



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 111 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Monday, November 21, 2016

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 21, 2016

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

GERMAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.)
moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the contributions that German-Canadians have made to Canadian society, the richness of the German language and culture, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon German heritage for future generations, and that the Waterloo Region is host to the largest Oktoberfest outside of Germany, by declaring October, every year, German Heritage Month, and the nine days commencing the Friday before Thanksgiving, every year, Oktoberfest.

He said: Mr. Speaker, today I have the privilege of presenting a motion which I hope this House will support. The motion I present today has been jointly seconded by the members of all recognized political parties in this House. I thank the members for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, Kitchener—Conestoga, Saskatoon—Grasswood, Saskatoon—University, and Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, as well as my own caucus colleagues, the members for Cambridge, Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Kitchener Centre, London North Centre, Mississauga—Lakeshore, and St. Catharines for having jointly seconded my motion.

I want to talk briefly about migration and the main reasons that individuals and families decide to leave their communities and countries of origin. The reasons for migration can be classified into four categories.

The first is economic migration, where individuals and families, like most of our ancestors, migrate for better economic opportunities and to find better employment and career prospects. Better employment helps families elevate themselves and achieve greater potential.

The second reason is political migration. People leave a country where political conflict and instability have hindered the lives of its citizens who then choose to flee to areas with a stable political system. Many have immigrated to Canada in fear of their lives and

have sought shelter in our communities, and we, as Canadians, have welcomed them with open arms.

The third reason is social migration, where people move to a country where quality of life is substantially better than in a person's country of origin, such as access to social services, health care, education, and so on.

The fourth reason is the environment, where natural disasters have displaced millions of people and devastated communities.

Furthermore, immigrants weigh particular factors before making a final decision to leave their country of origin. Push factors include high crime rates, lack of services and lack of safety in their country of origin, or the country may be impoverished or war torn. Pull factors include better employment opportunities, better services, safer communities, less crime, and political stability. All in all, like so many immigrant families, they immigrate to pursue improved prospects and to build better futures for themselves and their family.

In Canada, we value diversity as one of our country's strengths. We accept that members of ethnic groups can integrate into our shared national economic, cultural, and political systems while simultaneously maintaining their ethnic cultures, languages, and traditions. In fact, reverse osmosis also occurs, in which the shared culture absorbs facets of its constituent ethnic cultures. We celebrate our similarities and our differences.

It may be a trite example, but the online version of The Canadian Encyclopedia has an article entitled "Everybody's Irish on St. Patrick's Day". Canadians know what that means. Montreal's St. Patrick's Day parade is the oldest in North America, approaching its 195th year. The millions of Canadians of Irish heritage are as Canadian as Canadians can be, but have a sense of kinship, of shared heritage. We all celebrate with them the significance of the Irish presence and contribution to Canadian culture and history.

Individuals and groups in society thrive and flourish when they are acknowledged, respected, and given the recognition they deserve. The motion I present today proposes to recognize and celebrate the contributions, culture, language, and history of one of the largest constituent ethnic groups in Canada, well over three million Canadians of German ethnic origin, approximately 10% of the Canadian population.

Private Members' Business

I have the good fortune to represent the riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler, where I grew up from the age of four, and where I live to the present day. The birthplace of the Waterloo region is located in my riding. In 1800, in what is now south Kitchener, which is part of my riding, Mennonite pioneers, the Schoerg and Betzner families, established the first permanent settlement in inland Upper Canada and started farming.

• (1110)

In 1801, the Schoerg family welcomed the first non-native child to be born in what would be Waterloo township. Following soon after, were the Schneiders, and other families whose names can still be found in local names, the Bechtels, the Ebys, the Erbs, the Webers, the Cressmans, and the Brubachers. In 1857, the Hespeler part of my riding was named after Jacob Hespeler, a native of Württemberg, Germany. He was an immigrant entrepreneur who established successful industries in Hespeler and performed exemplary public services.

There are 20% of the residents of my riding, one out of every five people, who are of German ethnic origin. German-Canadian entrepreneurship, industry, skills, and business acumen, have played and continue to play a significant role in the economic success of Waterloo region.

German social clubs, associations, and organizations have a long history as part of the social and institutional infrastructure of Waterloo region, 23% of whose population is of German ethnic origin. The German-Canadian Congress, Ontario branch; the German-Canadian Remembrance Society of Waterloo region; the Kitchener Christkindl market committee; and the presidents of the German-Canadian clubs of Waterloo region, which comprise the Cooperative Council of German Canadian Clubs of the Waterloo region, have expressed their support for this motion.

Canadians of German ethnic origin are one of the largest constituent ethnic groups in Canada, numbering well over three million, nearly one out of every 10 Canadians. There is 28% of Saskatchewan's population, 19% of Alberta's and the Yukon's populations, nearly a quarter million people in Toronto, 200,000 in Vancouver, over 100,000 residents of each of Winnipeg and Waterloo region, and nearly 100,000 in Montreal, who are of German ethnic origin.

Woven deep into Canadian history, Germans started immigrating to Nova Scotia in about 1751. The German Society of Montreal is still active 181 years after its founding by immigrants and Canadians of German descent in April of 1835.

Following the American Revolution, groups of Germans leaving the United States settled southwest of Montreal and south of Quebec City, but the largest group, Mennonites from Pennsylvania, settled around Berlin, Ontario, which is now known as Kitchener-Waterloo. That settlement attracted new immigrants from Germany, drawing some 50,000 to our region over the following decades, and continuing until well after 1850.

Beginning in 1896, Canada's west drew further large numbers of German immigrants, mostly from eastern Europe and Russia, and later, the U.S., to the new prairie farming community. In the years since 1945, there have been about 400,000 German-speaking

immigrants to Canada. An annual declaration of October as German heritage month will provide opportunities to remember, celebrate, and educate future generations about the inspirational role that Canadians of German ethnic origin have played and continue to play in communities across Canada.

In the U.S., German-American heritage has been celebrated ever since the first proclamation by former president Reagan in 1983. October is German-American Heritage Month.

There are two parts or “asks” in my motion. The first asks the government to recognize the contributions that German Canadians have made to Canadian society by declaring October, every year, as German heritage month.

The second part of the motion asks that the government declare the nine days commencing the Friday before Thanksgiving every year as Oktoberfest. This second part of the motion does not conflate German heritage and culture with the annual Bavarian harvest festival. It is separate, though connected.

The Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, now in its 48th year, is the largest Oktoberfest celebration outside of Germany, running nine days starting the Friday before Thanksgiving. The festival celebrates German heritage, food, music, and festivities, and is supported by more than 40 not-for-profit organizations. The festival is operated by eight year-round full-time staff, over 500 volunteers, and 1,300 community and service club volunteers. They stage the nine-day festival each October, promoting a unique German cultural experience.

• (1115)

In addition to the economic boost the festival gives the local economy during the international festival, over \$1.5 million is raised each year by the not-for-profit organization associated with the Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, one of the top three most recognized event brands in Canada.

This motion has the support of Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Inc., its officers, board members, staff, volunteers, partner clubs and fest-halls, sponsors, and associated businesses. I ask my colleagues on all sides of the House to support this motion.

There are no financial costs involved and the benefits are clear. By demonstrating respect for a very large group of Canadians, and a large group of constituents, we make their country and community a better place to live. Motion No. 73 does that. It meets that test. There is no good reason why this motion should not be passed unanimously when it comes to vote in the House.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly the German community within Sarnia—Lambton has contributed a lot. One of my best friends is German, and so I am definitely in favour of marking the occasion.

My concern is that Women's History Month is also October. There was a motion brought to the House recently about gender equality week in October, and as well, there is Persons Day.

I would ask the member how he feels we can take the whole month for German heritage without taking away from the recognition of women?

Private Members' Business

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, if we can vote on the motion so that it can go to committee, we could discuss it there. It could be, if not the whole month, maybe a couple of weeks in October. I am willing to have a debate in committee to talk about how we can structure that.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality of Canada is that it is a country built on diversity. All these cultures have come here and developed a beautiful mosaic that leads us to greater acknowledgement and understanding of cultures and how to bring those cultures together in a way that is respectful.

I am very happy to hear the motion come forward; however, I do have a specific concern.

The motion says that, "...Waterloo Region is host to the largest Oktoberfest outside of Germany, by declaring October, every year, German Heritage Month, and the nine days commencing the Friday before Thanksgiving, every year, Oktoberfest."

The motion specifically mentions the Waterloo region. We have had some folks get a hold of us and have asked some questions about that. Therefore, to clarify for the record, will this be a month that is celebrated only in the member's riding or is it something that will be celebrated across Canada?

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, this can be celebrated all across Canada. I looked at my riding, to speak for constituents in my riding, and to boost the great tourism that comes to our riding. It is beneficial to boost tourism, and to speak for all the organizers, communities, and businesses there.

It is to get more tourists coming to our region and also all across Canada. I know that Ottawa has an Oktoberfest, and I am pretty sure that there are many cities around our country that celebrate Oktoberfest as well.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I applaud my colleague for bringing forward a worthy motion. We are all very proud of our German heritage.

In Winnipeg North, we are who we are as a community because of how the German heritage community, particularly the German Canadian Congress, has had such a profound positive impact on our social or economic fabric, which has been changed in such a positive way. A good demonstration of that in Winnipeg is during Folklorama where our German community puts on a fantastic pavilion, which is always packed as people genuinely appreciate our German heritage.

I wonder if my colleague would comment regarding something the Prime Minister has often said, which is that one of Canada's greatest strengths is its diversity. We should be very proud of our diversity, and the German heritage community is one of those communities that goes out of its way to ensure that we appreciate how important our diversity is.

• (1120)

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. I grew up in a very multicultural riding and I grew up with a lot of German and Portuguese friends. I learned a lot about their culture. They have brought some of their social fabric, their culture, here to Canada. We have worked together and built together this great fabric and this

great culture here in Canada. The contributions that the German community has made in my region and across all of Canada are something to recognize.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak in support of Motion No. 73 put forward by my colleague the hon. member for Kitchener South—Hespeler.

I had the honour of representing a good portion of the riding that my colleague currently represents but due to changes in the last electoral distribution I now have the honour of working next door to my colleague.

Let me read Motion No. 73:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the contributions that German-Canadians have made to Canadian society, the richness of the German language and culture, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon German heritage for future generations, and that the Waterloo Region is host to the largest Oktoberfest outside of Germany, by declaring October, every year, German Heritage Month, and the nine days commencing the Friday before Thanksgiving, every year, Oktoberfest.

I will focus my remarks primarily on the first part of the motion.

I am honoured to speak in support of the motion because of its content and because I am also proud of my own German heritage. My ancestors arrived in Canada around 1850.

In 2011, the census results reported that 28,490 of my constituents indicated that they were of German ethnic origin. That is about 31% of my riding.

Almost one-third of my riding shares my German heritage and this is something that has contributed greatly to the fact that the riding of Kitchener—Conestoga is the very best riding in all of Canada.

Germans who report their ethnic origin as solely or partly from Germany, or are of German ancestry, are one of Canada's largest ethnic categories of European origin. In 2006, over three million people in Canada reported German as their ethnic origin and in 2011, 430,000 people in Canada reported German as their mother tongue.

Canada's Germans have come from virtually every east European country, Asiatic Russia, the United States, and Latin America.

German colonists have been migrating to eastern Europe since the Middle Ages and to colonial America since 1683.

Canada's main source of German immigration was Russia, especially from the Volga, the Black Sea coast, and Volhynia. Some of the religious allegiances represented in this group are Mennonite, Hutterite, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Moravian, and Jewish. The mother tongue includes High German, Low German, Pennsylvania Dutch, and numerous regional dialects.

Private Members' Business

I remember well listening to my parents dialogue in Pennsylvania Dutch. I remember hearing conversations in Pennsylvania Dutch between my parents and my uncles and aunts and neighbours who would come to our farm to help with work, threshing grain together, participating in quilting bees in our home, or watching a barn raising in our community as neighbours came together to rebuild barns after destruction by fire. While I did not understand every word they said, I knew by their smiles and laughter that in the midst of their hard work they enjoyed working together as a community.

There are two defining elements that define those of Germanic descent and they are hard work and team work. These are defining characteristics of the German immigrants who came to Canada, especially to Waterloo region. Still today these values of collaboration are very strong. The current Governor General when he was president of the University of Waterloo would often comment about the barn raising spirit in Waterloo region, and that is largely as a result of the German ancestors who settled in our area.

I want to focus a bit on the story of the German Mennonite communities that immigrated from Pennsylvania. These pacifist Anabaptist farmers fled the fervour of American nationalism and sought land for their growing population. Preferring cohesive settlement, they acquired a huge tract of land in Waterloo County. Through chain migration they transplanted their families and Pennsylvania German culture. Their Waterloo County colony, with a hub community named Berlin, developed into an area of concentrated German settlement. From there, German settlements spread to Perth, and Huron and Bruce and Grey counties.

In 1916 during the First World, what was know as Berlin changed its name to Kitchener, when citizens, especially business owners, wanted to combat any perception of disloyalty due to its sizable German-speaking population. In the Second World War, Kitchener was the site of a training camp for the Canadian Women's Army Corps.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Kitchener and its citizens led the nation in first welcoming new German refugees who fled or were expelled from eastern Europe, Romania, Yugoslavia, Poland, and the Soviet Union. It has since its retained its place as one of the centres in Canada most likely to receive refugees, aided by its vibrant local economy. I would like to add that this past year through the resettlement of Syrian refugees, it has been very encouraging to see again the same level of generosity from the Waterloo region that was shown over nearly 70 years ago.

● (1125)

Let me now share a few personal stories about local organizations and the townships and towns that make up the Waterloo region and we will see from the names and the characteristics of these villages the strong German heritage.

Berlin, as I said earlier, changed its name to Kitchener as a result of the First World War and not wanting to appear disloyal to Canada.

A little town called Merryhill in my constituency used to be called New Germany. Heidelberg, New Hamburg, St. Jacobs, Schindelstettel or Shingletown, Schmidtsville, which was renamed to Wellesley, Baden, named after Baden-Baden in Germany. Recently in Baden we installed the first statue of previous prime minister, Sir

John A. Macdonald and all 28 previous prime ministers will have a statue installed in the town of Baden at Castle Kilbride, which is the township office for the Wilmot Township in my riding. I am proud of that new icon we will have right in my riding, which will be a tourist destination for sure. Other villages are called Strasburg and Mannheim. We can see from the names of these villages the strong German heritage in my riding and in the Waterloo region.

Companies in my area include Ontario Drive and Gear, started by an immigrant from Germany now working on things like the lunar rover for NASA and the Canadian Space Agency. Schneiders meats has been an icon in our community for years. ATS was started by a person of German heritage.

The German-Canadian Remembrance Society and many other German clubs in our area do a great job of preserving our German heritage. We have the German-Canadian Business and Professional Association, the Alpine Club, German-Canadian Hunting and Fishing Club in Mannheim, the Transylvania Club, the Schwaben Club, and the Concordia Club. We have German Pioneers Day, when each year we celebrate people of German ancestry who have contributed greatly to the economy in the Waterloo region. As my colleague mentioned, we have Christkindl Market at Christmas each year, which is coming up shortly.

Let me now return for a moment to some of the towns I mentioned earlier. The town of New Hamburg, which is of German origin, is popular and known for a number of reasons, but one of the reasons that I am proud to be part of New Hamburg is because of Howie Meeker, a former NHL star who played for the Toronto Maple Leafs for nine seasons. He also served here in Parliament as the member for Waterloo South, which is the predecessor of the riding I currently represent. I was honoured to be with Mr. Meeker when he received the Governor General's Order of Canada.

New Hamburg is also home to Ontario Drive and Gear, a company that produces all-terrain vehicles, including the ARGO, and it is also doing work for NASA on the lunar rover. It is also home to Oak Grove Cheese. People may not have heard of Limburger cheese, but Oak Grove Cheese Company is one of the only cheese factories in all of North America that continues to produce Limburger cheese. I never developed a taste for Limburger cheese. My dad enjoyed it immensely. Maybe one of the reasons I did not was because the smell was not the greatest, to say the least.

St. Jacobs is another town in my riding that is famous for its farmer's market, a popular tourist destination. Walter Hachborn of German ancestry was the person who started Home Hardware in 1963. He brought a number of independent hardware dealers together and formed an association. Today, Home Hardware has a network of over 1,100 stores across Canada. Their headquarters and distribution centre are still in St. Jacobs.

Private Members' Business

As for the little town of Schmidtsville, which is currently called Wellesley, I am going to read what I found on the Internet. Prior to the 20th century, the area was home to doctors, blacksmiths, and merchants, as well as a tannery, hotels, and churches. Into the early 1900s the village carriage and wagon maker, George Diefenbaker, whose preferred spelling was with an extra “c”, would entertain his grandson, John Diefenbaker, each summer in the little town of Wellesley.

● (1130)

Another little town people have never heard of is Punkeydoodles Corners. It is in the far west of my riding, and it is known for the quaint name, not for any significant settlement. It is a tiny hamlet situated where the counties of Oxford and Perth intersect with Waterloo county. The Huron Road passed through this locale in the late 19th century. It had a blacksmith shop and a tavern, where it was said that the German tavern keeper sang his version of Yankee Doodle, which came out sounding like “punku doodle”, and that is where the name came from.

I want to encourage my colleagues to support the motion. We can be proud of our German ancestry and the immense contribution the German community has made to Canada.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I stand in the House to speak in favour of Motion No. 73, German heritage month. The maternal side of my family is of German origin, and I have always been proud of the strength of my ancestors who travelled to Canada for a better life for our family.

Canada has a rich German heritage that has contributed to the mosaic of the many cultures that make up our great country. The significant cultural and social contributions of these communities are evident across Canada. Oktoberfest is an example.

According to *Historica Canada*, German Moravians served the Inuit until the 1960s as educators, traders, doctors, music teachers, and lexicographers. Assisting the Inuit in creating a written alphabet and dictionary, they helped preserve this precious part of the Inuit language and culture.

The first wave of German immigrants took part in the early development of agriculture in the west. Later, in the 1950s, they played important roles as entrepreneurs, professionals, artists, and tradespeople in the development of Canadian urban life in communities like Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Victoria, and Vancouver. That is just a few.

In British Columbia, the German presence dates back to the Cariboo gold rush in the 1860s, when Germans came with the first diggers from California and subsequent waves of miners to the Fraser River valley. Between 1953 to 1963, German immigrants made up 19% of Canada's skilled arrivals to our country. The list goes on and on.

During my time as the executive director of the Immigrant Welcome Centre, our region received newcomers from over 70 countries. Immigrants from Germany often came to our area. I was always impressed by their attachment to the breathtaking natural environment and by their welcoming of all the Canadians they received.

In my riding, the small community of Black Creek continues to have a thriving and long-standing community of German Mennonites. In the 1930s, many came to the region looking for better opportunities for their families. They established themselves and have continued to prosper in the area. They are known for their significant contribution to the musical and academic life of the Comox Valley.

Canada's diversity continues to be a strength that unites us. According to Statistics Canada's demographic projections, the ethnocultural diversity of Canada's population will increase greatly by 2031. The increase in diversity spurs innovative ideas, a strong commitment to one's community, and a rich cultural history that engages all Canadians.

Although the NDP will happily support the motion, I must share some concerns I have heard from organizations across Canada. The specific emphasis on the Kitchener-Waterloo region left some with questions. As the German Canadian Congress said, they are very much in agreement with the motion, but they wonder whether this motion only affects the Kitchener-Waterloo region.

Rich German culture is experienced in small and large communities across our great country. It is important that we do not highlight one region at the expense of any other. While it is wonderful that the Oktoberfest celebration has grown in popularity in Waterloo and across Canada, German cultural heritage should not be reduced to this one symbolic celebration. Many celebrations, such as the St. Nikolas festival, St. Martin's, or lantern fest, Maifest, and Fasching, or Karneval, are important to many German Canadians. Soccer, or football, also pulls together scores of supporters out of solidarity and love of the game.

Lastly, with the Goethe Institut presence in Canada, the German language and deeper cultural learning is now accessible to many. This should not be underestimated when we celebrate German heritage.

I recently had a constituent share a concern about the numerous cultural days or months we have designated for specific cultures. Believe me, I have looked into this. He suggested that we designate one month for multiculturalism and that we use this time to promote all cultural heritages in Canada. I do not agree with this idea. The rich diversity of our country is what leads to so many celebrations of culture and heritage. I am proud of our cultural diversity and will continue to promote all cultural heritages so that Canada remains a land of possibility for all who call it home.

● (1135)

This summer I had the honour of having a student in the region shadow me for a day. His family shares both German and Canadian citizenship. This young man hopes to use his dual citizenship to pursue post-secondary studies in Germany. He shared the strong connection he feels between the two countries and how proud he is to be a citizen of both.

Private Members' Business

I share that pride that these many cultures have joined our culture and have become uniquely Canadian. It is why we must continue to promote understanding and appreciation of Canada's rich diversity and why so many cultural groups have come together to support the history of our country that resides with the indigenous communities that have been here since time immemorial. I look forward to the expansion of cultural diversity in Canada and to the acknowledgement of and growing support for the first people of our country.

I hope we always take time to celebrate the unique richness we have to offer here in Canada. I look forward to supporting this motion.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address Motion M-73, introduced by my colleague and friend, the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler. This motion seeks to have the House recognize the contributions of Canada's German community and to establish October as German heritage month and the nine-day period starting on the Friday before Thanksgiving as Oktoberfest.

[Member spoke in German]

[English]

Our government supports this motion, and I am proud to stand here today to recognize the contributions of the German community in Canada. For all Canadians, German history month will provide a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the German community in Canada and the role it has played in building our country's rich and diverse heritage.

According to the 2011 national household survey, nearly 3.2 million people in Canada have German roots, including nearly 120,000 in my home town of Edmonton. Further, more than 500,000 people indicate that German is the non-official language spoken at home, making German one of the top 10 non-official languages in Canada.

Diversity is an essential ingredient of our Canadian identity. Immigration has played, and will continue to play, a key role in the development of our country. We truly are a country of immigrants, which has made Canada the rich, multicultural mosaic it is today.

● (1140)

[Translation]

German colonies were established from coast to coast. Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, was one of the first. It was named in honour of King George II, who was born in Germany and was also the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg.

The City of York, now Toronto, was co-founded in 1794 by Johann Albrecht Ulrich Moll, a German immigrant better known as William Berczy. He initiated a major colonization undertaking in Markham, and is credited with clearing the forest to build the road that is now Toronto's famed Yonge Street.

To this day, Canadians of German origin constitute a vibrant and dynamic community. Despite the diversity of their origins, people of German ancestry come together in many ways, including volunteer associations, business and professional networks, and celebrations of German heritage, such as Oktoberfest and other events.

The diversity of the German cultural mosaic is also reflected in its rich heritage. Since the beginning of the 19th century, Canadian artists of German extraction, such as William Berczy, whom I mentioned earlier, and Otto R. Jacobi, have enriched Canadian culture. In literature, Robert Kroetsch won the Governor General's Award, and in the sciences, Claus Wagner-Bartak gained international renown as a space engineer.

[English]

It is a pleasure to also recall the close ties of friendship between Germany and Canada. A number of cities across the country have established themselves as sister cities of ones in Germany. For example, Cobourg, Ontario, is a sister city of Coburg in Bavaria. Leduc, in Alberta, just south of my city, is the sister city of Grimma, in Saxony; and Kitchener is the sister city of Diedorf, also in Bavaria.

The strong cultural and social links between our two countries, Germany and Canada, are supported by the German-Canadian Association, founded in 1951. The Canada meets Germany program is another vehicle that works to maintain strong ties. Through this program, young Germans and Canadians from a variety of fields, including business, politics, academia, and culture, meet and exchange ideas. Language and culture are the windows to the soul of the people.

I wanted to understand Germany, its people, and its traditions. That is why, as a 25-year-old student studying at Oxford, I chose German as my first international language to study. I had three classes a week and each

[Member spoke in German]

[English]

While I was studying at the Goethe-Institut, with 30 people in our classroom, representing 17 countries, including Jordan, the United States, Australia, Japan, and Denmark, just to mention a few, I realized how much of a crossroads the German republic had become, and it sparked my interest even further to understand its people, its culture, and its language.

Canada has embraced a vast array of German traditions, institutions, and influences. Many have become so accepted that their ethnic origin has been obscured, such as Advent calendars and Christmas trees. Our kindergartens and social security systems are based on models derived from Germany. If we look at the actual word "kindergarten", it is the place where we keep children, the garden of children. That has become a word we have taken into our own parlance.

The Prime Minister has noted that our enviable inclusive society did not happen by accident and will not continue without effort. The effort required of us is a small one. It is to support this motion to recognize the contributions of the German community to Canada and to declare our support for the establishment of October as German heritage month and the nine-day period starting the Friday before Thanksgiving as Oktoberfest.

Private Members' Business

Speaking on behalf of Canadian Heritage, it is also important to realize for how many centuries Germany has perfected the art of telling its stories through music, through opera, and through the theatre. Where would our modern society be without Johann Sebastian Bach? Where would we be without Wagner? Where would we be without all the German greats? Modern opera has its roots in the German tradition.

This month is most appropriate, not only for where we are heading as a country but to honour our past and to honour all the people of the world, and in this case the German people, who have come and built our country.

When we are given an opportunity to share our cultures, traditions, and history with others, we are making connections with people with whom we may not otherwise have interacted. German heritage month would provide an opportunity to celebrate our diversity and for the German community to share its culture, traditions, and history with all Canadians.

In conclusion, I want to thank the German community for its contributions to Canada.

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

Germans have been in Canada for centuries, and they have built a strong, diverse, and pluralistic nation. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

[*English*]

I invite all members of this House to vote in favour of this motion. I look forward to celebrating German heritage month and to sharing in the tradition of Oktoberfest.

[*Member spoke in German*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak today to Motion No. 73, German heritage month. As deputy critic of the heritage committee of our party, I totally support the motion.

My province of Saskatchewan has a very high population of German-ethnic groups that came to our region well over 100 years ago. In fact, in my riding of Saskatoon—Grasswood, 31% of our residents are listed German-ethnic origin, which is the fourth highest in the province of Saskatchewan.

We are proud to have the German Cultural Centre in my riding of Saskatoon—Grasswood. That centre hosts many events throughout the year. It has two banquet facilities and a very large dining area that serves traditional German foods. I was just at the facility yesterday, and the menu featured traditional Bavarian dishes such as bratwurst, beef goulash, rotkohl, sauerkraut, schnitzel, reuben, strudel, spätzle, and many more.

Folkfest is a tradition in our city. Every August, it gives our German community a chance to showcase its heritage and its traditions. It is one of the more popular pavilions during the three-day Folkfest in August. Food and drink, along with bands and dance, are showcased, such as traditional German beers known worldwide, which have a rich and bountiful taste. Entertainment includes the

Concordia Brass Band, the German choir, the German folk dance, and so on.

In fact, the highest population of ethnic-Germans in our provinces comes from the riding of Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, which, by the way, surrounds the city of Saskatoon.

Although I was born in Saskatoon, I actually spent 11 years in a community called Humboldt. Humboldt is one of four settlements of German Catholics in Saskatchewan. There were also a number of German Protestant settlements, mostly Lutheran. People of German origin have become the largest ethnic component, nearly 30% of our total population of Saskatchewan.

The city of Humboldt is named after Baron Alexander von Humboldt, a world-famous German scientist. The history of Humboldt was influenced by the establishment of St. Peter's Colony. A businessman formed the German American Land Company back in 1903 and purchased 100,000 acres of the railroad land in the district. The company enticed German Catholics living in the United States to homestead in the St. Peter's Colony. The St. Peter's Abbey began back in 1903, with the arrival of seven Benedictine monks from Collegeville, Minnesota.

Many German-speaking Roman Catholic immigrants had settled in the area. By 1903, homesteads reached over 700. By 1910, over 8,000 thousand arrived. Then, by 1930, it was home to 18,000 Roman Catholics.

Even today, as we drive down Main Street in Humboldt, a number of businesses still have a Bavarian theme on their buildings. They are proud of their tradition and their German culture.

My wife's family settled north of Humboldt, in an area called Marysburg. My wife's parents, Ray and Caroline Albers, had a small farm about three miles north of Marysburg. The family included their two sons, Jerry and Ed, and three daughters, Lois, Ellen, and Ann.

Everything they produced back then was homegrown. The huge garden in the summer produced fresh vegetables. They would also can those vegetables, like carrots, beets, and pickles, so they could be eaten in the cold winter nights.

Strawberries, along with raspberries and Saskatoon berries, were plentiful and were made into jams and jellies. Homemade bread and buns were a tradition, and sometimes bread dough was deep-fried and dipped in sugar, cinnamon, or honey, a special German treat known back then, and still today in our culture, called spitzbuben.

Chicken and other homegrown meats were cut, wrapped and taken to the town of Humboldt back then for storage. There was no electricity, or even running water. However, the work ethic of this family and their culture is world-renowned.

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●(1150)

Jerry and Ed later would leave Saskatchewan and move to Alberta, and later British Columbia, but the work ethic of these two men produced a great entrepreneurship, a tribute from their parents. The three daughters all became successful teachers, with Ellen moving away to Alberta to pursue her teaching career with her husband Rick, who was also a teacher. Lois stayed in the area living in Lake Lenore. She was married to Frank Yeager, and they raised a strong family of entrepreneurs. Anne became my wife and moved to Saskatoon to raise two children. Our children have followed in their mom's footsteps and have also become teachers.

What is interesting about the Albers family is that the children have 100% German ancestry, which is rather unique for anyone whose family has been in North America since the last 1800s, and in Canada since the turn of the century.

Some of the German traditions and values were common to many European cultures, and later North American pioneers. From my experience, German people valued intellect, hence their education, and certainly this family with all three daughters in education. They value discipline, hard work, and a job well done. It is no surprise when we look at the landscape of Saskatchewan, and especially around Humboldt, that we call it the iron triangle as many businesses have been set up, producing farm equipment for worldwide.

Living off the land is what this group of German ethnic people did best, producing grains, animals for milk and meat, raising their own beef, pork, chickens, and, yes, sometimes the odd goose or even a duck. There was also wild meat.

The Germans are known for their rich tradition of making sausage, hence all the bratwurst dishes. Every meal, of course, included potatoes, which is another German tradition. Some of the best German sausage in the world is made in right our province. A schnitzel is a thin, boneless cutlet of meat, which is coated in breadcrumbs. One can choose a wiener schnitzel, which is made of veal, or a weinerart schnitzel, which back then was made of pork.

Families often made their own butter and cottage cheese, and apple strudel, the popular dessert. It is a buttery pastry filled with apples flavoured with sugar, along with cinnamon, raisins, and breadcrumbs. The delicate flaky pastry is made from an elastic dough, which is kneaded and stretched until it is paper thin. It takes a real talent, but when perfected, it is one of the great foods in the world.

Women certainly worked very hard, not only preparing the meals and looking after the family, but making family clothes, like coats, knitting socks, mitts, and toques.

The church was the centre of the community for both social and religious life. Even when times were tough, parishioners donated large amounts of money to the church. Many of the churches in our area in Saskatchewan have sensational art work, like original paintings on the walls and ceilings. They even have marble alters. Every fall, parishes around Saskatchewan would have their church picnic and everyone would attend. Social events centred around family and neighbours. Large extended families often visited back and forth. Card games like schmear were very common.

Oktoberfest, as we all know, is the world's largest funfair. Many communities in my province celebrate this long tradition. Oktoberfest is an important part of Bavarian culture, having been held all over the world since 1810. In Canada, it is modelled after the original Munich event.

It is my pleasure to speak in the House today in support of a rich German culture and heritage, which has built our country strong for over 149 years.

●(1155)

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate with the hon. member for Mississauga—Lakeshore, I will let him know that there are only about seven minutes remaining in the time provided for private members' business. He will have the remaining time of his 10 minutes when the House next takes up debate on the question.

The hon. member for Mississauga—Lakeshore.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): *Guten Morgen und danke schön*, Mr. Speaker.

It is truly a pleasure and it gives me great pride to rise today in support of Motion No. 73, brought by my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Kitchener South—Hespeler. His motion seeks to declare the month of October as German heritage month, and to designate the nine days commencing the Friday before Thanksgiving as Oktoberfest.

I commend the hon. member for serving Kitchener's German community, alongside all residents of Kitchener South—Hespeler, with such remarkable energy, passion and commitment. I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to his motion.

Canadians of German heritage have profoundly shaped our society. The 2006 census notes that over three million Canadians identify themselves to be of German ancestry.

German immigrants have been part of our Canadian story for several centuries. Canada's first permanent German settlements developed in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia between 1750 and 1753. These settlers were largely farmers and tradespeople, but soon became expert fishermen, sailors and boat builders.

Later, Germans formed the largest non-British subset of Loyalists, migrating north during the American Revolution, and by 1786, making up between 10% and 20% of the refugees who were fleeing to Canada.

In the early 19th century, German Mennonites migrated from Pennsylvania to the Waterloo-Kitchener area, and their successful settlement helped attract some additional 50,000 German immigrants between the 1830s and 1850s.

From Confederation until the First World War, thousands of Germans emigrated to Canada, especially to the Prairies and the west. Canada's rich farmlands and plentiful natural resources proved to be an ideal fit for these newcomers. They worked hard to open the west to central Canada and the Maritimes.

Between the world wars, political, social, and economic uncertainty in Europe led tens of thousands of Germans to come to Canada. Here, they were able to raise their families in safety, preserve their culture and religious tradition, and contribute to Canada's growth and development as a nation.

After the Second World War and through the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Germans came to Canada to flee a divided country devastated by war. Over the years, German immigrants excelled in the trades, farming and business and became leaders in our communities.

In short, German Canadians have helped to shape a modern Canada that cherishes the diversity and differences among its citizens.

In late August 1981, my parents, my sisters and I arrived in Canada to join those who had come from Germany before us. It was, hands down, the most profound, transformative and inspiring moment that I, as a teenager, could have possibly imagined. It opened up new doors from day one and triggered events, friendships and opportunities that have profoundly shaped and continue to shape who I am today.

On my father's side, my family has a strong connection to Berlin, Germany's capital. My father, one of my sisters, my grandfather and I were all born in Berlin, and my great-great-grandfather, Johann Anton Wilhelm von Carstenn-Lichterfelde, built a section in the city known today as Berlin-Lichterfelde. In the course of this project, he constructed the world's first electric streetcar line in 1881, exactly 100 years before my family and I arrived in Canada.

In 1963, at the height of the Cold War, then-U.S. president John F. Kennedy spoke in the still divided city and declared that "All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin." I am sure that with a gentle nudge, he would have included women as well.

Fifty years later, in 2013, President Obama visited Berlin and, speaking at the city's most famous landmark, the Brandenburg Gate, referred to Kennedy's words as:

...timeless because they call upon us to care more about things than just our own self-comfort, about our own city, about our own country. They demand that we embrace the common endeavor of all humanity.

Having been born in Berlin and now working daily to defend our core values of freedom, democracy and inclusiveness as a member of the House, it gives me great pride to echo President Kennedy today and to say, "*Ich bin ein Berliner*".

I am proud to join a list of seven other German-born members of the House, one woman and six men. The first was the Hon. Hugo Kranz, elected in 1878 in the riding of Waterloo North.

Today, I am honoured and humbled to represent my riding of Mississauga—Lakeshore, and I am proud to stand today as the only German-born Liberal member of Parliament in its history so far. I hope there will be others to follow.

● (1200)

In the meantime, let me recognize a remarkable institution located in my riding. Friedrich Schiller Schule is a German language school that has championed language training since 1972. Named after the great German poet Schiller, and founded by the late Christa

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Guschewski, the school teaches students from kindergarten through high school. In 1999, Christa Guschewski received the Federal Cross of Merit or *Bundesverdienstkreuz* from the German government for her dedication and commitment to German heritage, language, and culture. Today, the school is beautifully run by her daughter Christina Guschewski.

Economic and cultural ties between Canada and Germany are numerous, and the partnership between our countries runs deep. It includes trade and commerce; research and development; military training exercises and exchanges through NATO; academic connections, including student exchanges, and tourism.

Germany is admired for its commitment to sustained investment in science, technology, and engineering, and for its long-standing constructive relationship between capital, labour, and the state. As a result, many German products and services are globally recognized and sought on the basis of quality, design, and efficiency. German companies with strong representations in Canada include BASF, Bayer, Carl Zeiss, Hapag-Lloyd, Miele, and DB Schenker, to name a few. Siemens, the company whose founder 100 years ago developed and produced the cars for the electric tramline that my great-great-grandfather installed in Berlin-Lichterfelde, has its Canadian headquarters in Oakville, my neighbouring riding to the west.

On the trade side, Germany, as the economic powerhouse of the European Union, was one of the primary driving forces behind the new Canada-Europe trade agreement. I congratulate our incredibly hard-working Minister of International Trade, the hon. member for University—Rosedale, and her team for having secured this milestone, which will bring about an even stronger and closer relationship between Canada and Germany.

To conclude, I would like to pay special tribute to the German community in Kitchener—Waterloo and its long-standing contribution to Canadian heritage. I had the privilege of accompanying the Prime Minister to Kitchener this fall to celebrate Oktoberfest, and I met many of the amazing volunteers and hard-working executives of the region's German clubs. Their warm welcome and hospitality truly underscore the word *gemütlichkeit*.

Motion No. 73 is a most fitting recognition of German heritage and its contribution to Canada. I am honoured by the opportunity to speak today and would like to congratulate the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler for this important motion.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 12:03 p.m., the time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**CANADA-EUROPEAN UNION COMPREHENSIVE
ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT
IMPLEMENTATION ACT**

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.) moved that Bill C-30, An Act to implement the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union and its Member States and to provide for certain other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is very appropriate that we should be beginning this debate following our discussion of the private member's motion that celebrates the close and historic connections between Canada and Germany. As we have just heard, Germany has indeed been one of the driving forces in getting this historic agreement signed.

I am delighted to rise in the House today in support of legislation to implement the Canada-EU comprehensive economic and trade agreement, CETA.

This is a historic day for everyone, a moment that I know very many hon. members of the House have worked hard to achieve. CETA is the most progressive trade agreement ever negotiated. It will help redefine what trade can and should be. It will lead to increased prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic, create well-paying middle-class jobs, which I will speak to further in a moment.

Our government believes strongly in an open global economy, and we will continue to champion the open society and open global trade. However, we cannot ignore the reality that, today, we are living in the most protectionist environment I have experienced in my lifetime, probably the most protectionist environment since the Second World War.

There is a reason for that. Many people simply feel that 21st century global capitalism is not working for them. This anxiety is manifesting itself, among other things, in a powerful backlash against globalization. For those of us who support the open society, and I hope and believe that includes all members of the House, it is incredibly important for us not to be in denial about the importance of these sentiments that are sweeping so much of the western industrialized world.

This is real. It is tempting for us to say that if only we could explain to people how positive the open society is, how valuable trade is, how costly protectionism is, if only we could find better words, everything would resolve itself. However, that is not going to be enough. We need to look more deeply than that and understand that this powerful wave of populist anti-globalization sentiment is based in the very real, very concrete experience of so many people in western industrialized countries, including our own. The answer has to be in more than trade deals, because the anxiety is about more than trade deals. It is about the impact of 21st century global capitalism.

The concerns people have, the economic concerns, the concerns they have for themselves, for their retirement, and for their children,

are very real, and we need to address them. That is why our government is very proud to have cut taxes for the middle class. We are proud to have raised taxes on those who can afford them, the 1%. We are very proud to have created the Canada child benefit for the families most in need, and have boosted CPP for our seniors.

We are making essential investments every day that strengthen and support our middle class. We know and believe that that is why we can still proudly say in Canada that we have broad public support for the open society and globalization.

It is also why CETA is all the more important. Canada is raising the bar with CETA and establishing more inclusive trade and higher standards for how global economies must function in the 21st century. This agreement that we are debating today cements the paramount right of democratically elected governments to regulate in the interest of our citizens, to regulate the environment, labour standards, and in defence of the public sector.

We are proud to have made these changes to CETA since coming into office. We will continue to champion aggressive trade policies. As the Prime Minister said about CETA:

That leadership that we were able to show between Canada and Europe is not just something that will reassure our own citizens but should be an example to the world of how we can move forward on trade deals that do genuinely benefit everyone.

I must say, having just returned at five o'clock this morning from Lima, Peru, from the APEC trade summit of Asia Pacific countries, CETA was much discussed and seen as an example of how it is possible, even in 2016, to do progressive trade deals.

● (1205)

Most importantly, CETA will benefit Canadians. It will give benefits to consumers through lower prices and more choice; it will help workers with better quality jobs, because we know that jobs in export-oriented sectors pay 50% more; and it will help small and medium-sized businesses by lowering the tariff barriers their products face.

CETA sets new standards for trade in goods and services, non-tariff barriers, investment, and government procurement in addition to its very high labour and environmental standards.

CETA offers Canada, Canadian workers, and Canadian businesses preferential access to a dynamic market of more than half a billion people. This is the world's second largest market for goods. In fact, the EU's annual imports alone are worth more than Canada's entire GDP.

Of the EU's more than 9,000 tariff lines, approximately 98% will be duty-free for Canadian goods the moment CETA comes into force, and almost all of the remaining tariff lines will be eliminated when the agreement is fully implemented. This will translate into better market opportunities and more jobs for Canadian businesses of all sizes, in all sectors, and in every part of the country.

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Consider Guelph's Linamar, a Canadian manufacturing success story with operations in Europe, which now stands to be even more competitive in the EU market as tariff barriers on products like its Skyjacks go down to zero; and Northland Power, with its clean and green power projects, which can expand even further into Europe; or one of my favourites, Manitoba Mukluks, a Métis-founded business, whose mukluks and moccasins are currently subject to a 17% tariff in Europe. That tariff will go down to zero when CETA enters into force.

Whether it is technology and software, aerospace, telecoms, clean tech, life sciences, agriculture, or infrastructure, Canadians working across our economy stand to benefit from this deal. This is great news for our middle class and those working hard to join it.

My hon. colleagues know, though, that trade today is about more than just tangible goods. It also includes services. In Canada and the EU, the service sector is responsible for most of our economies—more than 70% in both cases. CETA, a gold standard, modern agreement, recognizes the increasingly important role services play in global trade and creates a wealth of new business opportunities for Canadian service providers.

● (1210)

[*Translation*]

CETA offers Canadian businesses new opportunities to access EU government procurement contracts, which are estimated to be worth \$3.3 trillion. In addition to increased access to markets, CETA also includes many other important benefits.

CETA is the first bilateral trade agreement in which Canada has included an entire chapter on regulatory co-operation. It includes a conformity assessment protocol, which will allow Canadian businesses in certain sectors to sell their products tested and certified in Canada without the European Union having to duplicate those testing and certification requirements.

CETA also includes a detailed framework for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, which is a key factor for labour mobility.

CETA is a progressive and modern trade agreement that fully integrates labour rights and environmental standards. It emphasizes the role played by public services and the right of states to pass regulations.

Our common objective is to ensure that globalization is a positive force based on our shared values and high aspirations. That is this agreement's *raison d'être* and why it is so important.

I will now address some of CETA's more progressive elements. CETA's preamble recognizes that the agreement's provisions reaffirm the parties' right to regulate within their respective territories to achieve legitimate policy objectives, such as the protection of public health, safety, the environment, public morals, and the promotion and protection of cultural diversity.

Article 8.9 of the chapter on investment makes it clear that the parties to the agreement preserve the right to regulate in order to achieve legitimate policy objectives.

Changes were made to the investor dispute settlement provisions to include more detailed commitments on the independence and ethical behaviour of members of the tribunal, as well as establish a revised process for selecting members of the tribunal and an appeal mechanism.

Nothing in CETA prevents governments from regulating in the public interest, including by granting preferential treatment to indigenous peoples or adopting measures to protect or promote Canadian culture.

CETA will not necessarily lead to the privatization of public services. Canada has a great deal of experience using the negative list approach and is sure that CETA will give it free rein when it comes to policy making.

Articles 23.2 and 23.4 under the labour and trade chapter address labour rights and recognize the right of Canada and the European Union to set their own labour priorities and protections and stipulate that it is inappropriate to encourage trade or investment by weakening or reducing the levels of protection afforded in their labour law and standards.

In the chapter of CETA on trade and the environment, Canada and the European Union also reaffirm that environmental standards cannot be lowered in order to promote trade or attract investment. Those are two very important points for both us and the European Union.

CETA also recognizes the European Union's and Canada's right to define their own environmental priorities and levels of environmental protection and to pass or amend their own laws and policies accordingly.

What is more, CETA includes a commitment to co-operate on trade-related environmental issues of common interest, such as environmental assessments, climate change, and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

● (1215)

[*English*]

Our government has been tireless since the day we assumed office, pushing this deal forward and leaving no stone unturned. I would like now to recognize some of the people who have worked so hard on this historic agreement.

I would like to start, of course, with my Prime Minister, whose relentless advocacy, in public and in private, whose work directly with Europe's leaders, and whose work at home and abroad, were essential in getting to where we are today. I thank him for his leadership on CETA, and more generally for his voice in Canada and the world in speaking for the open society.

Many of my cabinet colleagues, as well as my exceptional parliamentary secretary, have worked extremely hard on this agreement, both in Canada and in Europe. Their engagement has been absolutely essential. In fact, my parliamentary secretary and our CETA envoy have spent a great deal of time over the past weeks and months across Canada, and particularly working with our partners in Europe.

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Hon. members in this House, and particularly our Quebec caucus, worked very hard in the final days before the signing of CETA, personally reaching out to our European partners, to legislators in Europe in national and subnational assemblies, explaining to them how important this agreement was, and speaking about the shared values between Canada and Europe, including our shared membership of La Francophonie.

[*Translation*]

I would like to sincerely thank my colleagues for this absolutely critical work.

● (1220)

[*English*]

Our provincial and territorial partners have been extremely engaged in working on CETA. I am very proud to say that when we were in Europe a few weeks ago to sign CETA, the Europeans pointed to Canada as an example of effective federalism, of federalism that works. The degree of co-operation between the provinces and the federal government on this essential deal has been outstanding, and I would like to strongly thank the trade ministers of Canada's provinces and territories and their chief negotiators, who worked so hard on the agreement.

I would like to single out the role that Quebec has played in working on the agreement. The leadership of Quebec, including strong advocacy for CETA in Europe, was very important, and played a particular role in securing the support of francophone Europe for this deal.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank my Quebec colleagues.

[*English*]

I would like to very warmly recognize and thank the exceptional work of our public service. We in Canada are extremely lucky to have outstanding public servants, and, as trade minister, I say our trade negotiators are the best of the best. They have done an outstanding deal on CETA.

I would like to personally recognize Steve Verheul, our chief negotiator for CETA. I would like to thank him for his years of dedicated work to ensuring that we as a country could conclude negotiations on this progressive gold standard agreement. It will serve as an international standard and also offer tremendous specific, concrete benefits to Canadian workers and Canadian businesses.

I would also like to recognize the hard work of the previous government on getting this deal done. Canada's strength is when we can work together across party lines, across this aisle, and pass the ball from one government to another and finally get it over the finish line. I would like to personally recognize the leadership of the former prime minister, Stephen Harper, on this issue.

CETA will set the bar for future trade agreements, and it forms the cornerstone of our government's progressive trade agenda. This is an agenda linked to our government's core focus here at home on reducing income inequality and enhancing inclusive growth that benefits all Canadians. CETA sends a clear signal, at an essential moment, to the whole world, that we in Canada believe in an open

society. We believe in a society that welcomes immigrants and welcomes investments, and believes that by doing that we have more jobs and more growth. After all, at our core, we are a trading nation, a nation of immigrants, and we are very proud of that.

CETA sends a message to the world that Canada and the EU reject protectionism and we are committed to a freer and more open global economy. At a time when so much of the world is saying no to trade and no to the global economy, I am very proud that on Canada's behalf, and through CETA, we can resoundingly say yes.

We are sending an unmistakable signal to the rest of the world that even now, at a time of some uncertainty, Canada believes in building bridges, not walls. Now is the time to embrace stronger partnerships with our friends around the world. Now is the time to pursue prosperity and economic growth with a progressive trade agenda, built from the ground up, to help strengthen the middle class here at home.

I welcome this week's debate on CETA, and I hope all members will support this important agreement.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I agree we are a trading nation, and trade with Europe is too important to get wrong.

I heard the minister talk about the insecurity felt by all Canadians. This is extremely true. She also mentioned her duty to regulate in the interests of Canadians. There is 25% of the legislative changes that are to the Patent Act for extensions and changes to pharmaceutical patents that will cost all Canadians. She mentioned no stone unturned. The stone unturned is talking to Canadians. CETA will lead to increased costs of prescription drugs for Canadians.

When the Liberals were in opposition, they agreed with New Democrats that greater analysis was needed, as well as compensation to the provinces. However, the government has provided no analysis of just how much this would cost provinces, nor has it offered any compensation.

Is the minister comfortable signing off on CETA without any further analysis of how these increased drugs costs will impact Canadians and those in her own riding?

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•(1225)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question and for her very hard work on this file. I am extremely comfortable, indeed proud, to advocate for CETA. I have absolutely no doubt that this agreement will bring tremendous benefits to Canadians. It will bring jobs and growth. A joint Canada-EU study that was done a few years ago found that CETA would bring GDP growth of 0.7% to the Canadian economy. When we look at where the economy is today, how hard we are fighting for even 0.1% of growth, to be able to sign and soon ratify an agreement that will give us almost 1% more in our GDP is something I am extremely proud to do.

As the hon. member knows, our government was very clear when I was trade critic, when we were in opposition, of our strong support for CETA. We have been true to what we said then in supporting it today and in getting it across the finish line. Of course, this trade agreement, like any trade agreement, will have some variable impacts across different sectors. That is something our government is working on and consulting on, and I am working very closely with my relevant cabinet colleagues on that.

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite a unique situation when the relay race is over and the minister gets to stand in the middle podium, so I welcome the opportunity to speak to this issue today. Having said that, she commented about an open society, and I could not agree more. There is a lot more media scrutiny, more social media scrutiny, on things like this, and there is very little factual information at times.

However, what pays for an open society? I would like the minister to comment on that. Trade is one of the major economic drivers of this great country, one in eight jobs in some sectors, and one in five jobs in other sectors, that rely on trade and the openness of trade to make that happen. The minister has often commented that this is the gold standard of trade agreements, and I could not agree more, having been part of the development of it. It is the chapters on labour standards, environmental standards, and the regulatory co-operation that facilitate that economic drive that will create and pay for an open society.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster and I find ourselves very much in agreement. I believe strongly, as does our government, that trade is a driver of economic growth in opening up trade agreements with the world. In this historic agreement with Europe, we are driving more growth to the Canadian economy. We will be creating more jobs for middle-class Canadians and those working hard to join the middle class.

I absolutely agree with the member opposite that it is through economic growth that we are able to support and sustain our open society. The member spoke about the labour and environmental standards embedded in CETA. Those are tremendously important for our government, and we are proud of the work we did to further strengthen those. He referred also to regulatory co-operation, which is an important part of CETA, but we will have to talk about that later.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon Marcell (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in her speech, the minister bragged about being an advocate for progressive trade

agreements, and the Liberals have been bragging about being progressive from the beginning.

However, the government voted against Motion No. 42 on the tax haven of Barbados, which was moved by my colleague from Joliette. It was that very tax haven that allowed the right dishonourable Paul Martin to save \$100 million in taxes. The government is saying that it is signing nice, progressive agreements, which is great and the Liberals get some good photo ops out of it, but the problem is that they still have not resolved the diafiltered milk issue or that of compensation for cheese producers.

Will the government stop taking us for fools?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for raising many issues with one question.

The hon. member spoke about the Canada-European union comprehensive economic and trade agreement, or CETA. I want to underscore that this agreement is truly the most progressive international trade agreement in existence. In fact, this agreement has the support of all socialist parties in a government coalition.

I would also like to point out that in terms of investment our government has made very significant and very progressive changes, and I am certain that they will serve as a model for all other international trade agreements.

•(1230)

[*English*]

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to stand today and congratulate our Minister of International Trade, who has done an astonishing job. She mentioned all of the people who contributed, but I think they would agree that she is probably one of the hardest working people in Parliament. She has broadened Canada in making sure that our trade relationships are growing. I cannot be more proud than to stand today on behalf of all of my colleagues to congratulate her. She is an astonishing figure, recognized not only in our country but around the world.

I would like to ask the minister what this agreement will do. As we know, our government is about Canadian families, the middle class, and jobs. What will this agreement do for all of the stakeholders in our country? I know that when the minister negotiates, one thing she remembers is the Canadian middle class and Canadian jobs.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his overly kind words.

As a member of our Quebec caucus, my hon. colleague was very much engaged in this intensive outreach effort, particularly in the final days ahead of the signing of CETA, and being sure that we spoke to European parliamentarians, especially francophone parliamentarians.

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I made a point in my remarks of specifying three Canadian companies that would specifically benefit from the lowering of tariff barriers, which will take effect immediately when CETA comes into force. It is something that will happen in a matter of weeks or months. It is not something far in the future.

I would also like to point out that CETA already is having a positive effect when foreign companies look at Canada and how they view Canada as an investment destination.

I was with the Prime Minister in South and Latin America over the past few days. We met with many companies there. They were very interested in how CETA now positions Canada uniquely as a country where investors have access to both the North American and the European markets. That is good for Canadian jobs.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for her speech in the House.

However, I must point out that Quebec's agri-food system finds itself on the losing side of the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement. Producers feel abandoned by the Liberal government because it is not defending our supply management system under either CETA or the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The government has been in power for one year and has not yet resolved the issue of diafiltered milk.

Furthermore, the transition assistance plan is only providing \$350 million. That is peanuts. The industry believes that there should be between \$750 million and \$1 billion in transition assistance.

Given that our producers are worried and feel abandoned by the Liberal government, can the minister give us a little more information?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and her work. I would also like to thank my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture. As my colleague said, a few days ago, the minister announced our robust plan to support dairy producers as they undertake this important transition and modernize their operations. I know that the hon. Minister of Agriculture has worked very hard and done a lot of consultation with dairy producers.

All Canadian provinces, including Quebec, strongly support this trade agreement. I was very proud to work with my Quebec counterparts.

• (1235)

[*English*]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to stand in the House today to speak to Bill C-30, the culmination of the comprehensive economic and trade agreement between Canada and the EU, or CETA as it has become well known.

This landmark and progressive trade agreement, as the minister commented, is the result of years of hard work from 2009 to 2014 when we signed the agreement in principle. I welcome the opportunity to bring this deal that we struck as a government into force here today.

I congratulate the current trade minister for taking the next steps with this agreement, but I do wish she would do the same for the TPP. It is as progressive as, if not more so than, CETA. We would like to see it on the agenda soon as well.

The trade minister commented that she had just gotten back from Lima at five this morning. I just got back from Russia a little before that, so I have had maybe an hour's more sleep than she has. I do wish I could tell her that it is going to get easier, that the time away from family and so on will be made up for in the deals that we strike and the work we do on behalf of Canadians. However, it does not. We are in opposition, but there are still those international functions that we have to attend to continue that work to benefit Canadians and make sure that our future is bright.

I would also be remiss if I did not mention her parliamentary secretary, the long-suffering gentleman that he is. Having said that, he is a tremendous resource for us on the committee. He does a great job there. He is very stable, calm, and collected. Although he does not take part in much in the day-to-day operations, he is there as a resource when we go in camera and so on. I have had the opportunity to sit on a number of media panels with him, as well. He is a gentleman. Having been a trade professor for a number of years on trade, he understands the importance of trade to Canada's economic prosperity.

CETA at the time was cutting edge and one of the most ambitious trade agendas we had ever seen. That is why the Liberals have begun calling it the "gold standard", which of course is true for other agreements that we did, like the TPP.

In the previous government, under the leadership of the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, my colleague and friend, the minister, the member for Abbotsford, and I were able to negotiate, together with a number of our cabinet colleagues and a number of people from what is now called Global Affairs Canada, agreements with 46 different countries. That was unprecedented in this country's history. I am proud to have been a big part of those successes and for the role that my staff played in that as well.

None of that could have been possible without all of the people who work with and for us, right from front to back benches, side to side, people of all stripes. At the end of the day, I would be remiss if I did not mention someone like Steve Verheul. I got to know Steve some 10 years ago, when he was our long-suffering representative at the WTO, carrying that sort of schizophrenic trade agenda that we had, protecting these portions and putting them up for trade agreements. Steve did a fantastic job. He is one of those soft-spoken, quiet gentlemen who always had his finger on the pulse of what was going on.

I remember a number of instances in Geneva over the years at the WTO, when the leadership at that time loved to take five major countries, sort of the same ones that have a veto at the UN, into a little, dark room at midnight to try to hammer out a deal that the rest of us would then accept. None of that ever worked.

Government Orders

It was amazing to be with Steve during those clandestine meetings that the director general called at that time. His BlackBerry was always lighting up with messages, “China said this; Russia said that; or America said this, how should I handle it?” Steve always had the answer, always had the way forward. If anyone was the arbitrator or mediator of what kept the WTO alive for a lot of years, it was Steve Verheul with his hand on the lever. We cannot say enough good things about Steve. He's world class. I am not sure what he will do for an encore after CETA. It has cost him some personal time and a tremendous amount of energy. As I said, I am sure he will land on his feet and continue to be as well-respected as he is.

Even when the work is done, it is not complete. We saw this over this past year, as the minister stirred the pot and everyone told her not to do it. Our chamber of commerce told her not to renegotiate. I know that people from global affairs said do not do this. I will not say who they are because they could get fired. Also, the European business councils that I continue to be in touch with said not to do this.

We covered off all of these little warts and blemishes when we signed the agreement in principle some two years ago, and all of this was not swept under the rug but adjudicated and addressed at that point. With the minister going back in and sort of ripping the scab off, opening Pandora's box, it created the crisis we saw in Wallonia. At the end of the day, we have escaped with a deal that is more or less intact. It is pretty much, I would say 99.9%, exactly what we signed in principle over two years ago.

Since that time, it was not a stalled deal, as the Liberals like to say, but it was moving forward with a legal scrub and translation into a myriad of different languages and texts. Members know how important that is to do.

• (1240)

We see that here. A lot of times when we scrutinize our regs, one word in French will not correlate with a word in English, and we go back and change something that has been written incorrectly for years. A lot of work goes into the legal scrub with that many languages and different legal systems in the EU, the same as we have in Canada with civil law and common law. The European Union has a myriad of different legal options as well.

It is so important that we get this deal right. It was done right. We have 99.9% of it going forward. We do have a vacuum when it comes to the adjudication of future ISDS claims, and there is no doubt in my mind that there will be some. The NDP and some of its cohorts who came before committee, mostly on the TPP, love to say that Canada is the most sued country in the world. While that might be technically true, the reality is that out of several trillion dollars worth of economic activity, we have paid out \$170 million in legal costs, and well over two-thirds of that is due to one little misstep by former premier Danny Williams when he took back an American company, saying that he did not like what it was doing and that he would nationalize it, which he did. Under NAFTA, WTO standards and so on, we paid out some \$130 million for that. Canada is sued like every other country, but very few claims come to fruition and get paid out. As I said, that is out of more than several trillion dollars worth of economic activity. CETA is a little different from that, in that we have written guidelines.

We will see the elimination of some 94% of the agricultural tariff lines, and that will allow us to export our goods into a \$20 trillion economy.

The European Union is a mature market, unlike the TPP, which is an advancing market. We need both. I often call the CETA agreement the “family reunification trade agreement” because a lot of areas in Canada were settled by Europeans almost a century ago.

I see my friend, the chair of the committee, nodding his head. His family came across and took advantage of the Canadian opportunity. CETA will enable us to work with our cousins at home to bring in different products and facilitate that. I am sure we will be able to get a lot more Scottish, Irish, and English products, all of that good stuff that my colleague's family grew up on. We look forward to that.

We have done an economic agenda. The minister made a nod toward that some years ago. That agenda showed that this agreement would return about \$1,000 per middle class family and 80,000 new jobs. That is almost enough to make up for what the Liberals lost this past year. The sooner we get this done the sooner we will be back to zero and can move forward with TPP and start to recoup what we lost and gain what is available in that regard.

It is a unique investment. It is a unique opportunity, in that the European Union has a number of trade agreements with countries around the world, but this is the first one that addresses some subsets of labour standards and environmental standards. It provides the EU with a proper way to negotiate new access to some of our GM products. It is a regulatory package that will allow our beef and pork producers to export their produce using different types of wash facilities and so on. There are still some details to be worked out with respect to that, but at least there are guidelines to move forward with the European Union in a timely way so things are not tied up for months and years.

Government Orders

We will see immediate results once CETA is implemented. Our process here is a bit more arcane than some of the Europeans' processes. They will have to work through all of their 28 member states, as we will with the provinces. The minister also pointed out that when we were negotiating this agreement, my friend and colleague from Abbotsford, and of course Steve Verheul, sat down every time it was required with the provinces and territories that were there, along with industry, which had signed non-disclosure agreements. We had some of the biggest fan clubs. The number of those fan clubs for the CETA deal almost measured up to the number of people the Liberals take along with them on environmental deals. These people were there to get the work done and to make sure that the provinces were looked after. I do not see any type of push-back. Some negotiations are still going on with Newfoundland and Labrador on the payments that will be required. That province has stipulated that a certain amount of fish caught in our waters has to be processed in Canada. There will be some changes in that regard.

Kathy Dunderdale, who was the premier at the time, said that all of the \$250 million belongs to her province, which was never true. It is for all of Atlantic Canada to drive efficiency and effectiveness in our fish processing system. The Liberals have that one to work out yet before they will get Newfoundland and Labrador onside, but it is certainly in the works.

It is important that we look at trade writ large. We are fully in favour of CETA. In our view, we could not have done any better. A few steps at the end had our heart in our mouths, but in the end it has all worked out, other than for the vacuum we are going to see in the adjudication of any ISDS claims. There is still work to be done in that regard.

• (1245)

The important part of all these trade agreements is that we take more and more eggs out of that American basket. We rely on the Americans for 75% of our overall trade, 98% when we talk about energy products and, depending on what the issue is, we are very much tied to their economic value. As they pull back on the TPP, there is no reason to believe that we cannot join the other six countries that are gung-ho guaranteed to move forward on it, that we cannot join them and rewrite TPP without the Americans. Let us get it done.

Why would we wait for President Obama to decide whether his legacy will be bad or not? He has gone from being in a lame duck session to a dead duck session, so we have to start moving forward, get this done, join Mexico, Japan, Chile, New Zealand, and Australia. All of them have got it working through their parliaments right now. We have to look at trade writ large. We need that diversity to move away from those holdings in the American market.

We see that when the Americans arbitrarily bring forward things like country-of-origin labelling. There are whispers down there right now again that they will reinvent that. They cannot. We won that fight at the WTO. They would have to change it considerably to bring back anything that looked like Buy America or country-of-origin labelling. As much as that raises red flags, they are only at half-mast, because we did win that particular fight, and we would certainly take up that fight again. We would from the opposition side, I can guarantee that.

At the end of the day it was a good win, but it takes time and there is trade hurt when that is done, so having regulatory packages built in to things like CETA and TPP that really nip those types of negative movements in the bud are very important to take advantage of, and we intend to make sure those are there.

Having both CETA and the TPP in our park would give us access to 80% of the world's GDP, almost a billion consumers who are willing to buy. The difference between CETA and the TPP is that CETA is a mature market. It has been around for a long time. It has trillions of dollars in market potential for us. All we have to do is double or triple a couple of things that we have the capacity to do and we are talking a huge win on both sectors.

The thing with the TPP is it is an emerging market. We are talking middle classes that are growing, their palate is changing, and they are asking for more types of westernized cuisine. In some cases, God help them, but in other cases, it is good for our exports. We will ship them all the burgers and beer they can handle and make money doing it.

It is in our best interests to have that diversity in our trade portfolio, having both the mature markets that take certain cuts of the beef and having the opening markets to take other cuts. We have countries in that Pacific Rim that will make use of a lot of products that we do not when it comes to a livestock animal or when it comes to grain products and pork products and so on. It then adds to the value of that product here in Canada. It changes our processing somewhat. We have to learn to sell what they want, not what we have, but that is just an educational thing that the market will take care of.

It is one of consistency. Canada has been a trading nation since beaver pelts were currency. We are going back a long time. Having said that, trade is still currency. It is still what drives our economy. The little discussion that the minister and I had was on moving forward on trade, setting the standard, and the social side of it that we have to talk to people about. There is a lot of angst out there on media websites and so on about what could go wrong, but there is very little on what goes right in these types of agreements, driving our economic agenda.

We have seen in the last few days our Prime Minister roll over and say, "Sure, we will sit down and renegotiate NAFTA, why wouldn't we?" but at the end of the day we do not start with a position of surrender to having any kind of positive drive on that. Certainly, NAFTA is 20-some years old. There are things in there that need to be modernized. There are things happening now that were not even discussed 20-some years ago, the digital age and all of those things that need to be addressed.

Yes, there are certain things that we need to look at, certain things we need to get on top of, and if we can roll in irritants like the softwood lumber agreement into a new, improved, long-term NAFTA agreement, everybody would benefit. We would not have these legal fights that cost billions of dollars and hurt our industry overall.

Government Orders

Before the Prime Minister sidelines our economic activity by saying we will take whatever the Americans give us, we should be negotiating from a power position. We have resources the Americans are envious of and require. Keystone XL is a case in point. We saw the president of the day in the U.S. veto it, not based on science or on his economic standards, because it has passed all of that, but based on the fact that his major fundraisers were against it.

Hopefully with the new president, who really does not require the same fundraising, we will see some movement on that. He has already been very positive in that regard, but if the Americans are to take that sector of our energy and our resources, then they have to take our energy and our resource sector writ large. What is very important in renegotiating things like NAFTA is to set the standards of what it is we will not take less than, rather than just saying, “Hey, let us do this” and leave it open-ended.

• (1250)

We are seeing a lot of the TPP countries questioning what the Americans have up their sleeve when it comes to trade and when they start talking about renegotiating NAFTA. It is one thing to do it during a political cycle when one is campaigning hard. At that time, we saw Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and president wannabe Bill Clinton both decry NAFTA. They said they would never sign it, they would tear it up, that it would never be in their best interests. Within months, both of them signed it and never looked back. However, they all took credit for it stating, “Look at what wonderful things we did.”

NAFTA was a negotiation by the Conservative government of the day, which faced the wrath of Canadians at the election at one point. That was one of many issues that led to its downfall. However, to be progressive and to have an open society we have to do what we are good at. We are good at trade. We are good producing grapple grommets. The one thing we have never come to grips with is doing some value-added to the grapple grommets before we ship them out of the country and get that side agreement on labour standards, and so on.

We have already seen major changes in our automotive sector. As a political neophyte, I remember during the NAFTA discussions thinking that our wine industry would be decimated before it even got up and running, and yet it has become an international success story. We cannot go anywhere in the world without seeing some Canadian wines on display. We take international awards every year for the great quality products that we ship out. Therefore, there is from trade that underlying driver of efficiencies and innovation, which make us even stronger and better. Certainly, there are transition times required. We have seen that with our dairy industry and the compensation package that has been offered for the 17,000 tonnes of cheese that will be coming in on an annual basis. However, that will not grow. It is a static number. At the same time, we have unlimited access back into the European market once our guys figure out how to do that with a global cost-pricing structure. They have done it for pizza kits here in Canada, so we know they can do it moving forward.

At the last Paris show that I was involved in, there were 30-something Canadian groups there marketing their products. That was a tremendous opportunity. Although maple syrup is well known,

many of them were winning awards for their fine cheeses. Therefore, we know we are world class. We know we can step up and provide whatever is required by the world. We know we can grow our trade. However, we need a government that is ready, willing, and able to take those steps. We are seeing some final steps here, such as getting to the podium to accept the medal after the relay race is done. I was happy to be part of that relay race. However, at the end of the day, there is a lot more trade that needs to be looked at and moved on expeditiously, including the trans-Pacific partnership. We hope we will see these types of actions moving forward on the TPP soon.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague, who was a minister for a long time and is well aware of these issues. As he knows, NAFTA has been updated numerous times since it was brought in 20 years ago. There have been something like 11 updates. Therefore, I do not think it is unfair for the Prime Minister to say that we are willing to hear what the issues are and discuss them. There is nothing wrong with that.

Another point I have is this. The member referred to the beaver as currency. As an aside, we have traded the pelts, but everybody hid the fact that beaver is really good meat.

With respect to CETA, every country in Europe has agreed on this. It is extraordinarily difficult to get Europe to agree on anything across every country. I wonder if the member can speak to the importance of that and what it really means for this agreement.

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, the takeaway from that intervention is to eat more beaver. We will have to see it coming up on menus around the world. We have them out in our country, but I have never gone that way. We never run out of beef or pork, so I have not had to try that, but a lot of people do and still enjoy it, and that is good.

Absolutely, the CETA agreement is the gold standard, and it is tough. That is what led us to begin the undertaking of an agreement with those 28 member states of the European Union.

Some years ago, before I got into politics, I was involved with an industry that was trying to export into the European Union. I will talk about it in the context of farm machinery. We would get an agreement with Germany to export x piece of equipment, and then we would get demands from France, Poland, and other countries that wanted to have that piece of equipment as well, and then we would start all over again. The whole idea of a CETA is one set of regulations. Once we pass the hurdles with our product in x country, it is then accepted by the other countries of the European Union. It also has one currency, as well as other things.

Government Orders

The one thing that has thrown a bit of a monkey wrench into this as we move forward of course is Brexit. How is that going to play out? How do we come to terms with it? It is not really up to us to drive that. Rather, it is up to the British and the European Union to decide on when they do or if they do, and also, if the divorce becomes final, what parts of CETA aspire to the British side, do they start renegotiating all over again, or are they still part of the Common Market?

Therefore, the work is not done. We have the initial stages of CETA. It is a good agreement, a world-class agreement, and a progressive agreement. We agree with all of that. However, the work is never done, and that is what is going to keep guys like Steve Verheul in business for a few more years.

•(1255)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the takeaway from that exchange is that the Liberals cannot find anything good to talk about in CETA so they want to talk about other trade.

My colleague and I sit on the trade committee together. We do not always agree. I am sure that is no surprise to this House, but I do respect him greatly and the work that he does on the committee.

Under the previous government there was a compensation program for the losses that would be incurred under fish processing in Newfoundland and Labrador. I cannot imagine how Liberals from Newfoundland and Labrador are not standing up and explaining to Canadians and people in their own provinces where this money is to compensate them for the real losses that they would incur in this deal. This deal is not all gold stars to be put all over. There are serious concerns from sectors in Canada.

My question is this. Is the member concerned that the Liberal government has not yet explained whether and how it will compensate Newfoundland and Labrador for expected fish-processing losses?

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, it is a bit of a fly in the ointment too, not knowing that. The member opposite and I were on the trade committee as we travelled throughout Atlantic Canada, and the underlying theme is that they are not against trade but they want to make sure of that compensation package. We were not there on CETA, we were there on TPP. Still, there was discussion on that compensation package. There seemed to be a bit of buyers' remorse that they had sent 32 Liberals alone, with nobody out there, and all the provincial governments have fallen in line too. Because if they step outside, then all of a sudden there is no infrastructure money, there is no flood mitigation money. There is a bit of political hanky-panky, blackmail if they want to go that far, going on out there. Certainly they need to see what that compensation package is and how it would actually underscore the processing that is required and will be needed moving forward. The European Union is a large fish-buying market, so they would actually look at increases in their ability to supply that market, not decreases.

The other one that is still out there for discussion is the cheese distribution, and I am sure the member's colleague will get up on this question. It is one thing to talk about compensation for dairy farmers, but the real money is in the distribution of that cheese coming in. We had stipulated as part of the agreement that of that 17,000 tons, 30% of it had to be allocated to new entrants. That means the small

cheeseries throughout Atlantic Canada and Quebec could actually take on the distribution of a cheese similar to their own so they could compare when they sold it out through the distribution network.

There is still some fine-tuning to be done; not enough for us to say “whoa” to the deal, but just enough to point out that these little hiccups still have to be addressed.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech in the House today.

My colleague briefly mentioned the negative impact of this agreement on the dairy industry and fine cheese processors.

When the Conservative government was in power, it announced a \$4.3-billion transition support plan. After a year in office, the Liberal government recently announced a \$350-million plan. That is peanuts, really.

The dairy industry and the producers I represent are very worried because they do not see the Liberal government doing enough to protect our supply management system.

I would like my colleague to comment on the importance of having a transition support plan and protecting our borders. The Liberals have been in power for a year, and we are still having problems on diafiltered milk.

Can my colleague comment on these two issues?

[*English*]

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. It is stability and predictability, both in trade and at the actual farm gate, that allow people to make investments and carry on. Dairy farmers are going to have to know exactly what the package is going to be. It is one thing to offer the \$250 million to the dairy farmers and \$100 million to processors. That is fine and it is all well and good. But at the end of the day how is the cheese going to be distributed? Is it going to come into the country in a rush that would be problematic for the market? Are certain valuable cheeses going to all come in at Christmastime? At the same time, we see our own dairy farmers not being able to fill the market. We have seen supplementary quotas all year long on butter. The first one was 4,000 tons and butter is a valuable commodity. A quarter of the CETA is coming in because our dairy guys cannot produce to keep up.

There is work to be done on both ends, with our own dairy farmers and processors deciding between them what they need to do to maintain the Canadian market but at the same time making allocations for these cheeses that would be coming in here. At the end of the day, the growth rate in Canadian content or Canadian consumption of cheese will more than offset that amount coming in from Europe as it works its way through the system and gets here over a staged period. We looked at all of that before we decided to allow that amount of tonnage to come in.

Government Orders

Of course, when we were negotiating, the Europeans started out wanting 60,000 tons, if I remember the numbers correctly. It was just an astronomical number. They always talk about milk lakes and butter mountains in Europe because of what their subsidies did. We have never hit that level. They just basically wanted to transfer their largesse and their problems to Canada. We said, "None of that." We were able to negotiate a deal that gave us the beef and pork access as well as letting in that small amount of cheese that would be distributed across Canada.

As I say, there are some hiccups and other lines that the Liberals need to continue working on to make sure this deal transitions in smoothly and does not affect our industries negatively.

• (1300)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today as we debate Bill C-30, the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement implementation act.

This agreement, which we refer to as CETA, is indeed comprehensive. It includes 33 chapters, ranging from traditional trade topics, such as trade remedies, tariffs, and trade facilitation, to less traditional areas, such as investor court provisions, intellectual property, financial services, and government procurement.

I will begin my remarks by discussing the deal and how Canada got to this point. Next, I will discuss some of the outstanding concerns with the agreement and how the Liberal government has neglected to listen to these concerns. Finally, I will conclude by talking about how the New Democratic Party thinks that the government should proceed.

CETA faces a long road ahead before its full ratification, with likely opportunities for improvement. Trade with Europe is deeply important to Canada's economic prosperity. By addressing outstanding concerns with this comprehensive agreement, Canada can forge deeper trading relations with our friends in the European Union, while ensuring Canada's interests and sovereignty are protected.

Canada and the European Union first entered into negotiations back in 2009 under Stephen Harper's Conservative government. In 2010, Canada signalled that the negotiations could soon be finished but concerns persisted. In 2013, Canada and the EU announced a deal in principle, and the then prime minister, Stephen Harper, flew to Brussels for a signing ceremony. In 2014, another signing ceremony took place, this time in Ottawa.

However, behind the pomp and circumstance, concerns over CETA's controversial investor-court dispute settlement mechanism, or ISDS, continued to simmer both in Europe and in Canada. Investor-state provisions empower companies to sue governments for regulating in the public interest. Under NAFTA, chapter 11, Canada is the most sued country.

Critics point out that both Canada and the EU have sophisticated legal systems that are fully equipped to handle complaints from companies. Thus, it is not necessary to grant special privileges to foreign companies beyond those that exist for domestic companies. Despite continued opposition to ISDS, Canada insisted on the inclusion of ISDS in CETA.

As CETA's legal scrubbing phase continued into 2016, the newly elected Liberal government announced that the controversial investor-state dispute settlement mechanism would be revamped as an investor court system, or ICS. However, critics of ISDS, including the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Council of Canadians, and Canadian labour unions clearly stated that replacing the ISDS arbitration system with a new court system failed to address their concerns.

In October, we saw more changes around CETA, but not to the actual text itself. Canada and the EU signed a joint interpretative declaration, now called a joint interpretative instrument, which was intended to allay concerns that investor-court provisions empowered foreign companies to sue government for regulating in the public interest. However, the declaration is outside of the CETA agreement and therefore does not carry full legal weight.

Canada's Trade Justice Network issued a strong rebuttal stating, "in a display of arrogant condescension, the Declaration simply reiterates and clarifies what is already in the agreement, as if the various legitimate concerns that it purports to respond to have neither merit nor substance."

Later in October, the Belgian regional government of Wallonia blocked Belgium and therefore the EU Parliament from signing onto CETA. Eventually, Wallonia agreed to sign the treaty if it could maintain its right to refuse to give its consent to Belgium to ratify CETA unless controversial investor-state provisions were significantly changed or removed from the agreement, exactly what many Canadians are calling for.

On October 30, the Prime Minister signed CETA at an EU-Canada leader summit. Two days earlier, the Liberal government put implementing legislation, Bill C-30, on the Notice Paper, and the Liberals introduced the legislation on October 31.

This rushed process violated the government's own policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, which requires the government to table a copy of the treaty, along with an explanatory memorandum, outlining key components of the treaty at least 21 sitting days before legislation is presented. The Liberals also neglected to table a mandatory final environmental assessment of the FTA, as per the 1999 cabinet directive on the environmental assessment policy plan and program proposals.

• (1305)

Where is the commitment to protecting the environment?

I stood in this place on a question of privilege, challenging the government on its own omissions and failures to adhere to its policies. I questioned the necessity of the government granting itself an exemption on the explanatory memorandum, given that CETA was first signed back in 2013. Between the Liberals and the Conservatives, they had three years to draft this memorandum, which is intended to assist parliamentarians in analyzing the treaty.

Furthermore, given CETA's significant potential environmental impacts, the government must follow through on its requirement to complete a final environmental assessment.

Government Orders

CETA is not yet a done deal. Parliament should take its time in carefully considering the legislation before us today. We know that Canada and the EU intend to provisionally apply approximately 98% of the treaty in early 2017. The European Council decided that provisional application would not include investor-state dispute settlement, portfolio investment, and criminal sanctions for intellectual property crimes. These are the areas of member state jurisdiction.

Before CETA can be ratified, each of the 28 EU member states will have to vote on the deal in their respective legislatures. This process could take between two to five years. If just one of the 28 EU countries decides against ratifying CETA, as we saw with Belgium last month, the entire agreement could fall apart.

Bill C-30 would enable the government to fully ratify CETA, including investor-state provisions that Wallonia has already stated it will refuse to accept. Bill C-30 would provide the strokes for an investor-court system, but would leave out key pieces of information, such as details on an appellate mechanism or how panellists would be selected.

Going through the intellectual property provisions, we see that much of the patent law changes would be done through regulations. These changes would have significant impacts upon the availability of generic drugs to Canadians and therefore the overall cost of prescription drugs.

Greater parliamentary oversight is needed. The Liberal government is essentially asking parliamentarians to sign a blank cheque that it will fill in after.

Over the past year, we have seen a series of actions intended to address the concerns of Europeans with CETA. At every turn, I have risen in this place, as the New Democratic critic for international trade, and have called on the government to truly improve this deal. Yet, every time the government dismissed the concerns of Canadians and focused on making CETA palatable to Europeans.

I would like to now discuss in greater detail outstanding concerns of Canadians with CETA.

We discussed the investor-court system. The changes to ISDS provisions were supposed to improve transparency and strengthen measures to combat conflicts of interest of arbitrators. However, the new system will still allow foreign investors to seek compensation from any level of government over policy decisions they feel impact their profits.

At the end of the day, foreign companies will have to access a special court system to challenge Canadian laws, without going through domestic courts.

As I have mentioned, Canada is already one of the most sued countries in the world under ISDS. Canadian companies have won only three of 39 cases against foreign governments. The Canadian government has lost many NAFTA cases, while continuing to be the subject of ongoing complaints seeking billions of dollars in damages.

Existing ISDS measures have also contributed to a regulatory chill where governments fail to take actions in the public interest that they fear may trigger an investor claim.

The Liberals have not explained how they would ensure environmental and health and safety regulations would be protected from foreign challenges. It is now clear that the deal will not pass in Europe without the removal of or significant changes to investor-state provisions.

In trade deals, there are always winners and losers. With CETA, there is no doubt that some Canadian sectors will be negatively impacted by this agreement, including supply managed sectors and Newfoundland and Labrador's fish processors.

When the Conservatives were still in office, they acknowledged the significant losses dairy farmers would incur in both CETA and TPP. They promised a \$4.3-billion compensation package, intended to offset the long-term perpetual losses.

For one year, the Liberal government refused to comment on whether it too would compensate dairy farmers. It required an extraordinary level of patience from Canadian dairy farmers. On diafiltered milk, the government continues to drag its heels. It is promising a solution, but refusing to provide any sense of timeline. The trade committee heard from the Minister of Agriculture on this file. His lackadaisical attitude was incredibly frustrating to listen to.

● (1310)

Dairy farmers are also frustrated with the government's inaction on tightening on the duty deferral program. These are serious trade issues that the government must address.

In this context, let us look at the government's recent announcement to invest in Canadian dairy farms and producers. It never admits the funds are compensation, only an investment package. The Liberals announced a \$350 million package for Canada's dairy sector, which indeed is a welcome investment. However, the sector anticipates CETA will cost it \$116 million per year in perpetual lost profits. The Liberals' funding announcement is for \$350 million over five years. This falls far short of compensating dairy for the losses it will incur under CETA.

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The Liberals also have not explained whether and how they will compensate Newfoundland and Labrador for giving up its minimum processing requirements. In 2013, the Conservatives included a \$400 million fisheries renewal fund, with the federal government contributing \$280 million and the provincial government contributing \$120 million. However, in 2014, Newfoundland and Labrador believed the Conservative government was signalling its intention to renege on the deal. The leader of the Liberal Party made clear commitments that he would follow through on compensating Newfoundland and Labrador. How can the government consider CETA a done deal without addressing its commitment to Newfoundland and Labrador?

I am also deeply concerned under CETA about changes to intellectual property rules for pharmaceuticals, which will increase drug costs by more than \$850 million every year. The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions has also warned that CETA could make it more difficult to bring down prices through a national pharmacare program.

I find this deeply disturbing. Canadians already pay some of the highest drug costs in the OECD. CETA's patent provisions are not a concern to the EU. It already grants brand name pharmaceutical companies longer patent protection, but Europeans also pay much less for their prescription drugs than we do in Canada.

People in my riding of Essex already struggle with the high costs of prescription medications. Yet the Liberal government is cutting health care transfers to the provinces and has given no indication that it will take action on a national pharmacare program.

Under CETA, Canadians will pay even higher drug costs, while the federal government shows no concern or even acknowledgement of this reality. When the Liberals were in opposition, they demanded that the Conservatives present a study on the financial impacts on provincial and territorial health care systems and prescription drug costs. In government, they are telling the provinces that they will cut health care transfers, while pursuing agreements that risk increasing drug costs for the provinces.

At every opportunity it would seem the Liberal government has refused to provide greater analysis of CETA. In June, the world watched as the United Kingdom voted in a referendum to leave the European Union. This raised immediate concerns about the impact of Brexit on CETA. In fact, the U.K. is Canada's biggest trading partner in the EU. Forty-two per cent of Canadian exports to the EU go to the U.K. Canadian concessions in CETA were based on the premise that the U.K. would be part of CETA. Yet the Liberal government has provided, again, no analysis re-evaluating the net benefits of CETA without the U.K.

In consultations with indigenous people, the Liberal government made a clear commitment to nation-to-nation relationships, which includes a commitment to consulting on international trade deals. The Liberals have given no indication that they have fulfilled their duty to consult. We know they have not fulfilled this duty with the TPP.

Also in CETA there are provisions stating that above a certain threshold, minimum local content policies will be outlawed, even in municipal and provincial government procurements. We also see

provisions granting companies an expanded ability to use temporary workers without a study of impact on Canadians.

I have also heard significant concerns over the ability of all levels of Canadian governments to protect public services. These are all important issues that warrant greater study than what the government has offered.

Many of the concerns we are discussing today were consistently raised in two studies conducted by the Standing Committee on International Trade. The studies, undertaken in 2012 and 2014, were deemed by the Liberals and the New Democratic Party as interim or pre-studies, as both took place before the final text of CETA was made available to parliamentarians.

● (1315)

In the Liberals' 2012 dissenting report, they called for further consultation with Canadians on CETA. They highlighted that while the committee's work was a good start, further consultation was required. However, now that the Liberals are in government, they have completely changed their tune. They are no longer concerned by the lack of consultation, the inclusion of investor-state provisions, or the impact of increased drug prices for Canadians.

Today, the Liberal-dominated trade committee has made it clear that it only wants to hear from groups that will benefit from CETA. It has gone to extraordinary lengths to restrict its brief study of CETA from receiving input from Canadians, by passing a motion that restricts the committee from accepting written submissions except for those from the handful of witnesses who are selected to appear.

On the other hand, the committee held dozens of meetings on the TPP, travelling to every province in Canada, and holding video conferences with witnesses from the territories. We heard from over 400 witnesses, and received written submissions from approximately 60,000 Canadians. With 95% of submissions critical of the TPP, it is no wonder that the government does not want to hear from Canadians on CETA. After spending half a million dollars on this study, not to mention the time and money spent by the minister and her parliamentary secretary on their own consultations, the Liberal government still has no position on the TPP.

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As a first-time MP, I find the Liberals' disregard for due process on CETA deeply disturbing. It makes me wonder what they are trying to hide by pushing through this comprehensive agreement without proper memorandums, consultations, compensation, or analysis. I reference the two previous committee studies. In both studies, the NDP made clear its concerns but also its hopes that these concerns would be addressed and CETA would be fixed. The NDP has long argued for better trade with Europe. This will help diversify our markets, particularly as we face the uncertainties raised by the election of Mr. Trump.

However, Canada should not ratify the biggest trade deal since NAFTA as merely a reactionary or symbolic gesture. As I have outlined, significant concerns and unanswered questions remain about the proposed deal for many Canadians. Trade with Europe is too important to get wrong. The government should work to fix problems with the current deal rather than settling for a flawed agreement.

New Democrats support trade deals that reduce tariffs and boost exports while remaining firm that components like investor-state provisions that threaten sovereignty have no place in a trade deal. In our view, the job of the government is to pursue better trade, trade that boosts human rights and labour standards, protects the environment, and protects Canadians jobs. I am deeply suspicious of the Liberal claim of having a progressive trade agenda. This is a party that supported free trade agreements with Honduras and the controversial FIPA with China.

A final trade deal must be judged on its net costs and benefits. New Democrats have always been clear on this, and we have opposed deals in the past that would have net negative impact on Canadians, including Honduras and the China FIPA. Furthermore, better trade must also involve a better process. Far too often, Canadians have been kept in the dark during backroom talks by successive Liberal and Conservative governments. We saw this with the TPP, and Canadians rejected this.

In 2014, the hon. Minister of International Trade made the following statement in this place:

Mr. Speaker, on CETA, we in the Liberal Party are adults and we understand and respect the fact that, if trade agreements are going to be done, they need to be done behind closed doors.

The Liberals promised greater transparency, but given the minister's own attitudes, it is clear they have no intention on delivering on this promise. New Democrats cannot accept this position. We will continue pushing for greater transparency in trade negotiations, and meaningful, honest discussions with Canadians on all the potential impacts of any trade deal.

Europe is an ideal trade partner, and deepening trade relations with the EU has always been an aim that New Democrats support. Today, we have an agreement before us, and there are specific measures that raise significant concerns. As the progressive opposition, it is the job of New Democrats to uphold Canada's interest in this process.

The Liberals have missed key opportunities to fix CETA, but the deal is still not done. It faces a lengthy complex ratification process in the European Union. Wallonia has said it will not accept a CETA that includes investor-court provisions. I call on the Liberal government to remove investor-court provisions from CETA and

this legislation, address the increased drug costs, and give Bill C-30 due process at the committee.

● (1320)

Without these key elements, I cannot in good conscience advise my caucus colleagues to support this agreement. New Democrats will vote no to Bill C-30, and we will continue pushing the government for an agreement that provides a stronger net benefit for all Canadians.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very clearly, a lot of homework went into that presentation on a lot of well thought-out issues.

However, I want to explore the investor protection provisions. If I go to some place and invest my money to build a plant and hire people, and then all of a sudden that jurisdiction changes the rules after I have made the commitment, I would ask the hon. member whether she does not agree that there should be some provision to protect me and the investment I have made, which could have gone someplace else in the world, against someone changing the rules in the middle of the game. If she agrees with that, what kind of mechanism would she prefer to see rather than the one that is in place?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, that is an important question. In NAFTA, for the very first time, we have an investor-state dispute settlement mechanism between two developed countries. We are talking in CETA about the EU. It has developed, progressive court systems that exist, the same as ours here in Canada.

I would challenge the member to say that our court system in Canada is not completely capable of fulfilling any need that any investor would have if they felt they had been infringed upon. Why are we not hearing these cases in our domestic court system? This is exactly why Wallonia stood up. This is exactly why European countries are standing up and saying they have their own progressive court systems and a mechanism, in a state-to-state resolution, to have these disputes heard. We do not need a separate court system.

I want to be clear that in CETA, we are being asked to sign a blank cheque. We are being asked to sign on to a court system that is not defined and not laid out. We will not see legislation before the House outlining what the investor court system would look like. We are being asked, in CETA, to sign off on essentially a few lines that exist. That is not acceptable to Canadians. We have a progressive court system here in Canada. If investors feel they need to use it, it is there for them to do so.

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I believe firmly that we do not and should not engage in any investor-state dispute settlement mechanism, in any trade deal we engage in. India has refused to sign trade agreements with these provisions. Around the world, there are many conversations about these provisions and the fact that they are hurting countries.

In NAFTA, chapter 11, these are the exact same provisions that we are talking about. We are the most sued country in the world under these provisions. This has not worked well for us as a country. We have paid out \$190 million. It is not just the money that we have paid out, but it is the impact it has had on our ability to regulate and legislate for public good, public safety, and public health in our own country, and to protect our environment. That is a key pillar of what the government is promising to do for Canadians.

We could come under threat of being sued in this court system that has absolutely no definition around it. We do not even know what the appellent mechanism is going to look like, who is going to be appointed.

• (1325)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that struck me from my colleague's speech was that the approval process in European legislatures is going to take between two to five years. Here we are in Canada's Parliament, where the Prime Minister signed the agreement on October 30, and the legislation was brought in on October 31. That violated the memorandum that outlined that 21 sitting days needed to pass before legislation was tabled in the House. Furthermore, we learned that the trade committee is restricting witnesses to only those who provide submissions to the committee.

From all perceptions of these actions, the ramming through of this legislation without the proper notification period, the fact that the committee is restricting the witnesses and the submissions, gives the perception that the government is trying to ram this through without proper oversight.

I ask my colleague where the rush is when it is going to take European legislatures two to five years. Why is Canada giving a blank cheque to the government and not doing due oversight?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question is something that I have asked myself. We certainly have enough time. We are going to be provisionally applied in CETA, which will mirror what happens in the EU.

My concern is that we are not taking the time here at home. The minister has spent a great deal of time this year in Europe trying to make this deal palatable to the European member states that have had push-back issues around the courts system and around their agricultural sectors. We have not seen that at home. We have not seen a consultation. We have seen over 400 witnesses around the trans-Pacific partnership at committee, and now we are likely to see fewer than 20 witnesses round CETA. This is the largest deal that we will be signing on to since NAFTA. It is very important that we get this deal right.

Trade with Europe is so important to our country. Europe is our second-largest trading partner. As I said, there is absolutely no conversation around the U.K. leaving, in Brexit, and what the implication will be. I am not sure what the rush is for the current

government to push it through, other than to have some form of success on the books.

However, that success will come at an expense for Canadians. It will come at the expense of every single Canadian who will pay higher drug costs from the day that the deal is ratified in this House going forward. I challenge every member in this House to tell me that they have spoken about this issue to people in their own riding, that people in their own communities are not already calling their constituency offices on a daily basis because they cannot afford medication. Yet here we are, with a provision in this deal to increase drug costs in Canada. We need this deal to be done right. We need provisions in here to protect Canadians, and increasing pharmaceutical costs in Canada will hurt many people in communities, including seniors, who have largely been left out by the government in previous legislation.

I am urging all members of this House to take their time. It is unfortunate that there is not—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, time and again, whenever we are talking about trade, surprise, there is one party that always stands up against us, or maybe two, that stand up against trade, against jobs, against providing our Canadian producers and businesses with more opportunity, more markets, to sell their product but promote jobs.

Canada is a trading nation. One in five jobs is tied to trade, especially for the hon. colleague in her riding, which has probably had massive benefit from the trade agreements that our previous government have signed, and indeed what CETA would bring to our country. Why is she so against trade?

• (1330)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, for a moment there, I thought my colleague was going to say that we in the New Democratic Party were fighting for Canadians, that we want trade to be right for Canadians, that we want trade that is going to benefit Canadians in their everyday lives.

This trade agreement, with these particular provisions, can be fixed. It can end up as a trade deal that works for Europeans and works for Canadians, but unfortunately we are not going to be taking the time to ensure that is the case here in this House.

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Trade is critical to my riding, and everyone in my riding supports trade. New Democrats support trade. However, we have to support trade in a way that benefits all Canadians. Increasing the cost of drugs should never be part of a trade deal. It is 25% of the legislative changes inside of this implementing legislation. That is wrong. Canadians do not support that. Again, I challenge these members, and I challenge the member for Cariboo—Prince George, to speak to members in their own ridings and ask if they would support increased drug costs in Canada going forward.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Oakville.

I will first address free trade in general by way of introduction and then address the comprehensive economic trade agreement in particular.

In properly managed economies, free trade regimes result in increased prosperity for all partners. This is uncontroversial economic theory and practice. This increased shared prosperity results from efficient economic specialization; each partner does what it does best, and this results in more efficient production within partner economies. More efficient production means increased net wealth for free-trading partnerships. Properly devised free trade results in a net increase in jobs and decreased prices for consumers. More employment and lower prices combine to increase the wealth available for free-trading societies.

This legislation would implement such a properly devised, progressive free trade agreement.

However, we have seen skepticism about free trade around the world lately. Why is there legitimate worldwide concern about free trade? There is such concern because governments have not always properly addressed the broader implications of free trade. With this fair and responsible agreement, our government will do so.

What are the often ignored implications of free trade? They are basically twofold. Governments have not always properly recognized that free trade hurts some citizens, despite the general increase in prosperity. Governments have not always helped sufficiently those negatively impacted. Such assistance can include measures for retraining; assistance to shift to new sectors, markets, or products; and measures to deal with unemployment and economic disruption. Our government will take the necessary measures to assist those negatively impacted by this agreement.

A further legitimate concern is that governments have not always had the wisdom and willingness to ensure that the general prosperity resulting from free trade is equitably shared throughout society. Many governments have been content to see the economic benefits flow disproportionately to the very few. Our government will take measures to ensure that any general increase in prosperity, including that flowing from increased free trade, will be shared in an inclusive manner, including especially the middle class and those working hard to join it.

After consulting and listening to Canadians, and guided by our principles, we are addressing these two areas. We are pursuing free trade in a fair and responsible way. Our free trade will reduce inequality and enhance inclusive growth.

There are other less valid reasons to oppose free trade. Some opposition to free trade flows from xenophobia, a fear of and unwillingness to deal with foreigners. When people struggle economically, they can become fearful and susceptible to calls for protectionist measures. The world saw this phenomenon in the years preceding World War II. Such inward turning contributed to the start of that horrific conflict.

We reject xenophobia. We will keep Canada open to and engaged in the world.

This is the right thing to do. It is also Canada's surest route to continuing inclusive prosperity.

History has useful lessons to consider. What was the world reaction to the Great Depression of the 1930s? There was a general protectionist response by the world's economies. Countries erected trade barriers. Countries pulled back from free trade. Did these fear-based responses help these countries and the world? The answer is no, they did not. In fact, these measures exacerbated the problem. They prolonged the Great Depression and caused more economic disruption.

These economic lessons were so clear that after World War II, the international community signed GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, in 1947, which is now the World Trade Organization. This reaction was specifically designed to combat self-destructive trade protectionism. The free trade effects of that regime were largely responsible for the unprecedented, prolonged post-war prosperity.

• (1335)

How should we respond to our great recession of 2008, under which shadow we still live? Should we make the same mistakes our ancestors made in the 1930s? Should we retreat from free trade? Should we become more protectionist? Will becoming less open to international trade help us? The clear answer is no.

Now I wish to deal specifically with the free trade agreement before us, the comprehensive economic trade agreement. CETA is an ideal complement to our current trading arrangements with the world's largest market, the United States, with whom, with Mexico, we are now linked in the North American Free Trade Agreement.

We came to this agreement only after extensive consultation with stakeholders, and only after listening to interested Canadians. CETA will now link us to the world's second-largest market, the European Union. Acknowledging the long-standing, mutually beneficial effects of NAFTA does not prevent us from duplicating the benefits of that arrangement with other countries. We can now forge a new and exciting free trade relationship with Europe.

Canadians can only benefit from diversifying our trading markets and supply sources to the broadest possible number of countries in the world. Free trade links us with a broad range of countries, grows our economy, and protects us from the inevitable ups and downs in different countries' and different regions' economic and political cycles.

In addition to the benefits of the size of Europe's markets, Europe has the further advantage of sharing with Canada much history and culture. There is a natural affinity between Europe and Canada.

While free trade does not require a similarity of outlook, such similarities make all relationships, including economic relationships, that much easier.

We have much in common with Europe. We share approaches to the rule of law, democratic government, workers' rights, investment, research, and even government regulations. All these linkages will ease our interactions with Europe on multiple levels. Examples of these similar views in CETA are its provisions recognizing labour protection and priorities. In addition, each partner has the right to set distinct environmental priorities.

Many Canadians can trace their roots back to Europe. Many Canadians still have links with Europe. Canada and Europe can use those linkages for our mutual benefit.

Canadians of Dutch heritage will help us sell to the Netherlands. Canadians of Portuguese ancestry can help us invest in Portugal, and Polish Canadians can help forge economic links with Poland.

Let us consider snapshots of some likely effects of CETA. Bombardier will be able to strengthen and grow its European market, keeping good jobs here in Ontario and Quebec. Clearwater Seafoods in Atlantic Canada is well positioned to take advantage of this trade agreement to provide Canada with more exports and Atlantic Canada with more jobs.

The Canadian Agri-food Trade Alliance applauds the government for signing CETA. Its members, including cow producers and soy and canola farmers, many in Canada's prairie provinces, are eager for this agreement, because they will sell more products to Europe, bringing back profits and keeping jobs in Canada.

Canada's forest products companies will be able to sell more to Europe. We are currently only 11th as a supplier of such products to Europe. Tariffs on forestry products will drop from 10% to 2% to 0%. This means more jobs and prosperity in British Columbia and elsewhere across Canada.

For these reasons, this agreement has extensive support from our business community. They see opportunity. CETA will provide direct benefits to Canadians, who will find temporary access to Europe enhanced under its provisions for the increasingly important service sectors. Not only will they take Canadian ideas and approaches to Europe, they will bring European ideas and approaches back to Canada. This will vastly increase the ability of the Canadian organizations to which they belong to compete, innovate, and thrive around the world.

The comprehensive economic trade agreement is one of those rare golden opportunities for Canada to live up to its progressive principles and for Canada, along with its European partners, to reap

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economic benefits and an increase in generally inclusive prosperity. We are standing by our ideas of openness and engagement. We are also pursuing inclusive and enduring prosperity for all Canadians.

• (1340)

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see the Liberal government embracing trade and actually doing so in a fashion that will benefit all Canadians.

I am just curious. We have had different testimony on ISDS and the provisions on ISDS. Could the member tell the House exactly what is in the agreement and how it will come into effect?

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his work on the international trade committee and for the work he has done for many years on this agreement. I know that he is in full support. He sees the benefits that will come from this agreement.

I know the member has heard from the parliamentary secretary and the minister about the work that is ongoing as they look at investor protections and at making sure they are there for investors. On the other hand, there is also an understanding of the sovereignty of all the countries involved in this agreement and of making sure that the environmental protections and labour protections are addressed. It is a well balanced, progressive agreement, and these are the types of standards we want going forward.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is praising CETA, but I would like to know what he thinks about the fact that the government is rushing this bill through despite the many shortcomings the NDP has found in terms of both the process and the bill's contents.

A number of industries will suffer, including the dairy industry in Quebec and in my riding. The Conservatives had previously agreed to compensation totalling \$4.3 billion over 10 years, but the Liberals are offering only \$250 million over five years. That represents a huge loss, \$116 million a year for the dairy farmers in my riding, even though this sector creates one out of every eight jobs in Canada.

I would like to quote our dairy farmers, who feel cheated:

CETA will result in an expropriation of up to 2% of Canadian milk production; representing 17,700 tonnes of cheese that will no longer be produced in Canada. This is equivalent to the entire yearly production of the province of Nova Scotia, and will cost Canadian dairy farmers up to \$116 million a year in perpetual lost revenues.

What does my colleague have to say in response to the concerns of Canadian dairy farmers?

Can he also reassure us? Apparently, people are not allowed to submit reports to the committee, unless they appear in person as witnesses. This shows a serious lack of transparency—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

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Unfortunately, there are only five minutes left for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

• (1345)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Mr. Speaker, I think the member is confusing two agreements, the TPP and CETA. For CETA, there has been a great deal of consultation, especially with the agriculture sector. Our agriculture minister is working hard on the transition phase and is doing his job correctly. It has been over seven years putting this together and seeing it come to fruition, with buy-in from the provinces, Quebec included, which is actually a champion of this agreement, the municipalities, and stakeholders. This will be an agreement that I will be voting in favour of, because I know it is good for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned the importance of being bold in the current climate of protectionism. Maybe he could comment further on the opportunity this presents to Canada to be seen as a leader in trade in the world, something started under the previous government. The talks stalled, unfortunately. We picked them up and carried the ball across the line. Now we have a comprehensive agreement that should show us as a great trading partner in the world. Maybe he could comment on that.

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member, who often talks about our trade agreements around the world, and the Prime Minister, for the leadership we have seen at APEC from the get-go. Canada is a trading nation. We are open to the world and are all better if we are trading with each other.

In my comments I spoke about the Great Depression and the great recession and how at those times there was a feeling of protectionism. That protectionism, we can see now, has brought poor results. We have to have open, progressive trade agreements like CETA to move everyone forward.

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today and speak in favour of Bill C-30 and the comprehensive economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union.

Canada is a trading nation. A trade agreement with the European Union is good business for Canada. The European Union market opens incredible opportunities for Canadian businesses. The EU is the world's second largest economy and is Canada's second largest trading partner after the United States. It is also the world's second largest importing market for goods.

CETA is a comprehensive trade agreement that would cover virtually all sectors and aspects of Canada-EU trade. Once implemented, approximately 98% of EU tariff lines on Canadian goods would be duty-free.

Canadian service providers would benefit from greater access to the EU, the world's largest importer of services.

CETA would also provide investors with greater stability, transparency, and protection for investments in the EU while significantly expanding Canadian access to EU government procurement contracts.

To make a specific case for CETA, I would like to reflect on the advantages of CETA to my community of Oakville. Oakville is home to many advanced manufacturing companies, which form a dynamic cluster of businesses supporting innovation and growth. Our manufacturing standouts include Ford Motor Company of Canada, UTC Aerospace Systems, GE Water & Process Technologies, and Dana Incorporated, an auto parts manufacturer.

With respect to the aerospace industry, CETA would offer tariff elimination, opening of government contracts, and regulatory co-operation.

With respect to automotive parts, given the integrated nature of Canada's automotive supply chain, it is important that there are rules of origin that accommodate significant levels of foreign value-added. CETA would allow Canadian passenger vehicles that meet a minimum percentage of domestic content to qualify for duty-free exchange.

For other manufacturers, the EU represents an unprecedented opportunity for Canadian businesses. Pre-Brexit, with its \$22-trillion economy and more than 500 million consumers, the EU is the world's largest integrated market. The potential value of access to the EU is quantified in a 2008 study, which estimated that CETA could lead to a \$12-billion increase to Canadian GDP and an increase in bilateral trade of over 20%.

A growing cluster of financial and professional service companies are taking advantage of Oakville's workforce capabilities to drive innovation and build sector leadership. In Oakville, there are 13,000 highly skilled and experienced knowledge workers. Also, Oakville is home to Sheridan College, one of the world's leading animation centres.

Oakville has the people, the partners, and the business knowledge to bring new technology to the world. For ICT workers, professionals, and businesses, CETA allows for tariff elimination, regulatory co-operation, temporary entry permits, and access to government procurement contracts.

CETA also has provisions for recognition of professional certifications, including legal, accounting, and architectural designations.

Ford Canada, located in my riding of Oakville, is very supportive of CETA. The EU market represents a significant global market for vehicles. In 2015, total vehicle sales in the EU countries were 15.5 million vehicles, ranking the EU as the third largest vehicle market in the world behind number one China, with over 24 million units sold and number two, the U.S., with over 17 million sales.

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Access to this large new vehicle market for Canadian produced vehicles would help diversity and grow Canadian exports of vehicles and our auto parts. Dianne Craig the president and CEO of Ford Motor Company of Canada, states that, "Ford is a global company built on free trade. ...Ford has supported trade deals with trading partners that result in the opportunity to increase the two-way flow of trade." That is what CETA does.

In 2016, Ford of Canada began exporting the Ford Edge, built in Oakville, to the EU. This includes building vehicles in Canada with right-hand drive and diesel engines designed for that market. Canada's decision to sign CETA contributed to Ford's decision to expand production of the Ford Edge in Oakville for export to the EU market.

Caroline Hughes, director of government relations at Ford states, "...we support a manufacturing-driven trade strategy that starts with the belief that Canadian manufacturing truly matters and that Canadian manufacturing can compete on a level playing field against the best competition from around the world."

●(1350)

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has spoken out quite clearly in favour of this agreement.

Locally, the Oakville Chamber of Commerce has supported the ratification of CETA. John Sawyer, president of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce recently stated that:

CETA is an important agreement that would benefit Oakville businesses by reducing trade barriers with the world's large economy. It will offer more opportunities for exporters and lower prices for consumers.

I do need to say that several people and groups in Oakville have raised concerns with me. They say that some of our recent free trade agreements have surrendered the state's ability to regulate and to act in public interest in favour of multinational corporations' interests. This has been the result of complex investor-state conflict resolution processes.

I want to reassure residents of Oakville that CETA represents a significant break with the past, at two different levels.

First, it would include an explicit reference to the right of governments to regulate in the public interest. CETA makes clear from the outset that the EU and Canada preserve their right to regulate and to achieve legitimate policy objectives, such as public health, safety, environment, public morals, social or consumer protection, and the promotion and protection of cultural diversity.

There is a clear instruction to the tribunal for the interpretation of investment provisions.

Second, CETA would create an independent investment court system, consisting of a permanent tribunal. Dispute settlement proceedings would be conducted in a transparent and impartial manner.

Contrary to the traditional investment dispute settlement agreements, the tribunal would be composed of 15 members nominated by the European Union and Canada, and not by the arbitrators nominated by the investor and the defending state.

It is also explicitly foreseen that governments could change their laws, including in a way that would affect investors' expectations of profit and that the application of law would not constitute a breach of investment protection standards.

It is worth repeating that CETA would explicitly safeguard health, safety, and environmental protections and that nothing in CETA would prevent governments from providing preferences to aboriginal peoples or from adopting measures to protect or promote Canadian culture.

As vice-president of the Canada-European Parliamentary Association, I have recently had the opportunity to speak about the advantages of CETA to our European parliamentary counterparts at meetings in Canada and in Europe.

There was general agreement that there were advantages for European countries to participate in this trade agreement, just as there are advantages for Canada.

I was part of panel that met with business owners in Bratislava, Slovakia, who were very excited about the opportunities opened up by the trade agreement with Canada.

I also have had the opportunity to tour auto parts manufacturing plants in Europe and to see a Volkswagen assembly plant creating VW Touaregs, Porsche Cayennes, and other luxury SUVs, many of which are destined for my community of Oakville. Just as Oakville currently exports the Ford Edge to Europe, we are importing European automobiles to Canada. This trade already exists. CETA would simplify the rules and make the products more affordable to consumers in both jurisdictions.

Like many communities across Canada, Oakville depends upon free trade and open global trade to maintain our high standard of living. This is a modern agreement, and an extremely positive one for the Canadian economy, which relies upon open markets and trade.

I have relatives in Germany, Poland, and Sweden. Many Canadians, like me, have family and friends who live in the European Union. This is a good trade relationship for people; this is a good trade agreement for Oakville and my town's businesses; and this is a good trade deal for Canada.

I hope every member of Parliament gets behind CETA and supports Bill C-30.

●(1355)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear my colleague across talking about his care for family and friends. I share that, of course, in my own riding of Essex.

I am deeply concerned for my riding of Essex and his riding of Oakville as a result of the impacts of increased costs of prescription drugs for Canadians. I cannot understand how the member opposite will explain this to the many people of Oakville. I have many friends who live in Oakville and who work in Oakville, and they do not support increased drugs costs in a trade deal like we see in CETA.

Statements by Members

Increasing drug costs for Canadians, changing our patent legislation—25% of CETA implementing legislation are changes to the Patent Act—have absolutely no place in a trade agreement in 2016. This would hurt Canadians. I cannot comprehend how, in a working community like Oakville, where the member across is from, he can explain to everyone there that he will now sign a trade agreement and stand proudly and happily to saddle them with increased drug costs from the moment that we sign on and from the moment that the member votes going forward.

I would like an explanation on how he will explain the increased drug costs to the people of his riding of Oakville.

Mr. John Oliver: Mr. Speaker, I was very careful in my remarks, outlining in great detail the benefits of CETA to multiple business sectors, people, and professionals working in Oakville.

CETA is a good deal. The member can take one small aspect of it, and focus on it. I do not know why the NDP does not get behind and support trade deals. One in five Canadian jobs depend on trade.

We need to work on drug prices in Canada. We also need to make sure that our pharma companies can make reasonable profits and have reasonable protection for the work that they put into research and development.

This is a good trade deal for Canada.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems like the member does indeed understand the importance of trade and the importance of this deal.

I do want to ask him a question, though, on the issue of international trade. I think he acknowledges that we are going into a time internationally where there may be protectionist sentiments out there. It is very important in that environment for Canada to be taking the lead, speaking up strongly about the importance of international trade, and especially about the benefits of our historic trade agreements.

Why, then, did the Prime Minister, right away, after the U.S. election completely throw NAFTA under the bus by saying that we would be prepared to renegotiate it? Why is the government not actually prepared to stand up for our historic trade deals, which are working, and which have served us and all of North America well, in the midst of pursuing this new trade deal as well?

Mr. John Oliver: Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister has been incredibly vocal, and is out there personally meeting with multinational corporations and leaders of other countries to promote trade.

In a period of time when protectionism seems to be growing in certain parts of the world, it is great to see Canada at the leading edge, fighting for free trade, and promoting trade. We all prosper when trade happens.

The government has been open and transparent, unlike the TPP deal that was negotiated by the previous government that was hidden and done behind doors. All of this has been open and transparent. This government continues to promote open and transparent trade dialogue.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*English*]

PENSIONS

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about the over 1,000 former employees of Wabush Mines in Labrador and Quebec who lost 20% to 24% of their hard-earned pension benefits. When Cliffs Natural Resources walked away from its iron ore operations in Wabush, it also walked away from its unfunded pension liabilities owed to workers.

Cliffs Canada, under the CCAA process, is liquidating assets for its creditors and being allowed to pass over workers' pensions, medical benefits, and deferred salaries already earned by workers. These workers spent decades building the company and the town they live in.

Cliffs Canada may have become unprofitable with the low commodity prices in Canada, but its resources in the U.S.A. remain profitable. I find it unacceptable that profits and assets can be shuffled across the border for years before a company can be assessed, yet CCAA can only look back through one year of a company's operations and it provides no mechanism to fully protect the workers.

When people work for a pension and benefits, they deserve to collect them—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

* * *

MIKE LANDUCCI

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour a well-recognized hockey, softball, and community volunteer, neighbour, and friend, Mike Landucci.

Prior to his passing last spring following a short battle with cancer, Mike was a dedicated Fort St. John minor hockey referee, and softball umpire who was highly regarded as the referee committee member for northeastern B.C.—Yukon district. Further, he was instrumental in training the next generation of young referees in the B.C. Peace.

The Fort St. John Flyers hockey club recently honoured his memory at a pre-season North Peace Hockey League game against the Dawson Creek Jr. Canucks. North Peace referees are honouring Mike this year by wearing an ML patch like I am wearing today.

Michael Joseph Landucci is survived by his fiancée Faye; his son Chris; his sister Kathy, and her husband Michael and their children.

As one of our community volunteers, as a neighbour, and as a friend to all he encountered, not to mention for the Christmas eve visits to our house as Santa Claus, Mike will be missed. May he rest in peace.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

CYANOBACTERIA

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, the environment is a priority for our government. Again, the main reason I came back to politics was the quality of the water of the two transboundary lakes between Canada and the U.S. in my riding, Lake Champlain and Lake Memphrémagog.

A month ago, I called a meeting of representatives of Global Affairs Canada's International Joint Commission and of Quebec's ministry for sustainable development, the environment and the fight against climate change, as well as the mayors representing the Lake Champlain area. My goal was to make them aware of the problem of cyanobacteria. The mayors all agree: the quality of the water is deteriorating. This is drinking water for several thousand people.

This needs to be addressed as soon as possible. That is why it is imperative that the mandate of the International Joint Commission, which deals with boundary waters, focus on the cyanobacteria problem, especially as it affects Lake Champlain.

* * *

[English]

PENSIONS

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year many Canadians voted for change. Unfortunately, the change they have so far from the current government is nothing but chump change. How else can we explain the huge mistake the Liberals made in their bill to change the Canada pension plan? How do we explain their refusal to answer a simple question: will they fix their flawed bill?

Ten times I stood in the House last week and asked if the government would fix this flawed bill. Ten times I received non-answers. No one on the government side wants to take responsibility for the Liberals' mistake. More frightening, no one on the government side has stood up to say the Liberals will fix it.

The Liberals' plan would single out women and the disabled for exclusion. We have been calling on the government to recognize the mistake and acknowledge the problem. Seeing nothing from the Liberals, we are proposing to fix the bill ourselves. I hope all members will support my amendment at committee. The supposed feminist Prime Minister is failing Canadian women and disabled people. Shame on him. I ask that he please fix the bill.

* * *

●(1405)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank three individuals who have excelled in their field and have made us all proud.

First, I would like to congratulate Manny Bahia, one of B.C.'s most influential young entrepreneurs who created VancityBuzz and Daily Hive, two sites that have some of the largest Canadian audiences, all while working out of his basement. He now employs dozens of people and earns millions of dollars in revenue.

The second individual is Dr. Kamal Masri of SFU Surrey, who has inspired his business class to raise thousands of dollars for cancer research.

Finally, I want to recognize Charan Pal Singh Gill, a man who has fought for workers' rights. He helped build PICS, a settlement agency that helps immigrants to integrate and to settle and become great Canadians. He also helped build Guru Nanak Niwas, a 77-unit assisted-living facility in Surrey.

Canada is better because of the commitments to research, technology, and charity by these individuals.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the wild rose grows prolifically across my province, its delicate beauty often belying its resiliency to flourish after harsh winters. I cannot think of a better metaphor for the women of Alberta. This year, they are being tested, as they and their families are out of work, many for over a year. They bear the burden of their families' lost incomes and lost pride. They do this while making the hard choices necessary to keep a roof over their heads. In the midst of their own struggles, their shoulders are cried on by those who do not want handouts, but just want to work.

I thank them for their strength and their sacrifice. The women of Alberta watch as the government ignores us, calls the work we do dirty, raises our taxes, and prioritizes everything everywhere else except for us.

If one tries to uproot a wild rose, one ends up with a fist full of thorns. The women of Alberta will not be silent. We demand action, and we demand it now. We will ensure a strong Alberta, and in doing so, a strong Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

MOLDOVA

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Canada-Moldova Parliamentary Friendship Group, I would like to congratulate the Moldovan people for holding the first presidential election by universal suffrage in 20 years, during the 25th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Moldova.

[English]

Like so many fledging democracies, Moldova needs support and encouragement from the more established ones. Canada has a great deal to offer this country that is striving to attain the ambitious goals of good governance, prosperity, and multilateral relationships.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

Moldova's geopolitical context makes it an important Canadian ally in eastern Europe.

Furthermore, Moldova is working hard to join the European Union.

[English]

It goes without saying that the success of one country on the road to reforms and European integration will have a huge impact and mobilizing effect on others.

I would like to congratulate the people of Moldova for the 25th anniversary of their independence.

* * *

HOLODOMOR

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 84 years ago, the horror of the Holodomor, the genocide of Ukraine's rural population, began. Stalin decreed food illegal for Ukrainian farmers. The Kremlin's red brigade scoured the countryside confiscating grain and livestock. Farmers who were caught hiding food, even as little as five stalks of wheat, were shot on site. Ukraine's lush countryside was transformed into a denuded and silent darkness as people ate grasses and anything living. The eerie silence that engulfed villages was only broken by the sound of death wagons transporting starvation-bloated bodies.

Let us also contemplate how was it possible that in the west, with the exception of a few brave journalists and politicians, so many chose to look away? Eighty-four years hence, once again, we confront the darkest of evils, genocide. Collectively, let the House have the moral strength of conviction to give meaning to the solemn pledge of "never again".

Vichna yim pamyat.

* * *

DEFIBRILLATORS

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2013, the present Minister of Public Safety, then in opposition, presented a private member's motion, Motion No. 446, calling for defibrillators to be installed in all 5,600 RCMP cruisers. Then, as now, this would cost only \$10 million.

Statistics from other police forces show that each year one life is saved for every 17 defibrillators installed in police vehicles. Following through on Motion No. 446 a year ago, when the Liberals took office, would have resulted in 5,600 installed defibrillators and 320 saved lives. However, a year has gone by, and even though the very same member who introduced Motion No. 446 is now minister in charge of the RCMP, nothing has happened. In consequence, 320 Canadians who would otherwise be alive today are now dead.

Why has the minister failed to follow through? What does he say to the families of all the Canadians whose lives would have been saved if he had followed through on his own proposal?

● (1410)

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend one of my outstanding constituents from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Planet Paws business owner and internationally known pet nutrition blogger, Rodney Habib. Rodney's life changed forever after his own dog was harmed during the melamine-tainted pet food crisis. At that moment, he devoted his entire life to changing the way we feed our pets.

Rodney continues to give back to our community through improvements at Shubie Park in Dartmouth and by donating a percentage of his business' sales to local schools. Now Rodney has reached a huge milestone. He has reached over 1.3 million likes on Facebook, making him one the largest brand followings on Facebook in Canada. His work on pet nutrition is known and respected worldwide.

They say that a dog is a human's best friend, but I would say that for dogs, Rodney is their best friend. On behalf of pet owners everywhere, and my dog Toby, I congratulate and wish Rodney Habib continued success.

* * *

BOMBARDIER PLANT

Mr. Don Rusnak (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past week I turned to the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay, a site that has a rich place in Canadian history.

Founded by the Canadian Car and Foundry Company in 1912, this facility was first made to produce railway box cars. During World War II, the plant began construction of the famous Hawker Hurricane fighter for the Royal Canadian Air Force, led by chief engineer Elsie MacGill, the first woman in Canada to earn a degree in aeronautical engineering.

Since Bombardier acquired the plant in 1992, the facility has been responsible for delivering a number of notable rail car designs distributed across North America, including the Toronto Rocket subway cars for the TTC, and the bi-level cars for GO Transit. These cars carry thousands of Canadians daily, but the site is only as good as its workforce. Production was undertaken by hard-working and skilled men and women to produce a top-quality product.

I am extremely proud to have this facility in my riding of Thunder Bay—Rainy River and it continues to serve as the hub of innovation and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

*Statements by Members***OTTAWA REDBLACKS**

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a bit of snow could not stop the Ottawa Redblacks from emerging yesterday as the CFL's eastern division champions.

The Redblacks came ready to play in front of more than 24,000 loyal fans. When the snow came, in typical Canadian fashion, it was shovelled away, and when the shovels scraped away the lines, again in typical Canadian fashion, they repainted them by hand.

Finishing 35 to 23, thanks to the leadership of quarterback Henry Burris, and the great coaching and support staff, the Redblacks are off to play the Calgary Stampeders at the Grey Cup next Sunday.

Next year when Ottawa hosts the Grey Cup, I am confident it will do so as reigning champions.

Go Redblacks.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 20, to mark Universal Children's Day, I met with students from Alfred-Pellan as part of the UNICEF Canada initiative "Bring Your MP to School Day".

During this event, I talked with young people about issues that are important to them. By listening to them, Parliament will be more inclusive and we will develop more effective policies to help guarantee respect for their rights.

Yesterday, I joined Maison de la famille de St-François at the rally in support of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to collectively express the importance of supporting universal children's rights.

[*English*]

Our government has taken historic measures to fight against child poverty. We must continue to do everything we can so that all children have the same opportunities to succeed in life.

* * *

VETERANS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the month of November, Canadians remember our men and women in uniform who have stood on guard for all Canadians. Today, I want to pay special tribute to one of those men, Fred Gendron, a constituent of mine in Powell River.

Fred served our country as a soldier from 1942 until 1946. He fought in France and Germany, and he was part of the liberation force in Holland, for which he was awarded a medal. Fred stayed on after the war ended to serve Canada as a member of the occupation force in Germany.

For the past 12 years, Fred has laid the wreath for his member of Parliament at Remembrance Day ceremonies. This year, Fred was too ill, and his wife Shirley and I laid the wreath in recognition of the man she loves so much.

I am so grateful for the courage, dignity, and service that Fred has offered to our country, as so many others have done and continue to do.

I know that the House will join me in offering our gratitude to a remarkably humble Fred Gendron, my constituent and friend in Powell River.

* * *

● (1415)

2016 GREY CUP

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, the 104th Grey Cup game will be played in Toronto.

Canadian football remains a distinct game, a unique part of our Canadian heritage. Our game is played on a bigger field with a shorter play clock, only three downs and, of course, in Canadian football, we have bigger balls.

Canadians can be proud knowing that our game is an exciting, high-scoring, and fast-paced game, a game worthy of the annual celebration that is the Grey Cup. It is a game that will be watched by millions of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

This year also promises the continuation of a tradition begun in 1948 of bringing western-style hospitality to Toronto. So watch out for road apples in front of the Royal York Hotel.

We expect a great game, and although I enjoy my time here in Ottawa, let there be no doubt where my allegiance will be as Calgary goes for its eighth Grey Cup.

On behalf of my constituents and all Stampeders fans, Go Stamps Go.

* * *

WILFRID LAURIER

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 175 years ago yesterday in what is now Saint-Lin—Laurentides, Quebec, Henri Charles Wilfrid Laurier was born and Canadian history was inexorably changed as a result.

I rise today to join all Canadians in celebrating a Canadian icon and statesman. Sir Laurier willed into being the open, tolerant, and diverse Canada we know and cherish today.

Since being elected to federal office 142 years ago and 120 years since being named prime minister, Sir Laurier's sunny ways continue to resonate in these halls, albeit sporadically, but fortunately considerably more often across our land. Considered by many Canada's greatest prime minister, Laurier is, on a personal level, my favourite prime minister, with one obvious exception.

His ringing pronouncement "Canada is free and freedom is its nationality" remains as true today as when Laurier first pronounced it.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals were not even playing in the snow like the players in yesterday's football game in Ottawa, but they still managed to drop the ball on the free trade agreement with Europe, not to mention the fact that they have not signed any free trade agreements with our partners in the past year.

Since the Prime Minister is proving to be an inept negotiator, how can Canadians trust him to negotiate good treaties and create jobs here in Canada?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CETA is clearly in Canada's national interest, and it is time that all members of this House stopped playing partisan politics and rallied around this agreement. We supported CETA when we were in opposition, and I would have expected the Conservatives to do the same now that they are in that position.

CETA is a progressive agreement that is very important for the middle class, and we are proud to enter into it.

[English]

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a very good answer but for the wrong question.

The Liberals almost dropped the ball on CETA, which was initiated under our government. Then the Liberals have lost a year without signing any important trade agreements with anyone.

Since the Prime Minister reveals himself as an inefficient negotiator, how can Canadians have confidence in him negotiating good treaties and creating jobs in Canada?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a bit confused as to how the member opposite can claim that our government has failed to sign trade agreements. The most significant trade agreement signed by a government of Canada since the signing of NAFTA is CETA. I would like to remind the member opposite that agreement was signed by our Prime Minister. That signature was only made possible by the hard work of our government.

* * *

● (1420)

*[Translation]***SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all remember Mr. Barroso's visit. I will not get into that again, but I would like to come back to the softwood lumber deal.

It seems we are headed for a legal dispute with our American partners, which raises many questions and concerns since 75% of Canadian products are exported to the United States.

What do this government and this minister plan to do to secure a softwood lumber deal that will protect the 300,000 jobs here in Canada?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. member would bring up Mr. Barroso's visit because it cost Canadians a lot of money and was held before the agreement was signed. The Conservatives were celebrating before an agreement was even signed. That is not what our government is doing. We believe in hard work, and that is why we signed the agreement.

* * *

*[English]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals signed the deal into the next stage, but it was already done when we left in 2014.

This has been a lost year for Canada with regard to trade opportunities. Last spring I called on the Liberal government to be ready to forge ahead with the progressive TPP signatories in the event the Americans got cold feet, which they have. Reports coming out of the APEC summit in Lima, Peru indicate that six countries, Mexico, Japan, Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore, have committed to pursuing the TPP trade agreement with or without the United States.

Why are our Prime Minister and our Minister of International Trade MIA, allowing Canada to be left out of this important deal?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite began with CETA, that is where I will start.

It is very important to point out that the finalization of the legal scrub of CETA was delayed for almost two years because of the failure of the previous government to make the progressive changes that were necessary. We understood what needed to be done, and we got this historic deal done.

When it comes to the TPP, we committed to consulting with Canadians, and that is what we are proud to be doing.

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the two years was budgeted early on for the legal scrub and the translation that would be required. The minister finds herself in the unenviable position of being on the podium but not even playing in the game.

For the last year, the Liberals continued indecision on the TPP has put Canada at a further disadvantage. The Prime Minister has sidelined Canada's economic interests and future prosperity, while six countries forge ahead with a TPP agreement. Why will the government not work with these progressive countries to implement this specific trade agreement and get it done?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really saddened by the need to point out that the hon. member is as ill-informed about the TPP as he is about CETA. The reality is that CETA was stalled until we formed government and until we made the necessary changes.

Oral Questions

As for the TPP, as the hon. member ought to know, and he could consult with one of his colleagues who is well informed about this agreement, that agreement was signed last year. There is a two-year period for all the TPP countries to consult on it. That is what—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Essex.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are trying to push through legislation to implement CETA, while ignoring the outstanding concerns of Canadians with this deal.

When the Liberals were in opposition, they agreed with the New Democrats that more consultations and analysis were needed on CETA. However, the minister has ignored calls for the removal of investor-state rules, refused to address rising costs of prescription drugs, and neglected to consult Canadians.

Trade with Europe is too important to get wrong. Why is the minister pushing through this flawed agreement instead of taking the time to get it right?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as usual, we are in a position where the Conservatives claim we are doing one thing wrong and the NDP claims we are doing exactly the same thing wrong. That is where we like to be, because it shows we are working hard for Canadians.

When it comes to CETA, I am extremely happy to be working energetically to get this progressive trade deal done. This is a deal supported by all the provinces, including Quebec. It is supported by all the socialist parties of Europe.

Are there any trade deals the NDP can support?

• (1425)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Liberals are full of hypocrisy, and around CETA, it is astonishing.

In the 2014 committee report of the Liberals, even they called on the previous government to assess the impact of CETA's IP protections on the cost of prescription drugs in Canada. Canadians already pay some of the highest costs for prescription drugs. Under CETA, they could rise by \$850 million every year.

Now that the Liberals are in government, they are in complete denial about this reality. When will the government be honest with Canadians about the impact of CETA on prescription drug costs?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to CETA, we are being absolutely transparent and absolutely consistent with the positions we took in opposition.

In opposition, I was our party's trade critic. I was proud then to support this progressive deal. We have made this deal even better. What astonishes me is that the NDP, which was able to support a trade agreement with South Korea, finds itself in 2016 unable to support the world's most progressive trade agreement.

We are living in a time of—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

[*Translation*]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government says it listened to what dairy producers had to say about a compensation plan in relation to the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

Since the announcement, however, dairy producers everywhere have expressed dissatisfaction. Last week, Quebec dairy producers asked the Liberals to increase the amount for producers by \$750 million, and they want the program to last 15 years, not five.

Will the government keep pretending to listen to producers, or will it come clean?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question and concern, but I think she is fully aware this government supports dairy farmers and supply management.

CETA is certainly an important deal for farmers, and it would provide additional export opportunities, up to \$1.5 billion. My hon. colleague is well aware that we announced \$350 million: \$250 million for the dairy farmers to innovate, \$100 million to make sure that our processors are in a position to work when CETA comes into play.

Through this, the government has done more for supply management than has been done over the last 10 years.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is peanuts.

I do not understand how the government can be proud of a transition plan that provides \$250 million over five years when our dairy producers are set to lose about \$150 million per year.

As the chairman of the Producteurs de lait du Québec said, the Liberal plan amounts to about \$5,000 per farm, and to get the money, producers have to invest money of their own. Five thousand dollars is barely enough to power a robot.

Will the government stop pretending to listen to dairy producers and—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is well aware that we have sat down with dairy producers and processors for the last number of months. This is a program that came in place—

Oral Questions

Hon. Ed Fast: They are not happy.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Ontario dairy farmers are quite pleased, Mr. Speaker.

We will make sure that dairy farmers and supply management and our processors in this sector will be able to deal with CETA when it comes into play and that they will be competitive for many years to come.

That is why this government sat down with the dairy farmers and put a program in place that will innovate the dairy—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the election of a new American president could lead to higher interest rates.

The chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, Janet Yellen, is saying that the rate hike could come as early as December. This is very bad news for Canadian taxpayers, because it is already costing them and our current annual budget \$24.9 billion in interest alone.

Meanwhile, what is the Minister of Finance doing? He continues to spend as though nothing were wrong and is running up colossal deficits.

For the 10th time, I want to ask the government the following: when will it return—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

• (1430)

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent.

The Government of Canada is doing exactly what Canadians know is best when interest rates are low: it is investing. Canadians understand that.

In budget 2016, we invested in families, in the Canadian economy, in our young people, and in our seniors. We reaffirmed our plan in the 2016 fall economic statement. What is most unfortunate is that the members across the aisle have voted against Canada's middle class at every turn.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was not for lack of trying. We have tried to get an answer 10 times now, but they keep refusing to tell us when there will be a return to balanced budgets.

In the meantime, there is no plan for economic growth either. The Prime Minister recently had the opportunity to meet with key economic decision-makers, but he did not talk about the softwood lumber agreement, Keystone XL, or the TPP.

Such is this government's record: no plan for economic growth and no plan to return to balanced budgets.

Is there anyone at the controls in this government?

[English]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has a very clear plan when it comes to economic growth. We have been clear that we are going to use fiscal policy to stimulate growth and invest in the economy. That is why we have made historic investments in infrastructure, \$180 billion, which will create jobs across the country and position our companies to be more productive, more competitive, and more export oriented.

We have a plan that is investing in middle-class Canadians by providing tax relief to them. The party opposite has not supported our efforts to help the middle class and help grow the economy, and that is very unfortunate.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives delivered a balanced budget, completed over 7,200 infrastructure projects, created over 1.2 million jobs, and set up P3 Canada to leverage private sector dollars, which delivered over \$6.6 billion in additional infrastructure. The Liberals gave us a \$30-billion deficit, zero new full-time jobs, and they are taking \$15 billion away from communities for their bank.

With this record, how can they call Canadians stupid and irresponsible for questioning their methods?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government, along with industry, has created an environment which has created 139,600 jobs since we took office.

To illustrate that point, we have invested in small business as well, for example, in new equipment to improve processes for G-Pak Technology Inc., in British Columbia, the same province that the member represents. That created 65 jobs in South Surrey—White Rock, a Conservative-held riding.

We are making investments regardless of which riding it is, to make sure we have growth and opportunities for our small and large businesses. We are creating jobs.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Zero net new jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Over 99% of announced infrastructure projects by the Liberals are not yet under construction, and zero new full-time jobs have been created since they took office. Announcing projects in a community does not equal breaking ground, starting construction, or job creation. Getting infrastructure projects built is what creates jobs.

Does the minister understand that simply announcing and reannouncing infrastructure projects in communities does not create jobs?

Oral Questions

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government's priority is to create jobs and create growth. That is why, since taking office, we have approved 980 projects, with a combined value of \$12 billion from coast to coast to coast. That is including a project that is currently under way, along with 70% of the other projects, in Surrey, British Columbia, the member's own riding, which she represented as the mayor of the city, asking for the same projects to be funded by the federal government that we are funding now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all we know about this new infrastructure bank is that the Liberals are considering selling and privatizing Canadian assets. They want to increase fees and tariffs and take \$15 billion that was allocated to the municipalities only to spend it on this infrastructure bank, which will not be available to small or mid-size municipalities.

I have a very simple question for the Minister of Infrastructure: can he name one municipality with a population under 50,000 that might be able to use this bank?

[*English*]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand we need to invest in Canadian communities of all sizes, large urban centres, small communities, and mid-size communities. It was our government that made an historic \$2 billion commitment to invest in smaller communities, which we made as part of the fall economic update. Only \$15 billion out of \$180 billion is being allocated to build new projects, transformed projects, in all kinds of communities from coast to coast to coast.

• (1435)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is unable to answer such a simple question because it is just not going to happen. There is no municipality with a population of less than 50,000 that will have projects worth more than \$100 million.

We now know that the investors the government met with are looking for a minimum return on their investment of 7% to 9%. How do the Liberal government and the party's cronies plan to accomplish that? There will need to be higher fees at Canadian ports and airports and more tolls on the highways.

What I am seeing is endless Liberal taxes. After a year, they have created no jobs and Canadian taxpayers have to pay more taxes.

Does the government realize that the only thing it has managed to create in a year is more taxes?

[*English*]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while we are focused on creating jobs for the middle class and growing the economy for hard-working Canadians, what are the opposition members focused on? They are focused on opposing taxes for the wealthiest 1% of Canadians. They are focused on opposing increased enhancements to CPP. They are opposing tax breaks for the middle class. As I said earlier, out of \$180 billion for infrastructure, the vast majority of the money will be

delivered to municipalities of all sizes, the way we have done in the past, creating jobs—

The Speaker: The member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, we learned that the Liberals have hired a corporation that is in the business of buying infrastructure to study the benefits of privatizing our infrastructure. I wonder what it will discover. This, after a report from private sector recommending an infrastructure bank to create tolls and user fees to pay off the private sector. What is next? Stacking an NEB panel with oil industry insiders? Oh, wait, that has been done. The government was elected to invest in infrastructure. Why is it so determined to sell it off?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be interested in knowing about the plan by the member and her party to grow the economy and invest in infrastructure. We are making historic investments, \$180 billion over 12 years, that will help grow the economy, create jobs for the middle class, as well as help municipalities and communities, of all sizes, to be more socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. That is the commitment we made to Canadians, and that is the commitment we are delivering on.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the commitment that was made to Canadians was to actually have access to invest in infrastructure and not to privatize it.

[*Translation*]

As Michael Sabia, a government adviser, has previously said, investors in this infrastructure bank will want to see a 7% to 9% return. Based on current interest rates, we are talking about spending four times more than if the government made those investments itself.

This infrastructure bank is like a PPP project or structure on steroids. Ontario's auditor general recently concluded that PPP infrastructure projects had cost almost \$1 billion more than if Ontario had gone ahead with the investments itself.

Does he understand that the definition of madness is to—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

[*English*]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were elected on a platform to invest in historic planned infrastructure, including the creation of the infrastructure bank. The role of the bank is to build more infrastructure, not less infrastructure.

\$180 billion of historic investment, and leveraging with the private sector, will help Canadian municipalities to build the public transit they need, to build the recreational facilities they need, help us grow our economy, and create jobs for the middle class and those who are working so hard to join that middle class.

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's edict to close the Vegreville immigration centre and move it to a Liberal-held city centre riding is just the start. Jobs and families are at risk. We are moving 280 jobs from Vegreville. It is comparable to cutting 55,000 jobs from Edmonton.

The Liberal plan failed to create one single new full-time job in all of Canada in the past year, and now the Liberals are charging ahead to cut 280 from a small rural town.

When will the Liberal reverse this edict and save rural jobs?

• (1440)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I definitely understand that this is an issue, which is why my staff have spoken to the mayor of Vegreville and I have offered to meet with the member to discuss these issues. However, the fact of the matter is that our fundamental responsibility is to improve levels of service and reduce processing time in immigration and, as a consequence, there will be a net increase in jobs in Alberta.

All those currently working in Vegreville will have an opportunity to remain employed.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is even bigger than 280 jobs, as 250 spousal jobs will be impacted. Small businesses will shut their doors. Struggling farm families will lose the only stable income they have. Schools will lose one-quarter of their students, and then teachers.

The Liberal's so-called business case does not include a cost study or an economic impact assessment, so how can the minister claim anything about job gains when he has actually no idea about the full scope of devastation he is causing?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is talking about jobs in Alberta, so I want to take this opportunity, again, to highlight what our government is doing to create jobs across Alberta and all the regions. I am honoured to work—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. Members have strong feelings on many subjects that come before us, but we still have to listen to the question and the answer.

The hon. minister of economic development has the floor.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of Immigration has eloquently responded to her question. I want to take this opportunity to talk about what we are doing to create jobs in Alberta.

For example, we invest in commercialization and new technology to improve efficiency in Oral4D Systems, a company in Alberta that will create 12 jobs. Again, these are small businesses that will benefit from those investments. There is development of a new product line for use in the airline industry, Dakota Supplies, in Alberta, for example, that will create nine jobs. That—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as Christmas approaches, the Canada Revenue Agency has decided to play the grinch with its employees.

Using typical Liberal math, an announced expansion of 70 jobs at the tax processing centre in Summerside, P.E.I., means 182 people are being told they must move to another community or face losing their jobs.

This Liberal attack on another rural area will cause unnecessary pain to all of the affected families. Why is the minister playing with people's lives and livelihoods?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has stopped reducing staff at regional tax centres.

We have reorganized our operations to ensure that we provide outstanding service and well-paid jobs for the middle class. Canadians are using online services in ever greater numbers, and we understand that the Canada Revenue Agency must modernize how it meets their needs.

Our government is committed to ensuring that Canadians across the country have access to the best possible services when they contact the Canada Revenue Agency.

[*English*]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough. That is an attack on the middle class.

The Liberal plan to devastate rural communities is getting worse. These are real jobs in jeopardy because the Liberals are taking Atlantic Canada for granted.

Rural communities need jobs like this to survive. When will the Liberals stop their attack on rural areas and allow people to continue to work in their home communities?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today's announcement confirms that the Canada Revenue Agency will hire more staff in addition to ensuring a strong regional presence across Canada. We will continue to work with unions and local stakeholders and assist them through this transition.

Canadians expect the agency to make informed decisions and good investments in order to provide world-class services.

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, Parliament ordered the government to stop fighting first nations children in court and to comply with the Human Rights Tribunal. Two days later, the government was back in court fighting against medical treatment for a first nations child, and tomorrow, Cindy Blackstock will be back in court because of its stonewalling.

When it comes to broken promises to first nations people, government talk is really cheap, but its lawyers are expensive. We found out that since the ruling in January, the current government has spent over half a million dollars fighting Cindy Blackstock with lawyers, even though she won.

A simple question: How can the Liberals justify that?

• (1445)

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government welcomes the tribunal's ruling and we have been taking concrete steps to address this order. In fact, we have committed more than \$635 million to address the child funding welfare gap in this country. We provided services to more than 900 kids since July with an additional \$382 million in investments under Jordan's Principle, and explained and expanded the definition.

This government prefers reconciliation with indigenous people, and we know—

The Speaker: The member for Port Moody—Coquitlam

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, then why is the government fighting them in court?

A humpback whale was found dead, entangled in an empty net at a salmon farm near Campbell River. This is the second time a whale has been entangled in this fish farm in three months. The last time, a juvenile humpback was trapped and needed to be rescued at this same site.

Open-net salmon farms are clearly a risk to marine mammals. Will the government eliminate this problem by supporting my bill to transition this industry to safe closed containment and protect marine mammals?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we obviously share our colleague's concern with respect to the protection of marine mammals.

The circumstances around these humpback whale mishaps are obviously of huge concern to the government. This is why, two weeks ago, the Prime Minister, in a historic investment of \$1.5 billion for ocean protections, put in place a series of measures that will not only ensure better protection of marine mammals but also make the scientific and operational investments to ensure that this kind of horrible incident does not happen again.

Oral Questions

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, infrastructure investments we make today have potential to lock in future greenhouse gas emissions, in many cases, for years. This is why I brought my private member's Motion No. 45 to this House. It is because we know we must reduce infrastructure-related GHGs now in order to combat climate change over the long term.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities update this House on what the government is doing to reduce the GHG footprint of Canada's infrastructure today and in the future?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Halifax for his strong advocacy on environmental sustainability.

We are delivering on a historic commitment to grow the economy, increase productivity, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and build socially inclusive communities.

Once in place, Motion No. 45 would be part of an existing approval process for infrastructure projects.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first nations people across Canada, in fact, all Canadians, deserve financial transparency from their communities. The lack of action from the current government and the empty words from the Minister of Indigenous Affairs are completely unacceptable.

The minister seems keen to making it almost impossible for first nations people to have access to the financial audits for their community. The minister is not enforcing the First Nations Financial Transparency Act.

Why is the minister endorsing and allowing first nations leadership to break the law?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite obvious that on this side of the House we do not believe in a process that is top down. We believe in working with first nations and all indigenous people across the country.

We see transparency, openness, and accountability as one of the hallmarks of doing that, but we are not going to implement something the Conservatives tried to shove down the throats of indigenous people. We are going to work with them to develop a transparency process that works for all indigenous people.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the First Nations Financial Transparency Act was put in place because grassroots first nations, like the Blood Tribe, requested increased transparency from their elected leaders.

Some first nations bands continue to file their transparency act disclosures despite refusal by the Liberals to enforce the law, because they, too, recognize its benefit to their members.

Oral Questions

This minister is harming first nations people by restricting easy access to financial information. When will she start enforcing the law?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government and first nations governments want more transparency. They want it increased, and they want more accountability. However, they do not want made-in-Ottawa solutions that are going to be forced upon them.

What I would say to the member opposite is that we are not prepared to enforce the top-down, regulatory process that they had in place, but rather we will work with first nations to ensure full transparency and full accountability for the work they do. We will not penalize them in the meantime.

• (1450)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the epitome of top-down is the process that the Liberals have undertaken.

We are talking about grassroots band members who are facing critical information, and the positive path forward is transparency as they look at how they move ahead. The reality is band members from Semiahmoo asked for financial information hundreds of times over 18 years.

When the transparency act finally revealed that things were not as comfortable as they should have been, the council did not like it. They have stopped filing, and now that information is no longer available.

How does the minister justify that this information is not available to the membership?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to be clear. The member knows that that is wrong. All first nations governments and individuals have access to information. There is a process they have to go through.

However, what the minister decided last winter is that she would not use her discretionary power to unfairly punish the members of first nations by withholding important program funding from them, something the Conservatives wanted to do.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the First Nations Financial Transparency Act also provides insight into successful band management practices.

I think there is a great example that was reported in The province, where the Osoyoos first nations is one of the most business-minded in Canada. There is virtually no unemployment. The chief's salary has been frozen for two years and is at a reasonable level.

Thanks to the transparency act, other bands and other people can look at the financial statements, see how they are structured and perhaps look at some of the best practices.

Does the minister not realize that shared information is a benefit to one and all?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have

said before, there is a process whereby all members can access the information and transparency around our budgets.

After any allegation of misuse of public funds, we take that very seriously as a government. We have also conducted forensic audits when we felt that it was necessary to do so. We ensure that the funds that are allocated are used for what they are intended.

We will continue to work with first nations to implement a process that is fair, accountable, and transparent, that they are a part of, and is not something that was dictated by the former government.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government promised gender parity for its senior appointments, and that means fifty-fifty. However, only a quarter of federal crown corporation and agency directors are women. One in four is not gender parity. It is not even close.

According to the Canadian Board Diversity Council, the government's approach is insufficient, and "quotas may be necessary to bring about the desired change".

Will the government support my bill to ensure equal representation? It is a simple question, yes or no.

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that when women are involved in every aspect of our democratic society, Canada does better as a whole.

That is why we are so focused on ensuring that women have the same opportunities for economic success, for leadership, and to contribute to our country. I look forward to continuing this work with all members of the House.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, although the Minister of Canadian Heritage is free to make major changes to the rules governing our distinct culture, she has the responsibility to be open and transparent about what she is calling her "public consultations".

In the interest of transparency, when will the minister make public the briefs submitted as part of these consultations? One thing is certain; they contain important information.

Can our ecosystem count on the minister to do what everyone thinks is the right thing and ask foreign companies such as Google, Facebook, and Netflix to pay their fair share?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his important question.

I would like to remind him that we are indeed holding an open and transparent consultation process and that we are going to make public the briefs submitted by the various stakeholders. I thank the member. I know that he specifically asked me to make this information public. Of course, I agree with him. This is a good example of co-operation.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government will be foolishly putting billions of taxpayer money at risk when it announces very soon it will be sole-sourcing Super Hornet fighter jets.

Respected Professor Elinor Sloan stated:

The...government's plan to sole-source...Super Hornet fighter jets is wrong. The Super Hornet may—or may not—be the right aircraft for Canada, but we won't know [that] until there is a full competition for the contract.

Why will the Liberals not hold an open, fair, and transparent competition that ensures that we get the best value for the Canadian taxpayer, the best jobs for Canadians, and the best aircraft for the Royal Canadian Air Force?

• (1455)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find that quite ironic, considering the previous government was into sole-sourcing the F-35. It should have looked at this problem a long time ago. It should have replaced our aging fleet.

Over the summer we have done a considerable amount of work with my colleagues in the various departments. The officials have done a lot of work. We are getting all of the necessary information and we will make a decision on replacing the fighters and will pick a process that will meet the needs of Canada.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we need to do a reality check here.

While the Prime Minister and the defence minister claim that there is a CF-18 capability gap, the fact is that the Liberals have a credibility gap on this issue. Just last week when asked about the supposed capability gap in committee, the chief of the defence staff said, "That is a false deduction."

The Prime Minister's Office has manipulated the Liberal cabinet to force a sole-source contract. The only solution to fix this mess by the Prime Minister is to do the right thing. Will the Liberals hold a fair and open competition to get the best fighter jets for the brave men and women in uniform?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a capability gap with our fighter jets. There is also a capability gap with our navy. If the Conservatives had looked at and focused on the military, we would actually have joint supply ships right now and not have to look at fixing things in the interim. Therefore, we are focused on replacing our fighter jets. We will be making a decision on the process going forward because we are committed to replacing our fighter jets.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the veterans affairs committee has heard personal testimony from

veterans about the impact of the anti-malarial drug mefloquine. Many of our veterans have testified about suffering long-lasting and life-altering side effects after using this drug. In fact, after hearing these stories, the veterans affairs committee has unanimously agreed that action is needed. Why is the defence minister continuing to support the use of mefloquine, despite the mounting evidence of its harmful consequences?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, when our troops deploy into areas where there is malaria we need to make sure that they are fully covered. We are looking at all aspects of this issue. The chief of the defence staff has asked the surgeon general to look at this. We will make sure that we make all of the right decisions so that our troops are well looked after on operations.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, supply managed sectors are vitally important for the Canadian economy, contributing over \$34 billion in overall economic benefits.

[Translation]

Supply management guarantees a fair income for producers and their families, stability for processors, and high-quality products for consumers.

Can the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell us how the government supports our supply-managed industries?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for his concern. Our government fully supports the supply management sector. We will be meeting with the industry over potential changes to duty relief to improve the predictability of these imports, and we are looking at options on certification for spent fowl. We will continue to work with industry to ensure supply management is strong and competitive for many generations.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, south-eastern Alberta and Saskatchewan ranch families are languishing from a single case of bovine tuberculosis. These families are in the dark and are extremely stressed about their financial situation. The herds have been quarantined by the CFIA, they have been stopped from selling their calves, and they have lost their one payday a year. Testing herds is taking months. Help is needed now. Will the Liberals implement an emergency relief program for the ranchers whose herds have been quarantined by the CFIA?

Oral Questions

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question and concern. Our government is committed to protecting human and animal health, and has launched a full disease investigation into this case.

We understand the difficulties some ranchers may be facing as a result of bovine TB. That is why we are ensuring that CFIA does its job as quickly as possible in conducting its investigations. We also need to ensure the industry is cleared of all this disease.

* * *

• (1500)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, the Liberal Party promised to respect the federal public service, but the government held no consultations and was not at all transparent about its decision to restructure the Shawinigan tax centre. Many employees, some of them still coping with the Phoenix fiasco, are worried about keeping their jobs. That is a strange kind of respect.

Can the minister provide some reassurance to those workers now by telling them that all of their jobs will be protected?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the aisle is well aware that there have been meetings with the members concerned. I would suggest that he talk to his colleague, the member for Jonquière, who congratulated us on what we did.

* * *

[English]

PENSIONS

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, residents of my riding of Scarborough Centre are working harder than ever, but many are worried that they will not have put away enough money for their retirement. Fewer Canadians have work-place pensions to rely on and one in four families approaching retirement, 1.1 million families, are at risk of not saving enough.

Could the minister please inform the House what our government is doing to help ensure Canadians can retire in dignity.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her advocacy on behalf of seniors. Our government is engaged in helping hard-working Canadians achieve a safe and dignified retirement. Earlier this year, we reached a historic agreement with nine provinces to make important improvements to the Canadian pension plan.

[Translation]

Once fully implemented, this measure will boost Canadians' pensions from a quarter to a third of their income. It will also reduce the proportion of financially vulnerable seniors from 24% to 18%.

[English]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, dozens of Alberta ranchers have been ordered not to sell their cattle that are under CFIA quarantine. These ranchers do not have the facilities, the feed, or the financial resources to feed their cattle over the winter. They are being forced to pay thousands of dollars to feed cattle that normally would have been sold by now so they could meet their bills.

Will the Liberal government commit to an emergency relief program to help pay the feed costs for the herds that have been quarantined by the CFIA?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CFIA will bring in additional staff to ensure the testing is done as quickly as possible. CFIA will pay compensation for any animals with bovine TB when they are destroyed. We are also discussing options for financial assistance for producers.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: None is left.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: The member will have to listen, if he wants, Mr. Speaker.

We are discussing options for financial assistance for producers whose animals are quarantined but will not be destroyed because they test negative for bovine TB.

* * *

[Translation]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to Quebec's very federalist, very Liberal premier, funding from the so-called plan to help cheese producers will be distributed equally to all 10 provinces.

Not only is \$100 million over four years not nearly enough, but Quebec would receive less than a quarter of that money even though 60% of all fine cheeses are made in Quebec.

Will the minister enhance his plan so that it really meet the needs of cheese producers, and will he solemnly commit to an equitable approach so that Quebec producers—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague is fully aware, we sat down and consulted with the dairy industry and the processors. The package that was put in place was put in place because of these discussions. We will be putting in \$250 million to ensure the dairy sector is innovative and ready for CETA. We will be putting in \$100 million to ensure our processing sector is ready, and I am sure it will be ready.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with regard to cheese producers, to call the minister's offer an assistance plan is clearly insulting. That plan is woefully inadequate. What it comes down to is that Ottawa does not give a damn about Quebec's fine cheeses, which are not even identified in this bad plan. Large cheddar producers, for instance, are just as eligible as artisanal producers.

Some 17,700 tonnes of cheese is about to arrive in our grocery stores, and Ottawa is doing virtually nothing about it.

Will the minister improve his assistance plan to meet the needs of cheese producers, or is he going to recite the same old government bullshit?

● (1505)

The Speaker: I ask the member to withdraw that word.

We will not hear from that member for a period of time.

Let us move on to the hon. member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel.

* * *

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government seems to have become the banks' lapdog.

Bill C-29 makes it possible for banks to circumvent Quebec's consumer protection laws and the business practices they govern. This will set Quebec consumers back 45 years. The banks will be able to charge whatever they want with the blessing of this government, the same one that voted in favour of allowing banks to use tax havens.

My question is for the 40 Liberal members from Quebec: who are they working for, the people or big banks?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question answers itself.

The 40 members on this side of the House are working on behalf of Canadian consumers. That is clear. The member is perhaps the only one who does not understand that.

What I can say is that we will continue to work on behalf of Canadian consumers. From the beginning, we have been looking at all of this country's tax laws and banking laws, and we will always do what is best for Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, in answering my question, the minister talked about the jobs in Canada. Just to be sure that all Canadians have the right numbers, I would like to table a document, "Labour Market Assessment 2016," produced by the office of the parliamentary budget officer—

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table the document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Did you note the fact that the member for Mirabel withdrew his remarks?

The Speaker: No. When I asked him to withdraw his remarks, he did not rise and he turned his head. If he would now like to withdraw them, I will give him the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, now that everyone knows what I am thinking, I withdraw my remarks.

The Speaker: That is not the ideal way to withdraw one's remarks.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1510)

[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table, in both official languages, a charter statement on Bill C-32, an act related to the repeal of section 159 of the Criminal Code.

* * *

DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the President of the Treasury Board, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, on behalf of 83 departments and agencies, the departmental performance reports for 2015-16.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 23 of the Public Service Employment Act I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the Public Service Commission 2015-16 Annual Report.

* * *

PETITIONS

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONFEDERATION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, historical societies across Canada are concerned about the Liberal government's war on history. They call on the government to include Confederation as a theme for the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017.

Routine Proceedings

Today, I am presenting a petition from members of the London and Middlesex Historical Society founded in 1901, over 100 years old. London is home to Sir John A. Macdonald Public School named after the man who gave us Confederation and at the time of Confederation was represented by Sir John Carling in Parliament. He was an important person in facilitating the negotiations for Confederation, including that temporary unique partnership between George Brown and John A. Macdonald. As a result of his work, while he was not deemed a father of Confederation, he is often described an uncle of Confederation.

The petitioners are following in his footsteps and call on the government to reverse the decision not to have Confederation as a theme of the 150th anniversary of Confederation, but to pay respect to Canada's history and make Confederation a theme of the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

WILD SALMON

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House and table another petition in support of my bill to help save wild salmon.

The petitioners, mostly from Chilliwack, British Columbia, know that west coast wild salmon are under threat from sea lice, pollution, and diseases originating from open net cage farms. They call on the government to support my bill so Canada can become a world leader in closed containment technology.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition from thousands of residents in southern Alberta who are very concerned about the Liberal government changing a fundamental part of our democracy with electoral reform without having a referendum.

The petitioners ask that any changes to our electoral system are done so through a referendum so each and every Canadian has a voice in what that will look like.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition from the Waterloo-Wellington, Ontario, branch of the Ethiopian-Canadian Community Coalition for Social Justice and Human Rights in Ethiopia.

The petition contains hundreds of signatures from Waterloo and Wellington and draws the attention of the House to deaths, violence, and serious violations of human rights in the recent unrest in Ethiopia.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, thousands of people opposed to the Kinder Morgan pipeline marched in Vancouver, and I had the honour of speaking at a rally held at the end of the march.

I am here to present a petition today signed by dozens and dozens of British Columbians who are opposed to the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion. The petitioners are calling on the government to reject this pipeline.

I urge the government to pay careful attention to this petition before it makes its decision on this pipeline before December 19.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present petitions signed by Canadians from across the country.

The petitioners are concerned about the accessibility and impact of violent and degrading sexually explicit material online and the impact on public health, especially on the well-being of women and girls.

As such, the petitioners are calling upon the House to adopt Motion M-47.

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise in the House to present a petition started by a citizen of Saint-Cuthbert. A total of 518 people have signed this petition, which calls on the Minister of Transport to impose a moratorium on the construction or the expansion of an aerodrome in their community.

They are also asking for consultations to be conducted by a neutral and independent third party, and that measures to ensure high environmental standards be respected.

This petition is very important to citizens' confidence and the social licence for major aerospace development in their community.

I truly hope that the Minister of Transport will listen to them and hopefully avoid a repeat of what happened in Neuville, Mascouche, and Terrebonne.

[*English*]

SENIORS

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to present a petition calling on Parliament to appoint a minister for seniors and to develop a national strategy for seniors.

41ST GENERAL ELECTION

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

The first petition is from residents throughout my riding as well as a number from Montreal.

The petitioners are calling for, even after the years that have gone by since the 2011 election, a full investigation of the use of robocalls to attempt to defraud voters.

MINING

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is primarily from residents in and around the area of Temiscaming near Lake Kipawa.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call upon the present government to protect the unique ecological and cultural historic values of the Kipawa lakes and to protect them from the proposed rare earth mining of Matamec Explorations.

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two sets of petitions.

First, ultrasounds have been used in Canada to tell the sex of an unborn child so that expectant mothers can choose to terminate the pregnancy if the unborn child is a girl.

Polls have suggested that 92% of Canadians believe that sex selective pregnancy terminations should be illegal.

As we know, there are some 200 millions girls missing worldwide, and gendercide has created a global gender imbalance plus violence against girls and human trafficking of girls.

The undersigned petitioners are asking members of Parliament to condemn discrimination against girls occurring through sex selective pregnancy termination.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Canada acknowledge that current impaired driving laws are really too lenient. In the interest of public safety, the petitioners want to see tougher laws. They want to see the implementation of new mandatory minimum sentences for persons convicted of impaired driving causing death and they want the Criminal Code of Canada changed to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death as vehicular manslaughter.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present.

The first petition is with respect to impaired driving causing death.

Families for Justice is a group of Canadians who have had a loved one killed by an impaired driver. They believe that Canada's impaired driving laws are much too lenient. They want the crime called what it is: vehicular homicide. It is the number one cause of criminal death in Canada. Over 1,200 Canadians are killed every year by drunk drivers.

Canadians are calling for mandatory sentencing for vehicular homicide, and they want this Parliament to support Bill C-226, the impaired driving act, and Bill C-247, Cassandra's law.

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATH

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is in relation to the passage of the assisted suicide legislation by this Parliament.

The petitioners are saying that there is an issue of Canadians being forced to participate in assisted suicide, or euthanasia, against their will and that protection and clarity needs to be addressed by this Parliament.

• (1520)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 530 and 532.

[Text]

Question No. 530—**Mr. John Barlow:**

With regard to the audit that was conducted for the Kainai Nation (Blood Tribe) last year by KPMG, as commissioned by Indigenous and Northern Affairs: (a) what is the status of the audit; (b) if the answer to (a) is that the audit was completed, (i) when was it completed, (ii) what are the details and findings of the audit, (iii) why weren't the audit findings made public when the audit was completed; (c) what are the details of any memos or briefing materials related to the audit including the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipients, (iv) title and subject matter, (v) internal file or tracking number; and (d) has the Minister been briefed on the audit's findings, and, if so, when did this briefing take place?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC, is concerned, the response is as follows. With regard to (a), in July 2015, the department received correspondence from Chief Charles Weasel Head stating that the Blood Tribe would not cooperate in the forensic audit proposed by the department. Audit work ceased at that time, since it was determined that the audit work could not be completed without the authorization and cooperation of the Blood Tribe.

As a result, a comprehensive review of the file was undertaken and a final legal opinion was provided to the department in March 2016, which determined that funds received by the Blood First Nation generated from Blood First Nation's agricultural leases are not Indian monies or public monies; therefore, the department has no statutory authority upon which to base an audit of the relevant transactions or the use of the money paid to Blood First Nation. Furthermore, management of band land, including how lands are allocated to individual band members, is the responsibility of the Blood First Nation and does not fall under the jurisdiction of the crown.

With regard to (b), an answer is not applicable.

With regard to (c):

(i) date	(ii) sender	(iii) recipients	(iv) title and subject matter	(v) Internal tracking number
2015-02-25	Audit and Evaluation	Deputy Minister	Blood Tribe, Alberta	AE888
2015-06-12	Audit and Evaluation	Deputy Minister	Blood Tribe, Alberta	AE927
2016-03-09	Audit and Evaluation	Deputy Minister	Blood Tribe, Alberta	AE1027
2016-05-06	Audit and Evaluation	Minister Bennett	Blood Tribe, Alberta	AE1028

With regard to (d), the minister was informed of the reasons why the audit could not be completed on May 6, 2016.

Government Orders

Question No. 532—**Mr. John Barlow:**

With regard to Canada Post, what are the latest statistics available regarding the delivery error rate for: (a) addressed ad mail; and (b) first class mail?

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the requested information is commercial in nature and has always been treated as confidential.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 531, 533, 535, and 536 could be made orders for returns, they would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 531—**Mr. James Bezan:**

With regard to the Future Fighter Capability project: (a) what are the statements of requirements for the (i) Air-to-Air (A/A) capabilities, (ii) Air-to-Ground (A/G) capabilities, (iii) Air-to-Surface (ASu) capabilities, (iv) non-traditional Intelligence, (v) Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), (vi) interoperability with other nations; (b) how many employees work on this project from (i) the Department of National Defence, (ii) Public Services and Procurement Canada, (iii) Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, (iv) all other departments and agencies of the government, (v) private organizations outside of the government; (c) how many employees have signed non-disclosure agreements, broken down by employees of (i) the Department of National Defence, (ii) Public Services and Procurement Canada, (iii) Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (iv) all other departments and agencies of the government, (v) private organizations outside of the government; and (d) what is the length of each non-disclosure agreement signed by employees of the Future Fighter Capability project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 533—**Mrs. Kelly Block:**

With regard to Minister's offices: what is the approved budget for each office, including the Prime Minister's office, for the 2016-17 fiscal year, broken down by individual Minister?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 535—**Mrs. Kelly Block:**

With regard to "consultation kits" developed by the government, since November 4, 2015, broken down by department or agency: (a) what are all costs associated with the production, development, or promotion of such kits, broken down by individual kit or project; (b) what are the titles or subject matter of each kit; and (c) what are the details of any contracts associated with the production of such kits, including (i) date of contract, (ii) original contract value, (iii) vendor name, (iv) file number, (v) final contract value?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 536—**Mrs. Kelly Block:**

With regard to the carbon price plan announced by the Prime Minister: (a) what total revenue does the government predict a \$50 per tonne price will bring in for federal or provincial governments, broken down by province; (b) what is the estimated cost of a \$50 per tonne price to an average family; (c) how much will a \$50 per tonne price cost per litre of gasoline; (d) has the government produced economic impact studies on the impact of a \$50 per tonne carbon price on the Canadian economy in general and specifically on the following sectors (i) agriculture, (ii)

mining, (iii) oil and gas, (iv) construction, (v) manufacturing; and (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, what are the specific details of each study including (i) dates and duration of study, (ii) file number, (iii) who conducted the study, (iv) specific findings, (v) who ordered the study, (vi) details of any costs or contracts associated with each study?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand at this time.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

**CANADA-EUROPEAN UNION COMPREHENSIVE
ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT
IMPLEMENTATION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to implement the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union and its Member States and to provide for certain other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to what is truly an historic trade agreement between Canada and the European Union. I want to begin by extending congratulations, because these kinds of negotiations of free trade agreements, at the best of times, are difficult. When there is an agreement like CETA, which is so complex, it is very difficult to get it to the finish line.

I want to extend congratulations to the Prime Minister and also to his international trade minister for doggedly pushing this file forward. It is this close to the finish line. It is not quite there yet, but it is oh so close.

I also want to thank former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who had the foresight and courage to move ahead with negotiations at a time when many naysayers said that this could not be done. In fact, I recall during these negotiations, which I led for four and a half years, many times when people would come up and say that there was no way we were going to be able to address an issue, and there was no way we would be able to open up agricultural access to the European Union.

Each step along the way, Prime Minister Stephen Harper had our backs. He had the back of our team in making sure we got this done. Our country owes Stephen Harper a tremendous debt of gratitude for his remarkable achievement.

Government Orders

I also want to thank my former cabinet colleagues for enthusiastically supporting this agreement every single step of the way and for providing helpful advice in their areas of expertise. I especially want to congratulate and thank my colleague, the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster, who was the minister of agriculture as our previous Conservative government was negotiating this agreement. He worked on one of the most difficult provisions in this agreement, which is agricultural access to the European Union, and also addressed some of the sensitivities on the Canadian side. He was able to get it done in a way that our stakeholders ended up strongly supporting this agreement.

I am pleased to see that he is now the official opposition's trade critic, holding the Liberal government's feet to the fire as they try to defend and promote Canada's trade interests around the world.

I also wanted to thank chief negotiator Steve Verheul and his large team of sectoral negotiators for a job very well done. These are some of our best Canadian negotiators. They represent the very best Canada has to offer. Their advice is not only sought by us as governments here in Canada but is sought around the world, because Canada is a kinder, gentler, more flexible negotiating partner. However, we are firm. We have resolve when we negotiate. The standard we have set is that we will not negotiate a trade agreement unless it is in Canada's national interest.

I also want to thank my friend, the former premier of Quebec Jean Charest, for first imagining what was possible and then inspiring us to take the first step in broadening our economic partnership with the European Union. That is exactly what this trade agreement achieves. It represents a broadening of our economic partnership with the European Union in a way that many of us could not have imagined a decade ago.

I want to just walk through this agreement. First of all, I want to talk about the agreement itself, the deal, and then the beneficiaries of this agreement. I want to talk about the opportunity this represents for Canadians and also the challenges we still face in getting this agreement over the line.

This agreement is the most comprehensive the world has ever seen. I say that without reservation. It delves into areas that were never considered before as being possible within a trade agreement.

This agreement has been compared to the North American Free Trade Agreement, and I would admit that NAFTA is still the definitive trade agreement between Canada and its two North American partners. Because of the scope and size of that relationship, it also dwarfs all the other trade relationships we have around the world.

CETA is much more comprehensive. It is a complex agreement. It means that it took longer to negotiate because of the complexities and because we needed to have this agreement be in Canada's national interest.

• (1525)

I recall on a number of occasions when we, the Canadian team of negotiators, had to leave the table. We had to say that the deal on the table was not in Canada's interest. Then a month or two later, we would go back and the other side would come back, and we would

come up with new approaches to some of the obstacles that faced us, and we would find ways through those obstacles.

This agreement is complex because of the novel and bold approaches the two sides agreed to take. For example, in negotiating expanded services access, services like engineering, digital technology, and information technology, we want to make sure that Canadians have an expanded marketplace in the world to sell high-quality services into. For the first time ever, Canada and the EU agreed to use a negative list approach to negotiating services. What that means is that if a service is not included on the list of approved services for additional market access, or if it is not specifically excluded, any future services that might be developed in a rapidly evolving global marketplace would be captured by this agreement and would be provided full access into the EU and Canada. That is unique in this agreement.

What else is unique is that for the first time ever, Canada had its provinces and territories at the negotiating table when it came to areas of their sole or shared jurisdiction. What this allowed us to do was to secure outcomes that none of our trade agreements before had ever secured. There was, for example, an outcome on government procurement. When a government goes out and solicits contracts for services, for properties, or goods and services, whenever that happens, typically governments protect their home market. What we have done is expanded government procurement access for Canadian companies to start bidding on projects within the European Union, the world's largest service market. Again, we were able to come up with a highly ambitious outcome on government procurement.

We know that trade, when done right, benefits all partners and has the potential to raise living standards and prosperity all around the world. That is also why we took great care in negotiating outcomes in things such as goods trade; services trade; technical barriers to trade; labour mobility; the environment, which Canadians care very much about; intellectual property and protecting our innovators; geographical indications; and as I mentioned, government procurement.

For example, in the area of trade in goods, which includes things such as agricultural products, automobiles, and fish and seafood, we have some of the best quality fish and seafood products in the world. When it comes to forestry products, and equipment and machinery, we have opened up the marketplace in the EU for those products. We would be eliminating 98% of all tariffs that presently face Canadian exporters within the European marketplace, including the 10% tariff on Canadian cars when they are sold in that market. That is good news for our auto industry.

This agreement is also very special because it provides Canada with unique global market access to both the European Union and the United States. We already have a free trade agreement, NAFTA, with the United States and Mexico, but we are the first major economy in the world to also have a free trade agreement with the European Union, a marketplace of over 500 million consumers. This is a huge advantage for Canada.

Government Orders

We also negotiated services. The question we had to ask was where does Canada's comparative advantage lie? Where does Canada, as a highly developed, highly educated, highly innovative country have an advantage? It is not in manually sitting on a production line, putting together widgets. That is not the future for Canada. The future for Canada is in the knowledge economy. That is where our future prosperity lies. It is in areas such as engineering, digital animation, gaming, health services, education, cybersecurity, information technology, and so many other areas that have high-paying jobs and are the economy of the future.

• (1530)

Let me give the example of engineering. Did members know that Canada is the third-largest exporter of engineering services in the world? We are a country with a small population of 35 million in a global marketplace of seven billion people up against giants like Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, and the United States, and we rank third. These are high-paying jobs. Canadians are carving out a reputation for their innovation and excellence and the quality of the services they provide. This trade agreement would dramatically improve the export potential of these services.

Let me talk a bit about the beneficiaries of this agreement.

Of course, there are the manufacturers and the exporters who want to access the European marketplace but who have, for so many years, been unable to do so because of high tariffs and very high non-tariff barriers, meaning all the rules and regulations and standards behind the borders that frustrate our exporters and provide protection for European companies. In large part, we are addressing those challenges both on the tariff and non-tariff sides. It is good news for manufacturers and for exporters.

It also means greater mobility for the workforce that our manufacturers have. The ability to move professionals back and forth between our two trading partners and to move senior management personnel back and forth seamlessly has been improved in this agreement.

Investors will be very happy because if the investor-state dispute settlement measures are in fact brought into force, our investors would have greater protection against discrimination and expropriation without compensation within the European Union.

I have already mentioned our service providers and what a huge market they would now have available to them. They are going to be very happy.

Then there are those who sometimes slip through the cracks, and those are Canada's consumers. When we remove tariff barriers on the European side, what happens? We get access to their marketplace. We would also remove tariff barriers on the Canadian side, which means Canadian consumers would have access to better-quality products at better prices, improving their value proposition. This is excellent news for Canada's consumers, who are trying to make the buck stretch a little farther. That is what we would accommodate here.

Some people have said that there are going to be winners and losers. Certainly there are going to be a lot of winners under this agreement. When we witness the hundreds of industry stakeholders and the owners of thousands of companies across Canada who have

voiced support for this trade agreement with the European Union, clearly there would be many winners in this agreement. But we live in a rapidly changing world where creative disruption is becoming the norm, and Canadians must be ready and willing to adapt. I know there are going to be many winners under this agreement. There will also be some who will be adaptors, who will have to adapt.

Let me give an example of why I believe Canadians are up to this challenge. When the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement was being negotiated some 25 years ago, the wine industry in Canada said that the government could not open up the border to U.S. wines, that it would cause the industry to go bankrupt, that the industry would be lost, that it would be over. The government of the day, Brian Mulroney's Conservative government, at least had the vision and the understanding of what Canadians were capable of. The agreement came into force and the industry stakeholders decided to reinvest in who they are as a wine industry. They invested in technology, in knowledge, and decided simply to get better at what they do here in Canada when it comes to the wine industry. Today, 25 years later, we have a world-ranking wine industry, not because we are protecting the industry with artificial barriers but because the people in the industry are simply good at what they do. They are among the very best in the world, winning awards all over the world. To those Canadians who may find themselves adapting to this agreement, take courage. We are innovative as Canadians. We can address changes in the evolving global marketplace, and this agreement would certainly achieve that.

Let me talk about the opportunity.

• (1535)

As with all other trade negotiations, CETA was a very difficult one. In fact, it was among our most difficult negotiations, because of the high level of ambition of both the European Union and Canada in the negotiations. It was a highly complex negotiation, one that involved new and novel approaches.

We now have this agreement almost in place, and it puts Canada in the enviable position, as I mentioned earlier, of having a free trade agreement with both the European Union and the United States. Let us think of the advantage that Canadian companies now have over the United States. The United States is one of our fiercest competitors. It does not have a free trade agreement with the European Union. It started negotiating one that has badly stalled. Now with the election of President-elect Donald Trump, we expect that there will be very little, if any, further movement on negotiating a trade agreement between the United States and the EU, which they called TTIP. That means that Canadian companies now have a once in a lifetime advantage over their American competitors to access the European market. That is why we are encouraging them to get out there and be proactive, and start exploring the European marketplace.

It is also a huge opportunity for us to attract investment from parts of the world that traditionally have not looked at Canada, because we now have a truly competitive investment advantage over other countries around the world, having access to a consumer market, including the U.S. and EU, of 800 million consumers.

Government Orders

Are there still challenges? Of course there are. CETA has not yet passed the European Parliament. We expect that will happen this December. I am hoping that it will in fact pass. It is also now generally acknowledged that the CETA that the government negotiated is actually a lesser agreement than what our Conservative government had originally negotiated. For whatever reason, the Liberal government agreed to reopen discussions. I fear that the investor-state dispute settlement part is going to end up falling by the wayside because it is are no longer part of provisional coming into force of the agreement. The regional governments throughout Europe will now have a say in whether they approve of that. My concern is that it will never see the light of day. I believe this may be a lesser agreement than we had bargained.

I also note that the European Union agreed to provide its regional governments with agricultural safeguards to protect against import surges, something we did not expect to happen. It is not clear what impact that provision is going to have on our agricultural producers, like the beef and pork exporters in Canada. There is also further work required to address some of the behind-the-border issues, the sanitary and phytosanitary standards that concern our producers.

I also note that the compensation package that our government had announced for the dairy producers is now being abandoned by the Liberal government. It is a lesser package that they are offering to the dairy industry. We are very disappointed in that.

Finally, we also have to inspire our small and medium-sized businesses to take advantage of this agreement. Canadians are notoriously cautious when it comes to expanding their export and trade horizons. I would just encourage Canadian companies, that if they are going to go to one source, go to the point source for information on trade in Canada. That is our Trade Commissioner Service. I got to know these folks well. They are some of the very best professionals, the most knowledgeable trade experts in the world. There is about 1,000 of them across Canada and around the world in 150 offices with one goal, to promote Canadian businesses and Canadian business interests all around the world. Businesses should go to the Trade Commissioner Service if they are looking for opportunities.

This free trade agreement is about a bold, new future for Canada. Let me be clear that trade is not for the weak-kneed or the faint of heart. It is not for the timid or for those who cower in the face of adversity. It is not for the skeptics and scoffers. I note there are some in the corner of the House today. There is a tinfoil hat brigade in the corner of the House that does not understand trade and the opportunities to use trade to grow our national prosperity.

Trade is for champions. It is for people who measure and take calculated risks, who venture beyond the status quo and beyond the same old, same old. It is for visionaries who seize opportunity when it comes knocking, and achieve extraordinary results for the people they serve, their companies, their employees, and their country.

• (1540)

I am honoured to be surrounded today by many of my colleagues who share that vision of trade, who are champions in their own right, and who are prepared to do the heavy lifting to ensure that CETA lifts Canada up to unprecedented prosperity.

Let us get to work. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Canadians we represent. Let us not squander that advantage.

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his work on this file. It is truly a pleasure on our part to have taken up this torch and brought it home.

I want to tap in on my colleague's wealth of experience. He mentioned NAFTA and when it was negotiated. I cannot admit to being that old to remember it as well as he does, but perhaps he could give us suggestions in terms of the implementation of CETA and how we could make it benefit our small and medium-sized enterprises.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his hard work in finally moving this agreement close to the finish line.

I mentioned the Trade Commissioner Service. Industry organizations across the country that represent different industrial sectors have been highly engaged in the negotiations of this free trade agreement. Many of our companies across Canada are members of those associations, whether it is the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the CFIB, or the Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters. These are all organizations that have engaged in raising awareness of the opportunities that this trade agreement presents among our small and medium-sized businesses.

Since the member mentioned NAFTA, I will note that back when the North American Free Trade Agreement was being negotiated, the Liberal Party of Canada was against it. The Liberal Party of Canada fought against that agreement every step along the way. That party said we were going to lose our health care system and our pension system. It said we were going to hollow out our economy and that our culture would be gone. Of course, none of that happened.

There is one party in the House that understands trade and the opportunities that trade represents for Canadians, and that is this Conservative Party.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the party in this corner of the House, I will unapologetically stand up for those Canadians who do have concerns about these trade deals. While we may disagree on this issue, out of respect for all the views that Canadians have, we should at least try to bring some respect to this place about those different viewpoints.

However, in an effort to turn this conversation in a more collegial route, I want to ask the member a question. He has a lot of experience on this file. I want to bring his attention to the specifics of one country, and that is the United Kingdom. As he may very well be aware, 42% of Canada's exports to the EU go to the U.K., and a large part of the CETA negotiations were based on the premise that the U.K. would still be a part of CETA. The Liberal government has not properly evaluated CETA without the U.K. If the U.K. triggers its exit from the EU and leaves CETA, is my colleague comfortable with the concessions that Canada has made in CETA, given that the U.K. represents nearly half of Canada's exports to the EU?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, let me first of all commend that member for his good understanding of what CETA entails and what the possible consequences of Brexit could be on this agreement.

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I have been involved in some public fora where I have expressed my concern over what Brexit will mean for the Canada-EU free trade agreement. If the U.K. exits, what happens to the market access that we had expected to get? The U.K. is our largest export market in the European Union. Canada's trade relationship with the United Kingdom is one of its most significant trade relationships, so Brexit puts us into uncharted waters. This agreement had essentially been negotiated before Brexit. There were not a lot of people who expected Brexit to happen, but it did.

The member is asking me what the impacts would be if the U.K. exits the agreement and whether I believe that the Liberal government has undertaken the due diligence to understand what this means. I do not know. I am skeptical as to whether the government has done that work. When we were dealing with carbon pricing and a carbon tax, the Prime Minister made it clear that the government did no economic impact analysis on that. I suspect that the announcement the government made about abandoning coal-fired electricity had no economic impact analysis. I suspect that the Brexit impact on this trade negotiation with the EU has also not been well understood by the Liberal government, so I share my colleague's concerns.

• (1545)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his great speech, with some great information, and thank him as well on behalf of the residents of southern Alberta for how hard he worked on effecting this deal.

My riding of Foothills is the heart of cattle country, the home of Alberta beef, some of the best malting barley in the world, and metallurgical coal. The stakeholders in my riding are very excited about the opportunity to see the new markets this will bring.

I realize how hard they worked to bring this, but I also understand how close this came to collapsing because of the meddling, let us say, of the Liberal government. Residents of my riding were very concerned about almost losing CETA, despite our doing all the work in getting it almost to the finish line. There are now very legitimate concerns that the Liberals will do much the same with the trans-Pacific partnership. Ranchers, farmers, miners, and energy workers are very excited to also see that come to fruition.

I ask my colleague if he shares those same concerns, that meddling with the CETA agreement, which has also been agreed upon in principle, may happen to TPP.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, unlike the Canada-European free trade agreement, the Liberals have not actually come out and said that they support the trans-Pacific partnership. Boy, that would be sad if we were not part of that agreement, if and when it gets ratified.

We are talking about 12 countries representing forward-looking trading partnerships, like Australia and New Zealand. Why would we not want to have a trade agreement with those countries? Japan is the third-largest economy in the world. Why would we not want to have a trade agreement with Japan, to open up new markets for Canadian exporters, especially agricultural producers. Unfortunately, there has been deafening silence on the Liberal side.

When it comes to agriculture, of course, there are some challenges that our agricultural producers face under CETA. We have not yet

fully negotiated some of the behind the border standards, and rules and regulations, the sanitary and phytosanitary issues, that bedevil our agricultural exporters.

Unfortunately, as part of this negotiation, the Liberal government opened up the door to the EU actually applying safeguards for import surges, as I mentioned in my speech. We do not know what impact that will have on our producers, such as the beef and pork exporters in Canada.

We are still looking to see what that looks like. It was unfortunate that agreement was opened up as much as it has been. However, it is important for us to focus today on the fact that legislation is before us. If it is passed and this agreement is ratified, it will still be of remarkable benefit to Canadians and our long-term prosperity.

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his contribution to the debate today. It is great to hear him speak to it. I have the pleasure of serving on the trade committee with some of his colleagues as well. They can attest that I actually credited the member for his great work in getting the agreement to where we are today, as well as his colleague from Battlefords—Lloydminster. I also gave him some credit for his work.

I do thank the member for his mostly magnanimous speech today, and I want to give him the opportunity to comment on some of the opponents of CETA, and perhaps opponents of free trade in general, and how perhaps some of their fears are not founded, how we can work together to make sure we can alleviate some of these fears, and let them know that this agreement will work for all Canadians.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I did refer to some of the naysayers in this House as being skeptics and scoffers, and they are exactly that. I do not apologize for that comment at all. These are people who do not understand the role that trade plays in Canada's national prosperity. They have continued to opine that Canada will lose its cultural identity, that we will lose our health care system, that we will lose our pension system, that our economy will be hollowed out, millions of jobs would be lost.

It has been over 25 years that we have had the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA. None of that has happened. History has shown that when trade is done right, it has the capacity to enhance the standard of living for millions and millions of people, not only in Canada, but around the world.

I am encouraging the NDP in this House, for once, to sit down and come up with a coherent trade policy. It supported trade agreements with Jordan and South Korea. However, with one of the most like-minded trading partners, the European Union, New Democrats are now saying no. No one can make sense of their trade policy, so I am asking them to go back to the design board to see if they can get this right.

Government Orders

● (1550)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to rise in the House today in support of the legislation before us. Hon. members will know that CETA is the most progressive trade agreement that Canada has ever negotiated. It will help to further our economy, create well-paying jobs in Canada as well as in Europe, and support our efforts to strengthen the middle class, all the while ensuring that trade benefits everyone.

Canada's great friendship with the European Union goes back many years. In fact, Canada's formal relationship is the EU's oldest with any industrialized country, dating back to 1959, when we signed the agreement for co-operation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Of course, there are many cultural and people-to-people ties that date back for centuries and serve to underline our common history and many partnerships.

We have always been close partners, and not only because millions of Canadians, like me, trace their family roots back to Europe, but also because there is a palpable buzz among these communities. I was in Toronto on Friday evening at an Italian Canadian chamber of commerce event, in a room full of importers and exporters, people who have business ties with Europe. They were clearly very positive about the opportunities that this agreement would present.

Canada and Europe are united because our societies, economies, and systems of governance are founded on the same set of values, such as equality, freedom, and respect for all individuals in society, not to mention democracy. Canada and the EU co-operate on many crucial international issues, including climate change, democratic governance, and human rights, as well as international peace and security. In a world of shifting global power, the Canada–EU relationship and our common efforts are more important than ever. This is something I heard a great deal about while travelling in Europe to promote CETA.

The EU is also a very important economic partner, representing the world's second-largest economy, and Canada's second-largest trading partner after the United States. It is also the world's second-largest importing market for goods, with its annual imports alone worth more than all of Canada's GDP.

As well, the EU is a key market for global supply chains. It has more Fortune 500 companies than any other country in the world, including the United States. This significant access to global supply chains is an important avenue of opportunity for the global ambitions of many of Canada's small and medium-sized enterprises.

CETA would help Canadian businesses better access the EU market. It will deepen our long-standing relations. It will help to generate much-needed growth and jobs while fully upholding Canada and Europe's high standards in areas like food safety, environmental protection, and workers' rights. CETA will deliver benefits for consumers through lower prices and more choice, for workers, through more and better jobs related to exports, and for businesses, through reduced costs and tariffs.

[Translation]

Experts project that once CETA comes into force bilateral trade of goods and services will increase by more than 22%, which will stimulate job growth on both sides of the Atlantic. Canadian businesses will enjoy a first-mover advantage over their competitors from markets such as the United States, which has yet to conclude a trade agreement with the European Union. In fact, CETA and NAFTA combined give Canada preferential access to nearly half the global marketplace.

Once CETA comes into force it will cover almost every sector and aspect related to trade between Canada and the European Union. Roughly 98% of European Union tariff lines on Canadian merchandise will be duty-free as soon as the agreement comes into force, and an additional 1% will be cut over a seven-year phase-out period.

Eliminating duties under CETA will create better opportunities for countless Canadian exports to the EU, where duties remain high. Currently, Canadian exporters of fish and seafood pay duties as high as 25%. EU duties on wood are 8%, while duties on wood products, information technology, and communications technology can be as high as 14%.

● (1555)

Machinery and equipment are subject to tariffs of up to 8% when imported to the European Union. CETA will eliminate those tariffs. What is more, Canadian service providers will benefit from the greatest access the EU, the world's largest importer of services, has ever provided in a trade agreement, as well as the most ambitious commitments on temporary entry the EU has ever provided.

Canada is one of the largest service exporters in the world. We exported nearly \$16 billion-worth of services to the EU in 2015. CETA will ensure that Canadian service providers are able to compete on a level playing field with EU service providers and gain a competitive advantage over competitors from nations outside the European Union.

In addition to increased access to markets, CETA also contains many other important measures. It is the first bilateral agreement in which Canada has included a stand-alone chapter on regulatory co-operation. The provisions set out in that chapter are forward-looking and promote proactive co-operation.

Under a protocol on conformity assessment, Canadian manufacturers in some sectors will be able to test and certify their products in Canada for sale in the European Union. This is an important innovation that will save companies time and money and will be particularly profitable for small and medium-sized businesses.

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CETA includes a detailed framework for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, a key aspect of labour mobility. The provinces made a valuable contribution to the negotiations on a matter under their jurisdiction, as did my former professor, Pierre Marc Johnson, chief negotiator for Quebec.

CETA provisions on labour mobility will enable entrepreneurs from Canada and the European Union to travel abroad more easily. Business people on short-term visits, individuals transferred within a company, investors, contract service providers, and independent professionals will be able to do business in the EU more easily.

CETA also opens up government procurement opportunities in the European Union, a sector worth about \$3.3 trillion. When CETA comes into force, Canadian companies will be able to provide goods and certain services to all levels of government in the EU, including the 28 European Union member states and thousands of government, regional, and local organizations.

CETA sets out a framework that will enable Canada and the European Union to make the most of their already strong investment ties, which are an important part of their economic relationship. In 2015, the known stock of Canadian direct investment in the EU was valued at \$210 billion, which represented over 21% of known Canadian direct investment abroad.

That same year, the known stock of European direct investment in Canada reached \$282 billion, or over 31% of its known direct investment abroad, in Canada.

CETA's chapter on investment provides investors with greater certainty, stability, and protection for their investments, as well as greater access to their respective markets.

CETA includes provisions that facilitate the establishment of investments in order to protect investors from practices like discriminatory treatment, expropriation without compensation, and arbitrary and abusive conduct, and it ensures the free transfer of capital.

• (1600)

CETA obligations are backed by an investor dispute resolution mechanism that includes an appeal tribunal. When an investor files a complaint, the permanent and independent tribunal, as well as the appeal tribunal, if need be, will determine whether a government measure violates CETA's investment obligations and whether the investor suffered a loss as a result.

[*English*]

CETA holds great potential for businesses in both our respective territories. That is why our government has been working extremely hard to bring CETA into force as soon as possible.

While negotiations concluded in August 2014, our government has made enhancements to the agreement in order to strengthen and introduce progressive elements related to environmental protection, workers' rights, consumers' health and safety, and a government's right to regulate.

Prior to our making these changes, support for CETA in the centre left in Europe, which is essential to have CETA ratification in the European Parliament as well as the support of member states,

such as Germany and France, was uncertain. Indeed, it was in jeopardy. Now that we have made those changes, the progressive leadership of those countries, as well as the progressive leadership in our country, is squarely behind it.

One of the most important things our government did right after taking office was to listen to the critics of CETA, both in Canada and in Europe, and to understand some of the legitimate concerns people had. We have worked with Canadians, including industry and civil society alike, and with our European Union partners to prove, with CETA, that a progressive trade policy is possible.

CETA will set the bar for trade agreements in the future, and it forms the cornerstone of our government's progressive trade agenda. This is an agenda that has linked the government's domestic policy focus on reducing inequality and enhancing inclusive growth. The idea is to ensure that trade policy makes a more meaningful contribution to this overall agenda and to ensure that trade is done in a way that Canadians can see, feel, and believe works for them.

This agreement clearly provides the advantages that our industries are seeking in expanding their footprints internationally, and does so in a fair and responsible manner that will benefit Canadian society as a whole. This is why it is important for Canada to implement CETA as soon as possible.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government needs to sign agreements that benefit all Canadians. This is a treaty with the European Union and we cannot afford to sign a botched agreement.

The government is asking for carte blanche when it comes to investor-state dispute settlement. We still do not know how the tribunals will be formed. We still do not know what the appeal system will look like. However, the government would have us believe that everything is okay, that the interests of Canadians will be taken into consideration, and that no harm will come to our public services.

Can the hon. member explain how we are supposed to reassure Canadians about local job protection? We know that under these types of agreements, foreign workers come before local jobs. This is quite worrisome to those who still do not have a job and who use social assistance or employment insurance.

This lacks transparency. Canadians are not being consulted on this, even though consultations on CETA have been going on since at least 2012. Those were held by the Conservatives, but the Liberals stopped holding them entirely.

We need more answers and more details. We are not getting the same story from the Liberals.

Government Orders

●(1605)

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

With regard to the provisions on employment, the draft text of the agreement was made available in 2014, while the final agreement was drafted and published in February 2016. The text was examined by the committee during the previous Parliament, and many clarifications were made in that regard.

With regard to the investors program, we have reached an agreement with the European Union regarding the framework for a transparent and independent process. We will work in good faith on the details in the near future

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a very specific question. The parliamentary secretary will know that I oppose CETA and many aspects of it, including pharmaceutical prices going up, intellectual properties locations, and that our auto sector is not fairly treated. However, my main concern is the investor-state provisions. Those were the ones that raised the sticking point with the region of Wallonia.

Could he clarify what has happened? It appears that individual nations, or provinces or states within nations in the EU can opt out of investor states, but Canada is saying that it opts in. This means foreign corporations will have the ability to challenge Canada for damages for decisions we make domestically, but we will not necessarily have reciprocal Canadian corporation ability to sue those states if they opt out. It strikes me that a very bad deal just got worse.

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, let me clarify. First, in regard to the investor-state mechanism, we have known since the beginning of the summer that this fell under the competence of European member states. In the case of Belgium therefore it devolves down to its provinces. We knew from the outset we would be working to elaborate the details of that investor-state dispute mechanism with the 28 member states.

We also agreed with our European partners that nothing would be imposed non-reciprocally. Whatever does or does not get negotiated will be equally treated on all sides.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the parliamentary secretary's speech today. I find it curious that, once again, we are hearing there is in fact a way for this agreement to change, that this is not the final version. What the parliamentary secretary just said was that essentially we could not sign onto investor-state provisions. That is exactly what the NDP and other parties in the House are asking for. I find it curious to hear that from the parliamentary secretary, and look forward to following up with him on that.

My question is around the cost of pharmaceuticals. Recently at the health committee our critic spoke to the assistant deputy minister for Health about the cost implications inside of CETA. She admitted at the committee that there would be a rise in cost of drugs. Where is our analysis on what this will cost Canadians, when the Liberals advocated for that in the previous Parliament, and where is the information and honesty with Canadians about the fact that drug costs will increase if we sign CETA?

●(1610)

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question is one that concerns me, having taught intellectual property for 20 years in Canada's best law faculty.

There are a number of different factors that go into the pricing of pharmaceuticals. There is the potential for an increase in the length of the protection period of up to two years under the agreement. It is not automatic. It compensates for a regulatory regime in Canada, a good regulatory regime that sometimes delays the entry into the market for certain pharmaceuticals. In that sense, yes, the protection period will be longer and therefore the price of patented medicines, which is higher than the price of generic medicines, could be extended for two years.

However, Canada has a pricing mechanism for patented medicines. We have provincial pricing. Therefore, a lot of different factors go into the actual pricing of pharmaceuticals that are not necessarily tied to the length of patent protection. Europe has had these kinds of patent protections for a long time and yet its prices are lower. It even has pharmacare regimes. There is not a necessary direct link between the price of patents and these other factors.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I represent a riding in Niagara, an area with which the hon. parliamentary secretary is quite familiar. There is a lot of apprehension about free trade from past free trade agreements. It is the same in many blue collar areas of Ontario and beyond. Could the parliamentary secretary advise the House and my constituents how CETA will benefit the good people of Niagara?

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for St. Catharines. As one of the other members of the House who can spell St. Catharines the way he has to spell it, I am pleased to get that question.

There will be a great deal of benefit to manufacturing industries in Ontario. I know that the auto industry is in Niagara, and this is an agreement that should benefit the auto industry with the reduction of tariffs. I know that at least one automaker is already planning to produce automobiles for the European market. With respect to other manufacturers, it should help agriculture in Niagara, as well as Ontario wine manufacturers expand their markets even further. There is plenty of good in here for Niagara.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, this. Once Canada approves CETA, as it goes through the process here and is approved, and the European Union approves CETA, what is the process from there? I understand it has provisional approval. How does it unfold from there as each country in Europe goes through the process of applying CETA to their country? Also, with respect to the present process, what is tariff-free right now and what is waiting until each country approves it?

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and his work on the committee. I will talk about the European process, because I believe that is what he is referring to.

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With passage in the European Parliament, which we expect by the end of this calendar year, and once ratification in Canada has taken place, 98% of the agreement, everything falling under the negotiating competence of the European Parliament, will be provisionally in force. That is virtually the whole agreement with the exception of the investor-state dispute mechanism, and a few other provisions that we feel are only a very small percentage of the agreement. Those fall under the competence of the European member states, and in each case the member states will have to ratify those parts of the agreement on their own. Once all 28 do, we will have to sit down again to ratify the agreement in a permanent fashion.

For the remaining 2%, this government is committed to working with European member states over the next number of years in order to make sure that the agreement gets ratified.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to reach this state in the House with CETA, to see it come to fruition in the House now, hopefully go on to committee, get passed in committee, and then move forward.

The Conservatives will be supporting this legislation. It is good for Canadians all across Canada from coast to coast to coast. Whether we look at the agriculture sector, the small and medium enterprises, union jobs, or service industry jobs, this is a great agreement for Canadians.

I want to compliment and express my gratitude to people like Steve Verheul and his team for all the work they have done for this agreement in the background, and for the hours and hours of the painstaking combination of flights and meetings they had to go through to get to the detail that we have here today to get this agreement, which is a good agreement, for all Canadians.

It is also encouraging to see the Liberal government embrace what was done in the previous government and carrying it past the finish line. This is important for all Canadians, especially when we look at our sectors here in Canada. We are an exporting country. We are a country that builds and produces more than we could ever consume. Therefore, it is very important that we export.

Also, I will inform members that I will be sharing my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable. He has some great comments that he wants to make on this agreement as well.

The EU represents 500 million people. It boasts an economic activity of \$20 trillion annually. It is the world's largest economy.

When I worked for Flexi-Coil and Case New Holland, I was the marketing manager for seeding equipment in Europe. We were looking at different components going into Europe, because, of course, the stuff we built in Saskatchewan was way too big for the European Union's usage. However, I can remember going through the homologation process, the tariff process, to try and understand how it all worked, and also being very frustrated when we had components and products that we wanted to sell into Europe.

The frustration was not only the tariff that would be applied, but the rules that would be applied, and the non-tariff trade barriers that would be applied. All those things were sitting there as hurdles that we had to face. In a lot of cases, European-made products did not face the same hurdles. I found it very unfair and frustrating that a

plant in Saskatoon was developing and building stuff, and building it cheaper than anywhere else in the world, and if we built that same product in Europe, we would actually have had an easier process to reach the marketplace. However, when we built in Saskatoon the exact same product, it had a tough time getting to the European market.

Therefore, to see this agreement come to fruition is so important, because it has a mechanism in it to get rid of those non-tariff trade barriers. It removes those barriers and gives the ability to take a product that is made here in Canada and sell it into Europe hassle free. I think that is very important. As we start the exercise of selling the products that we make here in Canada into Europe, we are going to find our small and medium enterprises grow and be stronger. We will also be diversifying ourselves in other markets. It is always a healthy thing to have two or three customers instead of just one big customer.

Bilateral trade would increase by 20%, or \$12 billion annually, which is equivalent to adding \$1,000 for the average Canadian family, or adding 80,000 new jobs. However, I would put a condition on that. When we bring in a carbon tax, new taxes for families, and taxes for small and medium enterprises, we lose the benefit. This is the concern I have when we start seeing things like carbon taxes come to Canadian businesses here. After all the work we have done to create markets for them, we would lose the benefit, because we have made their cost of production so high they cannot compete by producing in this country.

It has not sunk in on the other side that when the government raises a tax, it costs somebody money. It brings our costs up higher. We compete on a global stage, and so we have to make sure that we have the lowest production cost so that we can compete fairly on that stage.

Therefore, I would put a word of warning out to our colleagues across the aisle to understand that, as they start bringing in all of these taxes, all this spending, and all these deficits, the people who are going to pay are families. They will not have jobs, because companies that they want to work for cannot build the product that they are making cheaply enough to compete on the global stage due to carbon taxes and other things that the Liberals have put on there. We have to be very careful with that.

In Saskatchewan, CETA will be very important, whether we ship agricultural goods, chemicals, or plastics. The service sector accounts for 57% of the Saskatchewan GDP and employs close to 390,000 people. This is very important to all of those people. I look at the pulse production, and the farmers in the field having that market access to Europe. It is a very wealthy market with people who want the products we grow and the products we produce. It is so important to have access to that market, which can actually pay for stuff.

Again, going back to Flexi-Coil, there were markets that we could actually sell stuff into but could never get paid. There was always a problem with eastern Europe and places like that. We had the product, they wanted the stuff we built, but because they could not pay us, they could not buy it.

Government Orders

•(1615)

In Europe that is not a problem. Europeans can pay. They have the cash. They have the ability to finance. They have the ability to take the products that we make and buy them, but when we put tariffs and restrictions on them, they cannot get access to them. This would remove the restrictions and the tariffs, and I think we will see a lot of componentry from Canada going to Europe. That is good for the environment.

I look at no-tillage. I will use this example. We had a zero-till opener called “Barton opener” with very low disturbance. In Europe right now, if members understand ploughing habits, they go in with a plough, they turn the soil over, and release all the carbon that they sequestered that year by working that ground until it is black and then losing all the advantage from the organic matter and everything else that has built up throughout the year. We took the Barton over, which is a disc opener, a no-till opener, and we would not do that. They would save that one operation of ploughing. They would actually just direct-seed right into the stubble like we do here in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. We would save that carbon in the ground, plant that seed precisely where it needed to be planted, and it would grow in the stubble. That seedling is actually protected by the stubble that is there from the environment. They have kept the organic matter in the soil, and that is also good for the environment. The Europeans were embracing that technology.

One of the issues they had was that we put it on machines that were 40 , 50, and 60 feet wide, where they wanted three, four, and six metres. When we started looking at the sizes we had to take that componentry and built it for that size. We could do that. It was something that we could work on and do. Actually, we could get into three-metre road widths that they wanted us to be into, and actually get into 12 metres and widths beyond that. As their farms are getting bigger in France and former East Germany, they want those types of componentry but they need to get through the roads and the small towns. We could do that. We had the technology. We would do all that work, and then they would bring in homologations and then bring in non-tariff trade barriers.

They would bring up reasons why we could not sell that in Europe. The reality is if we had built that same product in Europe we would not have faced any of those issues. Now, with CETA coming into play, we could build those products here in Canada and our small and medium enterprises could actually sell them into Europe and capitalize on the componentry that they have spent so many dollars researching and developing. That componentry, in this case, will reduce our carbon footprint globally. Again we are helping the environment by improving the CETA deal.

One thing that I think we have to be very careful about is talking about diversifying markets. It is good to see that we are going to go into the Canada–Ukraine free trade agreement. That is very important. I am very disappointed to see that the Prime Minister offered up the NAFTA basically on a silver platter. That really is a major blunder. We heard presidential candidate Santorum saying it was a major blunder by our Prime Minister to do that. Then to have him double down on that is even worse. The reality is the U.S. market is very important. It has always been and will continue to be an important market. Until we see exactly what happens in the U.S.,

I do not think anybody should overreact. We should all just take a step back and wait and see what happens.

One thing we do that is prudent, no matter who is in power in the U.S., is diversify into markets other than the U.S. That is something that the previous Conservative government did by signing close to 35 trade deals across the globe so that our Canadian companies had options other than the U.S. to sell their products and goods into. That is why TPP is very important. That the other countries are willing to go it alone without the U.S. and TPP and Canada is sitting on the sidelines is a mistake. Japan is involved in the TPP and that group of six. Japan is a major client for Canadian businesses. That is the third-largest economy in the world. Now we have CETA on the east, and if we had the TPP on the west, just think what that would mean for Canada's position in the global economy; just think of the markets we would have access to in order to sell products built here in Canada and shipped out of Canada. Nobody else in the world would have that advantage. That was such a good thought process. I give credit to the former trade minister, our former agriculture minister, and former prime minister Harper for thinking through that.

Two-thirds of Canada's GDP or one in five Canadian jobs is tied to trade. CETA is an excellent step in the right direction, but the Prime Minister must pursue these steps even more aggressively. We do not ever want to be at a disadvantage. We do not ever want to be in a scenario where we are tied to one country or one region. That is why I try to make the point that CETA is good for moving forward, TPP is good for moving forward. We have the trade agreements with other countries, which is also good.

Our companies are going to be positioned very well to move into the future as far as market access and non-tariff trade barriers go. Let us not hang them with carbon taxes and other taxes that make it impossible for them to produce the products that they design and make here in Canada. We want products built here so that we have Canadian jobs. Let us make sure that we have the environment for companies to do that.

•(1620)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the hon. member highlight some of the potential benefits of CETA for people in his riding?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I just look at the agriculture sector in my riding, with peas, lentils and pulses. Those are going to Europe, as we speak, tariff-free. When we look at the wheat sector and grain growers, their products are going to Europe tariff-free. The forestry sector is a sector that is really hurting right now. It is feeling the pain of uncertainty because it does not know what is happening with its major market in the U.S. It could pivot into other markets, like Asia, under TPP, or CETA. It gives another option to take the products it makes, 2 x 4s, 2 x 6s, 2 x 8s, and go to other regions of the world. It is not tied to one specific region.

Therefore, when we look at CETA and TPP, and other trade agreements that we do in the future, even between Canada and Ukraine, that is what we are doing. We are giving our small and medium enterprises as many options to sell the good they make to as many people as possible, who really want Canadian-built products.

Government Orders

•(1625)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague said we do not want to be hindered by the treaty, yet this is a treaty that was negotiated by both the previous Conservative government and this Liberal government. It was predicated on the belief that the United Kingdom would be part of this treaty as part of the European Union. Now, with Brexit, we see that that may well not happen. I wonder if he has any concerns that the government does not seem to have done the analysis of what this would mean for the treaty.

This was a treaty we thought we were getting into, because almost half of our trade with Europe was through Britain, and now that may not be covered. I wonder if he could comment on that and the fact that the government does not seem to have done that analysis.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, regardless of the analysis, we still have to move forward. We do not know, and I do not think it is fair to ask the government to know, exactly what Britain leaving the EU would mean for this deal. No one knows. Even the British people do not understand what that means for them, and neither do the Europeans. That has not been negotiated. In fact, I do not think there has even been a proposal put in place between the British and the European Union on what this separation is going to look like and how deeply it will encompass that relationship. Will it keep trade deals in place? It may or may not.

Having said that, if one were to speculate, which is always dangerous in politics, a scenario in which Britain leaves the EU and all of a sudden does not have a trade agreement with Canada, I would encourage the government to hurry up and get one done with Britain. That is very important. It is a big customer of ours. It is a Commonwealth partner, for sure. I would not hesitate. We should be talking to the British as we speak, today, looking at what options there would be if it were to be no longer part of CETA.

However, anything we say here today in regard to that is nothing but pure speculation. That does not mean we hold up the jobs that are sitting there waiting for us with the signing of this agreement.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, at this first opportunity I have to address this piece of legislation, I would like to comment that the minister has done a fantastic job in getting an important agreement signed off to the degree we are now debating it with the idea of ratifying it.

I am quite pleased that the official opposition is supporting this. Even when we were the third party, there seemed to a consensus that CETA was in Canada's best interest. However, not all parties in the House are of that same opinion.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts as to why it is important that we pass this legislation in a relatively timely fashion. We now have the agreement. It is all signed off. Perhaps he could share his thoughts on how quickly he would like to see the bill passed.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I will remind members of the amount of consultations that went on in the previous government. In fact, the committee did a study across Canada. At that point in time, the NDP member of the committee was in favour of CETA. In fact, when we talked to the unions, they were definitely looking at CETA

and saying it was a good agreement, that we should be behind it. That is why I am surprised to see the NDP position here today.

Every province, whether Liberal, Conservative, or NDP, has managed to sign off on the agreement, saying that we should get it done. They are excited about it. They see the jobs and the growth that could happen with it. Look at the opportunities that would be lost if the NDP had its way, and we would basically stall and do nothing. The reality is, the European Union is going to move forward with the agreement. There will be a provisional agreement in place here by the new year. We should be in place also. The jobs will start to happen and be created. That is very important in our environment in Canada today. With the insecurity in North American right now from the change in the presidency, the reality is that if we could have that European market ready to roll, that is good. However, we have to put in place the things that small and medium enterprises need to take advantage of that market. Therefore, I will be challenging the Liberal government to make sure it puts those things in place so we can take full benefit of this trade agreement.

•(1630)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherbrooke, Canada Revenue Agency; the hon. member for Salaberry—Suroit, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Hochelaga, Indigenous Affairs.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to recognize the excellent work of my colleagues from Abbotsford and Battlefords—Lloydminster. In their speeches today, they gave a good overview of why we are all gathered here today to talk about C-30, which was introduced in the House by the Minister of International Trade. My colleagues talked about all the work that led up to this economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union. They spoke about the difficulties encountered and the work done under the leadership of former prime minister Stephen Harper. He was able to obtain the unanimous support of his troops and convince them that an agreement with our European Union neighbours was critical. This government had a vision that it shared with its team, and today we are seeing the fruits of that labour with the introduction of Bill C-30. We firmly believe that this is a good agreement that will be good for Canadians.

I will talk about two very interesting topics: the work that was done and the current situation, and what we can gain from this agreement or how it will benefit our regions and our ridings. Then I will talk about the small mistakes that sometimes happen when conducting negotiations and when we want to have our cake and eat it too, as it seems to be the case with the government, especially when it comes to dairy producers.

Government Orders

By introducing this bill, the government is taking a lot of credit for finalizing this agreement with the European Union. As we know, however, negotiations were well under way and the agreement was practically finalized in 2014. If not for the government's desire to reopen this agreement, we could have finalized it quite some time ago and this bill would have been introduced much earlier in the House of Commons. It almost did not materialize, but, fortunately, the Europeans discerned the imminent danger and were able to rally around a position that, although not quite as positive as in the previous agreement, is now acceptable and will open many markets for Canada.

The main goal of the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement is to promote trade by reducing tariffs between the European Union and Canada and harmonizing standards and regulations, which governments and businesses call non-tariff barriers.

The previous Conservative government worked on this agreement, which will provide privileged access to a market of 500 million consumers. This trade agreement will give Canadian service providers, which employ more than 13.8 million Canadians and account for 70% of Canada's GDP, the best market access that the European Union has ever given its free trade partners. This agreement will establish greater transparency in the European Union services market by ensuring more secure and predictable access.

It is worth mentioning that Canada and the European Union conducted a joint study that supported launching negotiations and concluded that a trade agreement between the European Union and Canada could stimulate and boost bilateral trade by 20% and inject \$12 billion per year into the Canadian economy. That is the economic equivalent of adding \$1,000 to the average Canadian family's income or creating 80,000 new jobs in our economy.

Conservatives are very proud of the fact that signing this agreement may help improve the Liberal government's economic performance. If the Liberal government's economic performance improves, Canadians' economic situation will improve too. It seems to me that they need a helping hand with that, and we are extremely pleased to have made such an invaluable contribution.

This is all about hard work and trade, so I would like to talk about a company in my riding that celebrated the grand opening of a \$35-million investment project on March 21. The company is called Fruit d'Or, and its president is Martin Le Moine. We marked the grand opening of a new cranberry processing plant in Plessisville. I will read part of what *La Tribune* had to say about it:

● (1635)

We are producing 20% faster than before and we are producing better products. This investment will help us better position ourselves in the free trade agreement with Europe and help us maintain our position as a leader in organic cranberry production.

Now that is what a free trade agreement is about, and that is an example of a business with a vision, one that believed in the previous government and believed that the government would continue on that path. What will this mean? This will create jobs in my riding and in Canada, and jobs in an industry that is super important.

Having visited that business myself for the official opening, I can say that the president is incredibly and exceptionally dynamic. He is

truly dedicated to and passionate about his business. I am convinced that all Canadians will benefit from this new passion. However, there is still work to be done. Like Fruit d'Or, everyone needs to invest, and the investments made today will benefit everyone in the future.

The mayor of Plessisville, Mario Fortin, mentioned that it was the largest investment anyone had made in Plessisville in recent years. This is the direct result of an agreement that had not yet been signed, one that we were certain would be signed. This will produce results. Why? Because people have a vision.

Some people in my riding are happy, but some are not, including dairy farmers. They think the Liberals want to have their cake and eat it too, in that the compensation program announced at the conclusion of the agreement with the European Union is not nearly good enough. It is rather ironic that our dairy producers, without whom we could not make cake, are being shortchanged by the changes made to the compensation program that we put in place to ensure that they could weather the difficult transition period as this large market, the European Union, opens.

I want to share some comments by a dairy farmer in my riding, Michel Couture, who says he is rather worried. He laments the small \$250-million contribution for dairy farmers. By telling his story, I hope to paint a clearer picture of the reality of a dairy farmer.

In 2014, he made some improvements to his farm that helped him streamline his processes. How much did he invest? He had to make upgrades of \$1.4 million to remain competitive. He made them because he believes in the future of his industry. Today he is being told that he will receive \$4,500 a year over five years in compensation as an incentive to upgrade his equipment. I will read what he said because his words carry more weight than mine: "... what can you do with that amount of money?"

We are talking about \$4,500 in the hope that farmers and dairy producers will invest \$1.4 million to modernize and meet the new challenges arising from the free trade agreement. Farmers and dairy producers do not have it easy. They have a lot of work. It is a little bit like playing the lottery for them. They invest a lot of their own money, several thousands of dollars, to purchase equipment and remain competitive, without really knowing the outcome or financial return, and without being listened to by this government, which has not even been able to resolve the diafiltered milk issue after one year.

What can be done to restore our dairy farmers' confidence and really encourage them to invest and profit from this free trade agreement? What the government needs to do is send them a clear message that they will be properly compensated. I urge the government to draw inspiration from the compensation programs that we put in place for dairy producers, the same way it drew inspiration from the negotiations we held to enter into this free trade agreement with the European Union.

Government Orders

In closing, I must say that I am very pleased with the work that the previous government did to make this agreement a reality. I am very pleased to know that, today, Canadian companies and SMEs will have access to a market of 500 million consumers on one side and 300 million on the other, putting Canada in an enviable position compared to other countries in the world.

• (1640)

However, we will continue to be very vigilant and hold the government to account in order to ensure that Canadians reap the benefits of free trade, not only as a result of the agreement with the European Union, but also as a result of other free trade agreements that are currently being negotiated, such as the much talked-about trans-Pacific partnership, which is just as important.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the support of the member from Mégantic—L'Érable for CETA.

This morning, members spoke about how important it was to make sure that every country in Europe was on board, whether they are left- or right-leaning, and about how we did that.

The question that I want to ask my colleague pertains more specifically to the diafiltered milk issue, which he mentioned in his speech. We agree that this is an important issue. The Conservatives say that they support supply management, but I would like to remind them that they are the ones who dismantled the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I will continue to talk about the benefits of the free trade agreement between Canada and the European Union.

The hon. member across the way says that the Liberals support our position on diafiltered milk. However, not a single thing has been done about it in the past year. They try to distract us by raising all sorts of other topics that have nothing to do with what we are talking about today. They are unable to resolve the diafiltered milk issue and they are unable to give dairy farmers reasonable compensation, much less in an open and transparent way. In fact, they have done the opposite. They have failed to do every single thing they told dairy farmers they would do from the very beginning. They are doing the opposite.

I do not think that the hon. member is in any position to lecture me on dairy farmers.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. We do not often see eye to eye on international agreements, but the NDP also laments the Liberals' inadequate compensation for dairy farmers.

In my riding, Salaberry—Suroît, Lord knows that many dairy farmers are counting on being compensated for being used as bargaining chips in this treaty process.

There is another key aspect of the treaty that we do not understand. In committee, the Liberals recently moved a motion in camera prohibiting interest groups or experts from tabling any briefs. They decided to receive briefs from witnesses physically appearing before the committee only. There is therefore no transparency. As such, a host of experts will not be able to submit certain information.

That is quite worrisome because informed decisions cannot be made without all the necessary information.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about this.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I am not a member of that committee, but I have spoken with some of my colleagues about how things are going, and it seems to be doing fantastic work.

What is clear is that the government is talking out of both sides of its mouth. Although it has been vaunting its transparency since the start of its mandate, now it is imposing restrictions regarding the witnesses who appear before committee to share their fears and concerns. This is exactly the same doublespeak it has engaged in for the past year regarding dairy farmers, as the member was saying.

The problem with this government is that it is completely out of touch with the regions. It does not understand the significance of dairy farmers and all farmers in our regions. It is important to point that out. Where I come from, a dairy farmer is more than just someone who produces milk. It is a small business that supports other businesses, like the gas station and the tractor dealer, for example. That is what SMEs are all about. That is what today's Canada is all about. It is not only Canada's big cities that matter. The regions matter. That is my Canada, and I will continue to support it.

• (1645)

[English]

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in this chamber today to support the comprehensive economic trade agreement. Before I begin, I want to extend my thanks to the Minister of International Trade for her diligent and tireless work in getting this agreement across the finish line. Congratulations to the minister, her parliamentary secretary, her team, and the countless others who worked on this critical file both here at home and across the Atlantic.

Mr. Speaker, before I continue, I would like to let you know that I am splitting my time with the member for Calgary Skyview.

I would also like to thank the previous minister of international trade, the member for Abbotsford, for his hard work on this deal as well.

This chamber is rightly the place of robust debate, one where competing ideas are exchanged, defended, and challenged. However, one thing all members on all sides of the House can agree on is the importance of trade as an economic driver.

Canada is a trading nation. Fostering strong and productive trading relationships is how we open new markets, grow and strengthen Canadian businesses, and create good-paying middle-class jobs from coast to coast to coast.

In negotiating CETA, the minister was very clear. This was not about getting just any deal. It was about getting the right deal for Canada, one that would achieve our objective of growing our economy and expanding opportunities for Canadian businesses while offering Canadian consumers more choice, and often lower prices. I am thrilled to see the final product achieve these goals.

Government Orders

CETA sets the standard for modern, progressive trade deals. It fully reflects the values and priorities Canadians expect our international agreements to adhere to and embrace. CETA was negotiated to uphold environmental protection and to respect the signatories' right to regulate standards that protect the public, including in the areas of health, safety, and labour. It is a deal that promotes good government, consumer protection, environmental protection, and employee rights, all core values and guiding principles for Canada and for Canadians.

Canadians can feel good about this deal. What is more, Canadians can be proud that this deal serves as a model for other progressive countries to emulate. It represents Canada and has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership on an inclusive, progressive approach to global trade.

I also want to talk about the real-world impact this agreement will have on Canada's trade with Europe, the opportunity it presents for Canadian businesses, and how it sets the stage for the growth of Canada as a destination for increased foreign investment.

CETA gives Canadian companies preferred access to the European Union's more than 500 million customers. Their combined economy generates more than \$20 trillion in annual economic activity. A closer trading relationship with the EU gives Canadian firms access to more Fortune 500 companies than anywhere else in the world, including the United States. In short, CETA provides Canadian businesses with an unrivalled competitive advantage.

Presently, about 25% of EU tariff lines on which Canadian goods are exported enter the EU duty free. On day one of CETA's entry into force, 98% of EU tariff lines will be duty free for goods that originate in Canada. Over the following seven years, a further 1% of these tariffs will be eliminated. As such, CETA will provide Canadian exporters with a massive advantage in a competitive European market.

I would also like to speak more broadly about our government's approach to trade. Maximizing the benefits from international trade and ensuring that Canadian businesses are successful in world markets is part of a whole of government approach for us. We know that supporting and expanding trade does not start and end with negotiations of trade deals. For Canadian businesses to be successful competitors and maximize growth under this agreement, they need a government that will work with them to ensure success in the new market. Such partnerships are how we use deals like CETA to create wealth and jobs for Canadians.

●(1650)

Trade is much more than imports and exports. It is also about attracting the skills and foreign investment needed to ensure that Canadian companies can excel. That is why I am thrilled by the announcements made by the hon. Minister of Finance in his fall economic statement.

Companies from around the world are looking for stable places to invest and grow their businesses, and we want to make sure that Canada is at the top of their list. The invest in Canada hub announced by the minister in the House earlier this month is designed to do just that. A brand new federal body, the invest in Canada hub is a high-impact sales force dedicated to promoting

direct foreign investment in Canada. It will work in partnership with other federal and provincial trade and international affairs bodies to ensure Canada's success in attracting ongoing, impactful, and sustainable foreign investment.

Similarly, the recently announced global skills strategy will help ensure that Canadian companies have the talent they need to thrive. The initiative will look at reducing red tape, which can cause undue challenges for companies looking to attract the high-skilled employees they need. It also aims to make Canada more attractive to global companies that are making large investments, looking to relocate to Canada, expanding production, and creating new Canadian jobs.

The strongest trading relationships in the world will not translate into economic growth in Canada if we do not have the infrastructure to support the movement of goods to market. That is why, over the next 11 years, the government will invest \$10.1 billion in trade and transportation projects. These projects will be focused on providing efficient routes to international markets and on reducing congestion and bottlenecks along vital corridors.

We all know how vital it is that Canadian businesses be able to get their goods to market efficiently, but we also have to do so in a safe, sustainable, and secure way. That is why, from our new national oceans protection plan to the Minister of Transport's focus on improving rail safety, we are seeing a commitment to improving our trade infrastructure in a way that protects Canadians, their communities, and the environment.

The announcements in the fall economic statement reflect the whole of government approach we are taking with regard to trade. Investments in infrastructure, our innovation agenda, and our commitment to job skills training, for example, complement trade and reinforce our commitment to sustainable economic growth. Working together, these will help to ensure that the Canadian economy is strong and growing.

We are prioritizing inclusive, long-term growth for all sectors of the economy and all regions of the country. CETA is one of many exciting initiatives to help us get there. I encourage all members to support its passage in the House.

Last year, our government committed to delivering on CETA at the earliest possible opportunity. I am proud to stand here today as we take another step toward implementation. I once again extend my congratulations to the Minister of International Trade and her team for their excellent work in moving this agreement forward.

Government Orders

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and government members would know that the Green Party has opposed this trade agreement for specific reasons, particularly the investor-state provisions. It is time for us to sit back and look at the history, starting with chapter 11 of NAFTA, and have what this country has never had, which is a full opportunity for debate and discussion on whether foreign corporations should have superior rights over domestic corporations to bring arbitration cases against other countries. In this case, Canada has had more arbitration cases than many other industrialized countries, and lost them, under chapter 11 of NAFTA. India is looking at this again and is saying that it is not going to go into any new ones. Australia is saying the same thing.

Would my hon. colleague agree that it is time to open a discussion on whether we should have been involved in investor-state agreements at all and whether we should not have another look at the one within CETA?

• (1655)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, CETA is a gold standard agreement, one in which many progressive countries will look to replicate in the years to come.

Canada is taking a leadership role in receiving the CETA agreement from the previous government, looking at that agreement and making some changes to make it a little more reflective and progressive to ensure Canadians, Canadian businesses, Canadian companies are protected, but at the same time are allowed access to markets that will allow them to be a little more competitive, allow members and companies in my riding to compete on a global scale by reducing some of the tariffs that currently exist with our European markets.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the hon. member a little about consultations. Back in 2012, when the Liberals were in opposition, they wrote a dissenting opinion in the 2012 report that further consultation with Canadians was needed on CETA.

When we compare the consultations that have been held with the TPP, we have had 400 witnesses before the trade committee and submissions from approximately 60,000 Canadians, on this agreement, the implementation legislation is enacted a day after it is signed and is brought before Parliament to be rushed through. Furthermore, the Liberal-dominated trade committee has refused to hear any submissions except from witnesses who are appearing.

I cannot believe the Liberal members on that trade committee did that without the cabinet leaning heavily on them. Therefore, why is the Liberal dominated trade committee forcing this through without allow proper submissions from Canadians across the country, not just those who have the means to appear before the trade committee?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I do not sit on that committee, so I cannot speak directly to that. However, I want to reinforce and underscore the fact that this government has been very open, transparent and engaged with Canadians.

We have taken an opportunity to lead by example and have had very robust dialogue with Canadians on all sides, across all ministries. We find that very important.

Let me reinforce the fact that this is the gold standard of progressive trade deals, and the minister has consulted widely. We have been open and transparent. We are pursuing trade in a fair and responsible way. We want to reduce inequality and have a very inclusive growth in our economy. I continue to invite our colleagues to stay involved in this discussion.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell my colleague how strongly this CETA agreement is supported in my riding, especially by the rural part of my riding. I have an urban-rural riding. However, the impact this will have on our agricultural industry is profound. I thank the government for proceeding with CETA.

The one question I have is whether her government will honour the commitment our government made to the dairy sector and also to the fishing sector in terms of the fishers investment fund.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague pointed out, CETA will open new agriculture and agrifood markets to Europe. We are very committed to ensuring the Canadian businesses thrive and succeed under this agreement.

As he is well aware, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has pointed out that the federal government has provided \$350 million to our dairy farmers: \$250 million for our dairy farmers to innovate, and \$100 million to ensure that our processors are in a better position.

We are listening and taking stock of what our dairy farmers are saying, and ensuring that our agriculture sector is strong and thriving in Canada.

• (1700)

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in support of the government implementation bill, Bill C-30, for the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement, CETA, and about the government's ongoing progressive trade agenda.

Canada is a trading nation and our government recognizes the importance of supporting free and open international trade for our collective prosperity. However, in many countries in the western industrialized world, there is a growing populist backlash against immigration, international trade, and globalization in general.

Beyond what we have seen in recent months from political campaigns in the U.S., the most recent report from the World Trade Organization and other international institutions on trade barriers, published in June, noted that G20 economies introduced 145 new trade restrictive measures between mid-October 2015 and mid-May 2016. That is 21 a month, the highest monthly average since 2009.

Government Orders

This is an issue of global concern, but it is particularly worrisome for a trade dependent country such as Canada. As a medium-sized economy competing in the global marketplace, Canada has long recognized that free and open trade is critical for our economic prosperity. That is why CETA and the government's broader progressive trade agenda are so important for Canada's continued economic prosperity.

People around the world are feeling powerless and anxious in the face of unceasing change. Globalization and technological change have created wealth and opportunities for many. However, parts of the middle class and those working hard to join it feel they are falling behind. Their concerns are not entirely wrong.

Credit Suisse found that the top 1% of the world's population owns 50% of its wealth. The bottom 50% combined owns less than 1%. People with a net worth of less than \$10,000 account for 71% of the world's adult population.

Trade, immigration and international openness are increasingly blamed for economic hardships and inequality. However, our government believes we cannot turn our backs on trade or turn back the clock on globalization. Done properly, increased trade can raise living standards, create more jobs, increase prosperity, and help to strengthen the middle class. Closing our borders will only lead us to a less prosperous and more closed-off, insular, and fearful world. This is one of the reasons that our government is pursuing a progressive trade agenda in concert with our like-minded partners around the world.

The progressive trade agenda advances higher standards of living and fosters sustainable and inclusive economic growth. It includes an emphasis on transparent and inclusive approaches. The government is committed to a consultative process on international trade that allows all segments of our society to contribute and be heard. It will ensure that governments can continue to pursue broad societal objectives.

The government firmly believes governments should defend the best interests of their people, particularly the most vulnerable. It ensures the government's continued right to regulate. It supports strong rules on food safety, consumer protection and the environment in addition to world-class publicly funded health care, and other public services.

Our trade agenda will continue to actively promote labour rights and strong environmental protections. It will also include a more progressive approach to an investment dispute resolution that is recognized as fair, open and impartial, including exploring the establishment of a multilateral approach.

We are still in the early stages of developing this new approach to trade for Canada, but we can already see some concrete results. The landmark example of the progressive trade agenda so far is CETA. CETA will create economic opportunities for Canadians across the country, and will do so in a progressive way that is in keeping with the inclusive values of Canada and the EU.

• (1705)

CETA's progressive provisions include stand-alone chapters dedicated to labour, the environment and sustainable development, a very clear recognition of the right of governments to regulate in the

public interest, making the process of the resolution of investment disputes more independent and fair, and further increasing its transparency.

On that last point, Canada and the EU have truly innovated with the most progressive investment dispute resolution mechanism to date. In CETA, we have moved away from ad hoc arbitration and established permanent tribunals. CETA establishes a new process for the selection of permanent tribunal members, sets detailed commitments on ethics for all tribunal members, and introduces an appellate system, which, in sum, demonstrates Canada's leadership in promoting progressive 21st century investment protection provisions.

Beyond these progressive provisions, CETA will translate into real benefits for Canadians and contribute to Canada's long term prosperity. CETA addresses the full range of conditions that shape modern international trade, including goods, services, investment, intellectual property, government procurement, non-tariff measures, regulatory co-operation, and more.

It also covers issues never before included in any of Canada's previous trade agreements, including NAFTA. For example, CETA is the first to include a stand-alone chapter on co-operation in regulatory matters. Another unique feature of CETA is its protocol on conformity assessment, which will allow Canadian producers in a number of sectors to have their products tested and certified for the EU market right in Canada.

In many areas, Canada and the EU have negotiated market access and improved conditions for trade that go beyond the NAFTA. For example, in the area of public procurement, CETA is the first to cover all levels of government in Canada and the EU. Once implemented, CETA will set the stage for progressive trade agreements fit for the 21st century. Our government is proud of signing that agreement.

This government has been proactive from day one in placing emphasis on the importance of supporting the middle class, transparency, and broadening consultations on trade agreements. In other words, Canada saw the need for change in this area early on and put things into motion before most others, and remains ahead of the pack.

Going forward, the government will continue to advance progressive approaches in other trade initiatives, including bilateral and regional trade agreements and at the World Trade Organization, and will be looking to co-operate on these issues with like-minded partners around the world.

Government Orders

We welcome the views of all citizens and parliamentarians on how Canada can advance this more progressive approach to trade for our collective prosperity.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I asked a question earlier of the member's colleague, and I do not think we got a clear answer.

Again, I am of the agreement, especially the benefits it will bring to our agricultural sector, including beef and pork, and grain and oil seeds. However, I would like to know whether the Liberal government is committed to following through on the commitment that our government made to support the dairy sector, as well as to provide funding for the Newfoundland and Labrador fisheries investment fund.

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, \$350 million has been put aside for agriculture.

This agreement literally covers everything we are trying to do. CETA will open a big market for our farmers and fishermen. Instead of 38 million consumers, there will be some 350 million. Our products are going to go to 28 nations. We are creating a big market. I do not see any reason why our farmers and our fishermen cannot compete.

Trade is going to bring in more jobs, as we know from NAFTA. When I moved to Calgary, the population was 390,000. It is 1.4 million now. If it was not for trade, we would not be growing our economies in Alberta and in Canada.

• (1710)

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech in the House.

I just want to add a few more comments about the answer we just got.

The dairy sector and fine cheese production in Canada will suffer enormous losses because of the Canada-Europe trade agreement. We are talking annual losses of \$150 million. The plan announced by the Liberal government is not good enough. It is important to listen to producers, but just listening to them is not enough. The government has to act. We need to have a transition support plan that truly mitigates the negative and damaging effects of the Canada-Europe trade agreement.

Quebec dairy producers are asking for an additional \$750 million in assistance. Can the member across the aisle confirm that Quebec dairy producers and fine cheese makers will get that transition assistance?

[English]

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture has been talking to the farmers. He has been consulting the farmers. Canadians have always helped each other, and if need be, maybe the government will look at it at that point in time. However, right now, I think the \$150 million that farmers are getting should be enough for now.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, my colleague has always been a very strong advocate for his constituents and the residents of Calgary, and I appreciate the many things he raises. Could he comment on how important it is for his constituents, indeed for the country, that we recognize that trade helps create those crucial middle-class jobs? A healthier middle class means a healthier economy.

Could the member talk about the importance to his community those new middle-class jobs?

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang: Mr. Speaker, Canada has been a trading nation from day one. I have been living in Calgary since 1970, and then came the oil sands development. If it were not for trade, we would not have that big development today. Back then, even in Alberta, it was like a country. We were not a global village back then, but now the world has become a global village.

With trade, there is more competition, which will create jobs. It also helps the consumer, because if we had a wall around our country, there would be no competition, and every consumable would be expensive. Trade also benefits the other countries, and we can look at NAFTA as an example.

When I was an MLA, I always said that we should go to India, and our senior Prime Minister Trudeau used to say that we should go to Pacific countries for trade. Therefore, we should not keep all of our eggs in one basket.

By negotiating this free trade deal, I think we are bringing more prosperity to the country, to Alberta, and to my riding of Calgary Skyview.

• (1715)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to stand to talk about CETA, which we have been discussing all day. It is quite a topic of discussion.

First, I want to congratulate both the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster and the member for Abbotsford, who both spoke. If anyone missed those speeches, they really need to hear them.

I also want to mention that my time will be split with the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

How did we swing this? Someone has to be asking that question. How does a nation the size of Canada do this? We all know, as Canadians, that this is the greatest country on earth, but it is very possible that the rest of the world does not realize that fact. We are not the most populous by any stretch of the imagination. We do not have the largest GDP. How did we manage to swing this kind of deal?

We heard from the two members I mentioned previously. We have a great negotiating team, as well. However, I would suggest that one of the key reasons is the position that Canada is in. That is the first point I want to talk about, how Canada positioned itself as it moved forward with this deal.

Government Orders

I want to take members back to 2008, when there was a horrendous crash globally. The banking system was in disarray and countries all over the world were scrambling. I remember having a conversation with the then finance minister, Jim Flaherty. He said we were so close to total collapse that it was so important for nations to come together and to do the right things. Canada was part of that, as well.

One of the commitments that nations had to make was to invest, to pour money into the economy. As the banks were on the verge of collapse, and countries and businesses too, it was important that all nations participated. Canada did as well, but we took a different approach. We took an approach that did not continue in that direction, but one with a clear target to come out of deficit within a period of time. That was precisely the position that Canada was in at the end of 2014, when we had moved from a deficit into a positive position and our economy was the envy of the G-7.

I would suggest, as well, that for a small country, negotiating a trade agreement with an organization like the European Union, with 500 million people and the largest economy, is somewhat of a fantastic thing to do. I think we ought to be proud as Canadians. We have heard that quite a bit today in many of the speeches, that we should be proud we were able to do that.

However, I would also caution that it is the very position we are in that needs to be maintained, that we need to continue on that path. We saw the Prime Minister in Argentina this weekend, talking about trade deals. I would like to say to the Prime Minister that that country has a rather seedy reputation, having been known to wench on some of its deals. We would never do that in this country, and other countries know that as well. Subsequently, countries that have that kind of reputation do not get to come to the foreground and make deals like the one we did here in Canada.

My message to the Liberal government would be to maintain the trajectory that the previous Conservative set out in 2008 and handed over to it in 2014.

The second thing I would like to consider is that we are the gateway to the United States. There there are many in the European Union who see this as an excellent opportunity to move products through Canada and into the United States. My riding of Chatham-Kent—Leamington lies next to Detroit. We were able, as a government, to begin the process, and that process is well under way with the Gordie Howe international bridge at the most important and busiest crossing in North America.

● (1720)

It is more than important, but imperative that we make sure that project moves to fruition. I would encourage and implore the current Liberal government to keep its foot on the gas pedal, and not to stop that.

It is hard work. We heard from both of our members who were responsible for initiating and working this deal. Our former minister of agriculture and our former minister of trade talked about how much work was done. It is probably for that reason that many other countries do not set out on this kind of endeavour. It is because it is hard work. It was hard work to begin those negotiations with the Americans to have that corridor to Windsor expanded and to make

the necessary deals with the Americans to have that bridge put into place too. We are not there at this point. There has been some suggestion that those workings are going to be slowed down. It is imperative that the government continue on to make sure that that corridor is finished, just as it has done with this particular deal with Europe, which we give the government credit for.

There are 28 countries with a myriad of languages in the European Union. We have in Canada a number of cultures, and here I am specifically talking about Chatham-Kent—Leamington. Today we began the session with the motion that October become German heritage month, and a good suggestion it is. We have had many fine German immigrants throughout the years who have helped make Canada the great country that it is, but so many of us are from Europe. In my riding, the Italians have done a marvellous job with the greenhouse industry. The Dutch have done an incredible job in the greenhouse industry and in farming as well. We have the Scots. We have the Portuguese, who are involved in fishing. All of those industries will be important to our European friends. As well, with what those industries have to offer it will be important that they move it through this corridor. They will be looking to us and looking for the diaspora in our regions to help them with that.

This agreement is good for all of Canada. I see in the chamber today some of the members who are on the trade committee, which has travelled across Canada. We have had the good opportunity to talk about another trade deal, but we know that the same principles are true with this trade deal, whether we go to B.C. with its lumber and minerals; Alberta; Saskatchewan with its oil, minerals, and mining; or Manitoba. Our former agriculture minister pointed out how important it was that we expand some of our trade positions and that we make sure we have another opportunity, and not to put all of our eggs in one basket, but that farmers and the pork producers have another opportunity. They were excited about that too. In Ontario, we have lost a manufacturing base, but we still have a very strong manufacturing base in a lot of segments. Bombardier was spoken about a bit earlier, as well as the service industries that are so big. In Quebec, again there is mining and the service industries. In the Maritimes and Newfoundland there is the seafood industry.

The opportunities are immense, and for Canadians this deal is excellent. It would provide prosperity, but there are obligations on the government to ensure that the deal not only comes to fruition but also becomes a better deal and continues to help make Canadians thrive in the future.

As my time is coming to an end, I would say that much work has been done but there is still much work to be done. Let us continue to be vigilant and be sure that we in the House provide the proper services so this deal will make this country that much greater.

● (1725)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, in the riding I represent, North Island—Powell River, we have small business owners who work hard every day who are trading with different countries. I also have a broad number of seniors who are coming to live in my riding, and those who have been in the riding, in some cases for their whole lives. One of the concerns I have with the agreement is the fact that medicine will increase substantially.

Government Orders

We need to fight for those benefits for small business. They are the backbone of our economy. They make jobs in our smaller communities especially. We need to support them. I am looking forward to seeing some of these opportunities benefit them. However, at the same time, we have to make sure that the benefits do not punish substantial groups who really need that support.

What are the members thoughts on pharmaceutical medication and making sure that people have affordable medicine in our country?

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Madam Speaker, that particular question was asked across the nation as well. We heard that from west to east. We spent quite an amount of time in committee discussing that too.

We have to understand that we are a small country. As such, we have a smaller group who are being sold to. Presently, we are one of jurisdictions with the highest pharmaceutical costs. I would suggest, and this was heard at committee as well, that rather than causing medicine to become more expensive, a trade agreement could in fact make the prices drop. It is something we must continue to monitor and make sure we are watching. I know the government will do that. I know the provincial governments will work on their behalf as well. Again, I think there are good things in store for pharmaceuticals as well.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member's speech with great interest, and heard him specifically say that the stable banking system was something that his government deserves credit for, knowing full well that it was Jim Flaherty and Conservatives and the big banks that wanted us to massively deregulate the banking system prior to 2008. A Liberal government refused to do that.

I also heard that renegeing on deals was not something that the government should do, keeping in mind the previous government renegeed on a deal with Newfoundland for about \$289 million in compensation that was part of the negotiation. Again, this is advice given to us from the other side about what not to do, which is basically follow their advice. I also note that the other thing they said was that prior to 2008, when they already had gone into deficit prior to the meltdown, when they cashed out the surplus left to them by a Liberal government, the government said it was very important in troubled economic times to invest heavily into infrastructure. Realizing that you had to prorogue Parliament, collapse your previous budget, and do what the opposition said to achieve that, is there any advice you would not follow yourself, but you would be free to give to us?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I must remind the parliamentary secretary to address the questions to the Chair.

The hon. member for Chatham—Kent—Leamington.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Madam Speaker, those were a lot of questions, and I am trying to think of which one I should address.

The advice I would give is to get your facts straight.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that I do have my facts straight, and I would ask you, the member, to address the Chair and not individuals. I know

that both members have been in the House long enough to remember that.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Madam Speaker, I apologize.

If I could have 20 minutes, I would certainly be glad to address all those questions, but I have only one minute left, so I will not have time. However, it would be a great topic of debate, and I would love to get into that with him at some point.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have a good and enthusiastic debate going on here today. I have to compliment my colleague who just spoke. He talked about encouraging the Liberals to keep their foot on the gas with respect to this. However, often watching the Liberals and the way they are doing things is like watching teenagers go joyriding. We see their hair blowing in the wind, but there does not seem to be any purpose in what they are doing. Sometimes we wonder if anybody is steering over there. They are racing all over the place, but we do not think anybody is steering.

It is certainly not about getting attention. Providing leadership in Canada is important. It is about giving direction. We would encourage the members opposite to begin to do that for Canadians. Thankfully, the Liberals have us to depend on. We delivered a trade deal for them. We gave them a trade deal that was pretty much negotiated and signed. It was all ready to be wrapped up and presented, and the Liberals did everything they could to mess it up by tinkering with it. Thankfully, they were not able to wreck it, and now we are here today with them actually supporting it.

We are excited to see the Liberals actually supporting one good thing this year. CETA has certainly been that. It is a trade deal that gives increased access to the world's largest economic unit. It gives us the opportunity to begin to mature our trade relationship with the European Union. Any country that gets access to a market of 500 million people, almost 30 countries, needs to take that opportunity.

This is the world's largest import market. I did not know this until today, but their imports are of a higher value than the entire GDP of our country. It is a huge market that we are able to access. We look forward to being able to do that. They have economic activity, every year, of \$20 trillion. I certainly think Canada can find a place, somewhere in there, to be able to benefit from this agreement.

Obviously our side of the House has a history of pursuing trade agreements. The Conservatives have been champions of that over the years, and less so on the other side of the House. We will maybe go into that a little. NAFTA, from the 1980s, has turned out to be probably the most successful trade agreement ever made. We do about \$2 billion of trade a day now with the United States. It is an incredibly effective and efficient trading relationship.

There are tens of thousands of jobs that are tied to the trade that goes back and forth. It probably has the strongest economic ties in the world, even given the European Union and its structure. It is probably the most positive trade relationship in the world, and we look forward to continuing that. We hope that is something that the government cannot mess up.

Government Orders

I guess we were surprised, when the president-elect in the United States was even suggesting that he wanted to talk to Canada about NAFTA, that the government would get down on one knee and ask him if he would possibly renegotiate that with them. It seemed like a very strange position to take, and yet our government moved ahead with that. I think it was naive. It was far too premature to be able to make those suggestions, but the government has done that already. We hope that will not impact NAFTA in any negative way.

Our government was also responsible for 46 trade agreements. I was here early in the 2000s when Doha was the big thing. That was the one trade initiative that everyone seemed to be focused on. I remember going to Geneva in 2003, representing our party, and seeing the negotiations that were going on there. It gradually faded out. The government was not able to get an agreement.

One of the things that concerned me and others in our caucus at the time was to understand that the Liberal government had no trade capacity in terms of putting these deals together. It was not that interested in looking anywhere else for trade agreements. It did not get it done. It did not pursue them. I think there were maybe two agreements over the entire time that the Liberals were in power. Trade was not an important issue to the Liberal government.

We came in, and it took a couple of years to build that trade capacity. It took a while to get it up and running, so that we could actually do the negotiating. In the seven or eight years after that, it was remarkable that we were able to get almost four dozen trade agreements done. I do not know if there has been any record of success like that around the world.

Now we are sitting here with CETA, and thankfully the government is supporting that. Hopefully it will not do anything further that would hinder that, and will move ahead as quickly as possible.

We also want to encourage the government on TPP. TPP has been a good initiative. It is something that we hope the government will be supporting enthusiastically. I know the trade minister said almost a year ago that it was not her job to promote those kinds of things, specifically the TPP, but we certainly hope that attitude has changed.

● (1730)

We saw an initiative on the weekend by six countries to try to put together an agreement like the TPP and move ahead with it, even if the United States is not going to go. We do not know if it has made a decision on that yet. We have heard some rhetoric. That trade agreement between countries would be phenomenal, whether the United States was in it or not. We need access to that part of the world, and the arrangements that have been made so far with respect to the TPP and the negotiations that have been done would be only good for Canada. We look forward to seeing the TPP move ahead as well. I would ask the government to keep its foot on the gas. On this one, we ask that it steers in the right direction and gets it done as well.

Trade is critical to my area. I have talked about this previously, but I probably need to highlight again for my constituents that we have a number of things going on in our riding that are very important and critical not only for our riding but for supporting the economy of this country.

Agriculture is a big thing there. We have dryland grains and oilseeds. We have pulses and lentils. Pulses and lentils grown in my riding go around the world. The majority of those pulses and lentils grown in western Canada now are exported. We need an export market to continue to develop those agricultural industries.

In these trade agreements, agriculture is always the biggest trade impediment. The biggest trade barriers are set up around agriculture. We encourage the government to take that seriously and to try to remove those barriers so that our folks can trade around the world.

Beef and pork, as well, come from our area. Beef always has a lot of trade barriers around it. We encourage the government to take a strong stand. The former minister of agriculture, who is my seatmate now, was instrumental in pushing back the COOL legislation in the United States. We worked on that for almost 10 years, and we were able to win those battles at the WTO and finally begin moving our beef more easily into the United States. We hope this issue will not raise its ugly head, or any other part, in the near future.

Energy is obviously important to all of us, particularly those of us who have oil and gas in our ridings. We would like to see pipelines moving these products. We know that they need to go to export markets like the United States. We need some markets in Asia and Europe. We encourage the government to continue to develop those types of export markets.

Potash is important in our province. We mine potash, and it goes around the world. It grows food to feed people around the globe. Again, it is an export-dependent product.

We have a lot of manufacturing, particularly agricultural manufacturing, that we need to move around the world. There are lots of markets in the European Union that we would like to develop and continue to access and grow. We look forward to CETA assisting with that as well.

CETA has an interesting history. It started back in 2007 with discussions. It is interesting that it was only a year after the Conservatives came in. Our cabinet saw the possibilities and the real benefits of an agreement like that, so it started having discussions. It took a couple of years to get the negotiations going. They started in 2009, and by 2014, five years later, we were able to negotiate the agreement and basically signed it in principle in 2014. There were two years to settle the legal issues and get the translation done, and we are at that point now.

It is interesting to hear the government opposite trying to take credit for that. When we look at the timeline, we understand who actually did the work and who got the work done.

Government Orders

As I mentioned earlier, the Liberals insisted on tinkering with the agreement, and they almost lost it. Thankfully, we are at the point where we can see the beginning of ratification in Europe. We hope that the implementation will soon come. We need to see the agreement come into effect fairly quickly.

I want to talk a bit about the consequences of this agreement for our economy. This agreement will bring a potential 20% boost in bilateral trade and a \$12-billion annual increase in the Canadian economy. We encourage the government to remember that in its discussions and negotiations. We need to see this finished as quickly as possible. The economic equivalent of this agreement is like adding the equivalent of \$1,000 to the average Canadian family's income and up to 80,000 new jobs to the Canadian economy.

Everyone in the House needs to get behind this agreement, see it as something really good for the future of our country, and move ahead with CETA.

• (1735)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the common things from the Conservatives when they stand up and speak is that they like to assume they have some credit owed to them when it comes to the issue of trade.

The Liberal Party traditionally has been a very strong advocate for trade. It has been a long time since we have seen a prime minister as aggressive on this particular file.

To the Conservatives' credit, yes, they did do some of the preparatory work, but let us not kid anyone. If it were not for the current Prime Minister and the minister responsible for this file, we would not be debating this bill today, and that is the truth of the matter.

On the overall issue of trade, we all recognize it. It is only the New Democrats who do not recognize the value of trade. However, I can tell members that we all recognize the importance of this.

Our record will demonstrate that we have had years and years of trade surpluses, whereas the Conservatives and the Harper government had nothing but years and years of trade deficits. The Korea deal they crow about is something in which they were the laggards of all the countries, and one of the last countries to sign on was Canada as the Conservatives resisted it.

Would the member agree at least that there is consensus among the Conservatives and Liberals that trade is important to our country? It is what generates our economy in good part.

• (1740)

Mr. David Anderson: Madam Speaker, I am excited to see the member join our bandwagon here. Obviously, the Liberals have a new-found enthusiasm for trade deals and that is great, because they can join with us at any time. There were two agreements, and that long focus on Doha, which is kind of their history, and that is okay, because at least they were taking a look at it at the time and they were trying a little bit here and there.

The fact is that we signed 46 agreements in less than 10 years. We were the ones in 2007, 2009, and 2014 who that put CETA together and brought it all the way to the point of where it was signed. It was

just a matter of finishing it off and signing the ratification part of it. Then the establishment of the TPP and the distance that we came on that relationship I think is a tribute to the commitment of the Conservatives on their focus on trade.

We welcome the Liberals, particularly the parliamentary secretary across the way, to join with us and to celebrate trade and the history of trade in this country.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for his speech and for breaking down the history of his party working on this deal.

Before I move forward with my question, I would ask the member to join me in shouting out to the lighthouse keeper who saved a life off Denman Island this weekend. The importance of our lightkeepers on the west coast is proven every time we have a life saved by a lightkeeper, and so we know the value of them.

Knocking on doors during the campaign, I met a woman who had to make a tough choice of whether to buy medicine or food. I have met people who have had to come out of retirement to pay for medicine, because of the cost of medicine and the limited pension money they have. We know that the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs is really affecting seniors and other people in our communities.

We understand the importance of trade as New Democrats. We want fair trade, we want good jobs, but we also want to make sure that medicine is going to be affordable.

Is the member concerned that CETA will lead to increased costs of prescription drugs for Canadians, given that Canadians already pay more for prescription drugs than nearly every other OECD country?

Mr. David Anderson: Madam Speaker, I do not know about the incident on Denman Island last weekend, but I think we all need to recognize the sacrifices that emergency response personnel make. I was fortunate enough, before I was here, to be able to serve seven years on a volunteer ambulance at home, and so I understand the commitment that people make.

On the weekend, I had the chance to go to the opening of an emergency response centre in my riding, which is a small community. The centre decided it needed to have a much better building to put the ambulances, fire trucks, or whatever in, and worked very hard to put that project together. We were able to celebrate the opening of that. These people do not do this for money. It does not matter what the money is, they do it because they want to make a commitment to their community and to serve their community well.

Quickly on the other issue, CETA does not change the length of the pharmaceutical patents in Canada. I understand there is a patent restoration mechanism in there if the regulatory delay has taken place on approval of drugs. My understanding is that it will not necessitate a hike in pharmaceutical prices in Canada.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Laurentides—Labelle.

It is with pride that I rise today to speak in favour of Bill C-30, an act to implement the comprehensive, economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union, or CETA.

Government Orders

I will frame my remarks by reminding the members of the House that our government has chosen an ambitious agenda to strengthen the middle class and those trying to join it. Job creation for Canadians depends on our domestic as well as our foreign trade policies.

Our government promised to review the trade agreements that were in process when we took office one year ago. We reviewed the provisions for CETA and through the extremely hard work of our Prime Minister and our very capable Minister of International Trade, we were able to get it done.

Based on recent statistics, almost 1.7 million highly-skilled Canadians are employed full time in Canada's manufacturing sector. By eliminating all tariffs on manufactured goods and creating a mechanism to address non-tariff barriers to trade, this agreement will unlock opportunities for Canadian businesses and advance our government's commitment to grow our economy and strengthen the middle class.

Bill C-30 would cover a wide breadth of economic sectors and issues. Under CETA, certain skilled professionals will find it easier to work temporarily in the EU. This aspect of CETA is welcome in my riding of Don Valley East, which is home to skilled professionals from all around the globe. Working in the EU for these skilled professionals will not only boost their skill sets, but will provide cultural opportunities that they may have never considered possible.

We live in a world which is increasingly interconnected and where the free movement of people, goods, services and ideas happens at rapid speed. Progress and availability of opportunities for Canadians cannot increase unless we look beyond our borders. In 2014, Canada was the 12th largest trading partner of the EU-28. The EU is Canada's second largest partner after the United States.

From 2013-2015, Canada exported an annual average of almost \$33 billion worth of manufactured goods to the EU. On average, these exports currently face tariffs of between 4% to 22%.

Under CETA, 99% of Canadian manufactured goods will enter the EU market tariff free. Within seven years, 100% of Canada's manufactured goods, including autos, will benefit from the duty free access.

Canada stands to gain even more by way of investment, opening new markets for our goods and services, and creating more stable jobs for our workforce. Workers in Canada's multi-billion dollar chemical and plastic industry will also benefit directly from CETA.

Canadians are world leaders in research, innovation and production in advanced manufacturing sub-sector, for example, scientific instruments, construction equipment and aerospace products to name a few. These goods, including robotics, are in high demand. In this area, Canadian exports to the EU totalled \$9.2 billion. Current tariffs are as high as 22%. Under CETA these tariffs will be eliminated.

In the agriculture field, we will be well positioned to reap benefits to the new market. This is a win-win for our agri industry across Canada.

CETA will not only open new markets for Canadian businesses and employees, but CETA is also the first trade agreement which has a stand-alone chapter on regulatory co-operation.

● (1745)

This very important provision will promote good regulatory practices and level the playing field. Our government is committed to creating opportunities for our businesses and our citizens. We want to expand the horizon, think outside the box, and ensure that Canadians are not disadvantaged by non-action.

It is with this in mind that CETA also contains provisions under which dispute settlement will be more open, transparent, and institutionalized. Our government will always protect the interests of Canadians and Canadian businesses. My riding contains some of the most innovative and forward looking technological small and medium-sized companies. Under CETA, companies such as Neuronic Works, Thales, Pearson Printing, Jansen, etc., will have access to European markets on a fair and even basis. Europeans and Canadians will benefit from a shared knowledge base and mutual higher standards of living.

In the area of safety and environmental protections, CETA builds on previous trade agreements that have explicitly safeguarded provided health, safety, and environmental protections. These protections are critical for our government and we will not abandon our principles. Under CETA, any EU producer interested in exporting goods to Canada will have to abide fully with the Canadian regulations on environmental protection.

Canadian culture will continue to thrive, as it will have new markets under CETA. I have spoken to many arts and cultural organizations who see this trade deal an opportunity to expand into the global markets.

CETA is a progressive way forward for Canada and the EU. This trade agreement will set a precedent for the way international agreements are negotiated and agreed upon. We are a country rich in technology and innovation. We know how to operate businesses, whether in pharmaceuticals or manufacturing or family farms. Canadians have always been forward looking. In this increasingly connected world, we cannot afford to be insular. This trade agreement will provide opportunities for all Canadians and ensure real protection of our environment, our indigenous peoples, and the diversity of our cultures.

I hope all members of the House will support our collective effort in making Canada a highly competitive global player that wishes to see Canadians benefit from growth and opportunities.

Government Orders

• (1750)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about how the government likes transparency. We all know that the government loves consultation, but I wondered if she could comment on the fact that the Liberal dominated trade committee has ruled out any possibility for concerned and knowledgeable Canadians to make written submissions to it unless they are among the few who are already appearing at the committee, unlike with the TPP, on which the trade committee received thousands of submissions. Is that because most of those submissions had negative things to say about the TPP. Is that what the Liberals are afraid of happening in this case?

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Madam Speaker, I have just finished consulting Canadians on Canada Post. I do not think anyone is afraid of negativity or input. There are certain rules that committees follow, and it is my understanding that the trade committee did not rule out input from any other witnesses. I am not sure whether the member is misinformed, but transparency is important and that is why we have been extremely transparent in getting input from everyone.

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, I feel it is important to rethink the transition plan for the dairy industry and fine cheese producers.

The Canada-European Union trade agreement will result in huge losses for supply-managed industries. Last week, the Government of Quebec and a number of key industry players said that \$350 million is not enough. They need more help to handle the transition and mitigate the negative impact of the Canada-European Union trade agreement. In Quebec, the industry is asking for more than \$750 million.

Can the member confirm that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is not only listening, but that he will actually do something to help Quebec's dairy industry and fine cheese producers?

• (1755)

[English]

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Madam Speaker, the same question was posed to the Minister of International Trade, who has worked with the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to ensure that the trade agreement really is beneficial to our farmers. When we open up our trading partnerships and our markets, there is supply and demand. Also, when we reduce tariffs, it makes goods cheaper and makes different varieties of goods accessible to different populations. I am sure that the minister has taken great care to ensure that there is enough protection.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today we are talking about CETA, but we have seen the government take a fairly aggressive approach to trade-related issues, such as the issue of canola from the prairies going to China and the Ukraine trade agreement that has been signed off on. The Minister of International Trade is working quite diligently and hard to make sure that the trade file is properly looked after, because at the end of the day, it will create jobs for Canada's middle class.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Madam Speaker, we are an interconnected world. If we want to increase the middle class, trade is an important opportunity. I thank the Prime Minister for going to South America to build better relations and better trade treaties so that we have wider exposure to markets, rather than sticking with one country.

[Translation]

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to first thank my colleagues for participating in this important debate.

I am delighted to rise in the House today to speak about the protections and guarantees of the Canada-European union comprehensive economic and trade agreement, or CETA, and how this agreement will protect hard-won social progress and guarantee the prosperity of all Canadians.

When our government came to power, there were many obstacles in the way of finalizing CETA. Support for CETA from centre-left parties in Europe, which was necessary for CETA's ratification by the European Parliament, and also by countries such as Germany and France, was in doubt. Therefore, from the outset, one of the most important things our government did was to listen to the criticism, both in Canada and in Europe, to ensure that the agreement addressed legitimate concerns.

We worked with industry and civil society to ensure that economic gains would not hinder essential social progress and to address the issues that really matter to Canadians and Europeans: environmental protection, workers' rights, consumer health and safety, and the right of governments to regulate.

In co-operation with our European counterparts, our government made improvements to the agreement in order to strengthen it and make it the most progressive trade agreement negotiated by Canada and the European Union. Now that those changes have been made, countries like Germany and France strongly support it.

Making sure that trade and labour support each other is a priority for our government. The provisions of CETA on workers strengthen this principle since they include commitments to facilitate the sound governance of the workforce.

Under CETA, Canada and the European Union committed to adding their respective obligations with respect to international labour standards to their labour laws. More specifically, both parties committed to ensuring that their national laws and policies protect the fundamental principles and rights at work, including the right to freedom of association, the right to bargain collectively, the abolition of child labour, the elimination of forced labour, and the elimination of discrimination.

Government Orders

Canada and the European Union also committed to seeking high levels of labour protection, enforcing labour laws, and not waiving or derogating from these laws in order to promote trade or attract investment. CETA provides for the establishment of civil society advisory groups responsible for providing their opinions and advice on any issues related to the agreement's labour provisions, as well as for the creation of a mechanism that will allow the public to share its concerns about the labour issues associated with these provisions. What is more, CETA encourages co-operation on labour files, especially through the exchange of information on best practices and co-operation in international forums.

The environment is another priority area for Canadians and Europeans.

In the CETA chapter on trade and the environment, Canada and the European Union reaffirmed their mutual commitment to ensure that strict environmental standards are met as part of the trade liberalization process.

Under CETA, Canada and the EU maintain the right to set their own priorities on the environment and to adopt or amend their own related legislation and policies accordingly. Canada and the EU are committed to ensuring high levels of environmental protection, effectively enforcing domestic environmental laws rather than weakening or deviating from these laws in favour of trade or attracting investment.

CETA includes a commitment to work together on shared environmental concerns. This might include issues such as climate change, conservation, and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Under CETA, environmental protection and economic growth go hand in hand. For example, the chapter on trade and the environment includes a commitment to facilitate and promote the trade of products and services associated with environmental protection. Among other things, this means paying special attention to products and services that may contribute to mitigating climate change and stimulating renewable energy production. Clean technologies represent a key aspect of the government's approach to promoting sustainable economic growth and play a key role in allowing us to keep our commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to achieve our objectives under the Paris agreement.

● (1800)

CETA's preamble recognizes that the agreement's provisions reaffirm the parties' right to regulate within their respective territories to achieve legitimate policy objectives, such as the protection of public health, safety, the environment, public morals, and the promotion and protection of cultural diversity.

The chapter on investment includes further clarifications on the right to regulate and reaffirms this right to achieve legitimate policy objectives.

Nothing in this agreement prevents governments from making regulations for the public good in areas like the environment, culture, safety, health, and conservation, from providing preferences to indigenous peoples, or from adopting measures to protect or promote Canadian culture.

Canadian and foreign investors alike must comply with all Canadian laws and regulations regarding the environment, labour standards, health care, and all building and safety codes. Nothing in CETA permits anyone who is selling a good, providing a service, or investing in Canada to be exempted from Canadian laws and regulations.

In all trade agreements, including CETA, Canada explicitly protects the environment, security, and social services, such as health care and education.

Under CETA, obligations regarding services and investments are fulfilled using a negative list approach. The use of this approach in CETA does not jeopardize the governments' ability to provide public services. In fact, the negative list approach provides Canada and the member states a more transparent way of targeting sectors or measures, such as those related to public health, education, and social services, where the parties want to maintain full control over policies.

Canada has been using the negative list approach for a very long time and is satisfied that CETA will continue to allow us the political flexibility to protect public services. What is more, no provision of CETA requires governments to privatize, subcontract, or deregulate their public services. Decisions regarding the delivery of public services are guided exclusively by domestic policy decisions.

As a result, CETA will compromise neither Canada's water quality standards, nor its regulations pertaining to water systems. Nothing in the free trade agreements that Canada has signed prevents the government from establishing standards to ensure that Canadians have access to safe drinking water.

No provision of any free trade agreement, including CETA, to which Canada is a party requires a government to privatize, resort to sub-contracting, or deregulate its water services. All businesses conducting these activities in Canada, whether Canadian or foreign, must comply with the laws and regulations in effect in Canada.

There is a major myth concerning CETA that we must dispel. I would like to set the record straight. None of the free trade agreements, including CETA, to which Canada is a party covers water in its natural state, that is, water in natural basins of water such as rivers, lakes, and streams, as a good or product for export.

The federal government has passed legislation and regulations to prohibit bulk water removal from water basins in boundary waters, no matter the reason, including export. Free trade agreements to which Canada is a party, including CETA, in no way compromise measures implemented by Canadian provinces to protect bodies of water within their jurisdiction.

Government Orders

Our government listened to people in the industry and civil society and worked with them to ensure that economic gains will not hinder essential social progress. Thanks to close collaboration with our European Union counterparts and a shared commitment to making CETA a progressive agreement, we addressed issues that really matter to Canadians and Europeans: the environment, workers' rights, consumer health and safety, and the right of governments to regulate.

To sum up, the CETA commitments that I just described are perfectly aligned with our existing progressive trade program and will ensure that economic gains do not come at the expense of the environment, workers, or matters of public interest, such as health and culture.

I support this bill and all of the benefits that it will bring to Canadians and the people of the European Union and its 28 member states.

I ask all hon. members to support this bill so that Canada can do its part to implement the agreement and continue to advance its progressive trade agenda.

• (1805)

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech in the House.

It is important to talk about losses once again, because the dairy industry, including processors and the producers of Quebec's fine cheeses, are going to suffer immensely. The plan proposed by the previous Conservative government was an ambitious plan worth \$4.3 billion, while the plan recently announced by the Liberals is much more modest. It includes \$250 million for producers and \$100 million for processors.

Last week the chairman of the Producteurs de lait du Québec told dairy farmers who had gathered for a general assembly that this plan to help our producers and processors is not enough. There are also a number of concerns regarding the production of fine cheeses. Will the \$100 million be given to big companies? Will companies like Agropur and Saputo be eligible? I think average size producers will get about \$5,000 in compensation. When the losses are in the \$150-million-a-year range, does my colleague think that is enough?

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Madam Speaker, I believe that I have 37 dairy producers in the riding of Laurentides—Labelle. This is therefore a very important issue for us because we must look after our dairy producers.

In my view, the plan is a good first step. We need something to keep us competitive in the future and to ensure that we can operate in foreign markets where we currently do not have a solid presence. We have a lot of work to do. With a perfect agreement, all trade would flow both ways, but there would be no protections for our industry, supply management, and our culture. I believe that our plan strikes a good balance, but there is always much more to be done.

• (1810)

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle for his excellent speech.

I believe that he spoke about some issues that are very important to his riding, where I know there are many dairy producers. Our colleague on the other side of the House asked these questions about producers, but I find it difficult to understand why the NDP is now asking the question while saying that it supports the \$750 million.

Since the NDP promised to balance the budget if it were elected, it would never have been able to provide this kind of compensation. I believe that it is playing politics. When the NDP says that it supports producers' demands, it should also tell them that in order to balance the budget it would have to cut the amount of compensation for softwood lumber, for example. Therefore, I would ask my colleague what he thinks about comments to the effect that the NDP is playing politics with dairy producers.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Madam Speaker, I think there is another issue here. If the NDP had been elected to office, it would not have signed CETA. The question would not have been asked. Since they promised to balance the budget, they would not have signed this agreement, so that issue is not relevant to the debate.

[*English*]

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague gave an excellent presentation and feedback on this incredible trade deal.

When I look at investors, they are looking for stability and predictability when they decide to invest in other countries; and countries are looking to control the public agenda around the environment, labour, and different issues like that. In the past, countries tended to resolve disputes in a very difficult forum with arbitrators making the decisions.

This is a very progressive trade deal. There is a brand new tribunal formed. I wonder if my colleague would reflect on the ISDS provisions, and why this is a better trade deal for settlement of investor-state disputes.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the concerns that have been brought up about the investor-state dispute resolution systems that are being proposed.

As the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells said earlier, it is really important that we have some kind of mechanism in place. We cannot have a situation where people come to invest, the rules change mid-game, and there is no option to continue. It is important that there is something, and I think this is one of the more progressive things I have seen in this type of thing.

If we read the text of CETA, it talks a great deal about finding compromise and mediation, and looking for solutions before getting to a court process. That is a good model to follow.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

First, I would like to thank the member for Essex, our international trade critic. In my opinion, she and her team do an extraordinary job. She exhibited great strength during today's debate. I would like to congratulate her on the work she did in committee and commend her for her dedication.

Government Orders

Today, I have the pleasure of speaking to Bill C-30, an act to implement the comprehensive economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union and its member states and to provide for certain other measures. I am also pleased to rise to represent the people of Berthier—Maskinongé.

It is important for me to mention in the House that the NDP is in favour of international trade agreements as long as they are fair. The word “fair” is important. It is not simply a matter of engaging in free trade. We need to ensure that we are engaging in fair trade. The problem with the current government and the previous government is that they are quick to sign any agreement just so that they can brag about signing free trade agreements.

We had a fine example of this in fall 2013. During question period, the leader of the second opposition party, the current Prime Minister, congratulated the Conservative government for concluding an agreement in principle with the European Union without ever having read the agreement, which was not yet available. That is the Liberal Party in a nutshell.

Now that it is in government, not much has changed. The Liberals had several good opportunities to improve the agreement, but they chose instead to sign something that is not fair to Canadians. They were in such a hurry to see CETA come into force that they botched their own process. They are asking us, the members of the House, to give them carte blanche by voting in favour of a flawed document that will be end up being changed, especially with respect to the investor-state provisions. I think it makes no sense that hon. members are not voting on the final document.

This agreement and trade with the European Union are too important for us to take this lightly or rush through it.

A number of problems need fixing before we move forward. First, for the people of Berthier—Maskinongé, changes to intellectual property rules will cause drug prices to skyrocket. Considering our aging population and household incomes below the Canadian average, rising drug prices make me fear the worst for my fellow citizens. The government should address this before moving forward.

Second, there are a number of problems related to the agriculture and agri-food sector. I should point out that the government allowed an additional 17,700 tonnes of cheese from Europe over and above the 13,500 tonnes it already exports. In total, Europe will be allowed to export 31,200 tonnes of cheese to Canada, most of it fine cheese.

This problem provision will increase the percentage of dairy product imports from 4% to 9%, and dairy producers will lose between \$116 million and \$150 million. We must not forget fine cheese producers; this will cost them too. Of the additional 17,700 tonnes of cheese, 16,000 tonnes will be fine cheese. The impact of this will be felt most keenly in Quebec, which produces 60% of the country's fine cheese. Many cheese makers have said that allowing fine cheeses in will cause businesses to close.

Our manufacturing standards combined with generous subsidies for European producers make it almost impossible for our cheese makers to compete.

●(1815)

For a few years now, dairy and cheese producers have been investing and working hard to grow the fine cheese market. Because of this problem provision, however, their efforts will only benefit the Europeans.

Here is an example of how this agreement will affect a fine cheese producer in my riding, the Fromagerie Domaine Féodal. Last Friday I had the honour of attending a wine and cheese tasting to mark that business' 15th anniversary. The owners, Guy and Lise, just invested over \$1 million to modernize their facilities, and they did so without any Canadian subsidies. I would also like to point out that they won a silver medal just last week for a cheese called Cendré des prés. I want to thank everyone who works with Guy and Lise and their family: Charles, Pierrette, Chantale, Annie, Mélanie, Justine, and Marie.

The arrival of fine cheeses from Europe will just eat into the profits they would have made on their investments. This cheese factory from the Lanaudière region will be able to absorb the blow from CETA, but that is not the case for all cheese makers in Quebec. They believe that many of the artisanal cheese factories from Quebec will close up. It is very hard for our cheese makers to compete with European cheese makers who are highly subsidized and have lower food safety standards than we do. Once again it will be our rural communities that will end up paying for this flawed trade agreement.

The government is absolving itself of the problems the agreement is causing the dairy industry with its transition plan. The government promised dairy farmers a \$100-million investment fund over four years to help them modernize their operations and increase their productivity and efficiency, as well as diversify their range of products in order to capitalize on new European markets.

Clearly this program will be reserved for the largest processors and our artisanal cheese makers will be left out. The amount budgeted for the processors is far from adequate, as it does not even cover the \$150-million losses the producers of fine cheeses will suffer.

The investment fund for dairy producers is even more appalling. The amount of \$250 million over five years in light of annual recurring losses that could reach \$150 million is not just inadequate but is an insult to dairy producers, who work very hard to make very high-quality milk.

Like artisanal cheese makers, several producers will never see this money because they have already modernized their facilities. However, above all, it simply makes no sense that our producers have to pay to access this money. How utterly deplorable of the Liberals to want to go forward with this agreement before examining its impact on the dairy industry. There is too much uncertainty for producers.

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CETA will be problematic not just for the dairy sector, but also for the pork and beef industries. The previous government and the current one repeatedly boasted about the share of the European beef and pork market they gained. However, there is much to do before producers can really benefit from this market share. In fact, due to current European regulatory obstacles, none of our beef and pork producers will benefit.

I do not understand why the government is willing to move forward without resolving these issues. Stakeholders in other areas of the agriculture and agri-food sector welcome the export opportunities offered by this agreement. However, there is always a big “but” or a “maybe”. Compared to Europe and other industrialized countries, Canada provides its agriculture and agri-food sector with very few subsidies. The same goes for technical support and funding for research and innovation.

● (1820)

I repeat: I understand that the government wants to move forward with this agreement. However, we need to ensure that all of the programs are in place. What is more, in order to prevent unfair competition, the government needs to stand up for producers and ensure that this agreement is in the best interests of all Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, earlier today in debate several members of the NDP referred to something that happened at the international trade committee.

I want to quote the member for Essex, who stated, “Today, the Liberal-dominated trade committee has made it clear that it only wants to hear from groups that will benefit from CETA. It has gone to extraordinary lengths to restrict its brief study of CETA from receiving input from Canadians, by passing a motion that restricts the committee from accepting written submissions except for those from the handful of witnesses who are selected to appear.”

There are a number of problems with this statement.

The first is that the committee did not meet today.

The second is that the relevant motion was put forward by the member for Essex, not by a Liberal.

Further, the member for Salaberry—Suroît commented:

[*Translation*]

In committee, the Liberals recently moved a motion in camera...

[*English*]

If we are discussing that, it would be a privilege issue because we would be discussing something that was discussed in camera.

Therefore, I am wondering if the member knows what on earth her colleagues are talking about on this file.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Madam Speaker, I do not sit on the trade committee. I am lucky to work on the agriculture committee. I would like to thank my colleague from Essex because she is working very hard on this deal, on CETA, and she has worked very hard on the TPP. We have no idea what will happen with that.

However, what is super important for us is that Canadians are consulted. I know the government says that it likes to consult, but I think it likes to consult to try to find the answer that it wants.

Right now with CETA, we have the feeling, and a lot of Canadians have the feeling, that they are not being consulted enough on this, and that if their voice or opinion is contrary to the government's position on CETA, the government does not want to hear it.

I cannot speak to what exactly happened at the trade committee because I was not there. However, I think it is important that Canadians feel included in this debate. I believe that Canadians should have a right to participate and testify at committee, and if they cannot make it to the committee, they should have the right to submit recommendations to the committee.

● (1825)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to point out that I really understand the issues with respect to dairy farmers. In my riding of North Island—Powell River, we also have dairy farmers. Their concerns have been very clear. They are wondering what this next phase will look like. One of the areas that I want to talk about specifically is that in these smaller communities where the dairy farms often are, they provide jobs to the communities. They are meaningful jobs, especially in the small communities across Canada where we desperately need that employment.

Could the member share with us what the long-term impacts will be on these jobs and on the communities?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

Stability is important. Dairy farmers and fine cheese producers in Quebec and across Canada are entrepreneurs. However, recent trade agreements, including the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement, or CETA, and the trans-Pacific partnership, have shown that there are flaws in our supply management system that will result in major losses for our industry.

The Conservative government said that it had a plan, and now the Liberal government is telling us that it has a plan, that it has a solution, and that producers should not worry because the government is listening to them and is going to propose a solution. The Liberal government's transition support plan to mitigate the negative effects of CETA is woefully inadequate. In fact, I think it is disrespectful of the Liberal government to move forward with a \$350-million plan. It is not enough.

Last week, the president of Producteurs de lait du Québec suggested increasing the transition support plan to \$750 million and establishing a 15-year program, rather than a five-year program.

The Liberals have been in power for a year, and I feel they could have done better. I hope they will change tack and improve the program so that it will really help the industry because this is important for the regions. This is about protecting one of our traditional economic sectors and our jobs. We are proud of our exceptional Quebec cheese producers. We eat Quebec cheeses; we love them. We must therefore support our producers.

It is just so disappointing to see that, after a year in power, the Liberals have not even been able to deal with the problem of diafiltered milk in Canada.

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I realize I have one of those lucky spots, where I get about a four-minute speech, seeing as we are getting close to 6:30 p.m.

I want to start by thanking my colleague, the member of Parliament for Essex, for the incredible work she has been doing in raising these issues.

I have been quite sorry to hear some of the condescending tones emanating from the Liberals. I would like to be there when their constituents start raising issues, asking the Liberals where they were when we talked about dairy compensation, or about the high cost of pharmaceuticals, or about the application of sovereignty, the ability of local and provincial governments to make laws for their own citizens and not have some super-national body overrule them. I would very much like to be there when their constituents ask them where they were when we were bringing up these very real concerns with this agreement.

I will unapologetically stand here and bring these concerns, as is the job of a progressive opposition, to signal that we are in favour of trade, but the agreement is so much more than just simple trade. It goes far above and beyond simple trade, and we have to bring forward these important points.

Trade with Europe is too important to get wrong. We support the deepening of Canada-EU relationships. These are member countries to which we have significant historical and cultural ties. We have received many waves of immigration from European countries, which represent some of the most progressive democracies in the world. However, this is such an important agreement that we must ensure the scope of it remains in Canada's interests.

The Liberals are essentially asking Parliament to sign-off on CETA, despite the fact that European states have made it clear that the investor-state provisions would have to be removed before they ratify it.

I want to reference how quickly the Liberal government is trying to ram this through.

On October 30, the Prime Minister signed CETA at the EU-Canada leaders' summit. Two days later Bill C-30 was put forward as the implementing legislation. This process violated the government's own policy on tabling treaties in Parliament, which requires the government to table a copy of the treaty, along with an explanatory memorandum outlining key components of the treaty, at least 21 sitting days before the legislation is presented. The Liberals also

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neglected to table a mandatory environmental assessment of the free trade agreement, as per a 1999 cabinet directive on environmental policy plans and program proposals.

Seeing that my time is short, tomorrow I will continue my speech and go over some of the costs to our drug provisions, as the seniors critic, and some of the investor-state provisions. I look forward to continuing that conversation tomorrow.

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have seven minutes left for his speech when this matter is before the House again.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford brought up an interesting point in mentioning the splitting of his time. The clocks have wound up more and more out of sync in the chamber. I wonder if the Chair could undertake to have the clocks brought back to the real world time. It is now more than two minutes out.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sure that the clerks will look into the issue.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is my great pleasure and honour to address the House.

I would like to resurrect a question that I asked in the House on September 22, 2016. Two months ago, during question period, I asked the Minister of National Revenue a question relating to the latest information leak in the news. In September, everyone heard about the Bahamas leaks, which surfaced shortly after the Panama Papers, though the latter are more familiar to Canadians. The information in both was very similar.

Between 1990 and 2016, 175,000 companies were registered in the Bahamas. The information was obtained by a German daily paper, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and was then handed over to a consortium of journalists including some from the CBC and the *Toronto Star*. Three Canadian banks were named in the leaks: RBC, CIBC, and Scotiabank.

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This leak of information occurred after the Panama papers, which really alerted the world to the important and growing phenomenon of tax evasion. As everyone knows, globalization and the introduction of technology have increasingly led businesses to use tax evasion schemes. Businesses organize their tax matters with an eye on paying as little in taxes as possible. This is a global trend and Canada is no exception. For that reason, Canada must do more, and it must show leadership in fighting tax evasion. Unfortunately, that is not what we are seeing with this government. There was praise for a few additional investments. However, at the international level, the fight must be fierce, concerted, and led by leaders who care about this. Unfortunately, at this time, Canada is not doing nearly enough on this issue in comparison with other countries.

I therefore asked the minister for the government's response to that new information leak, especially regarding the fact that Canada has a tax information exchange agreement with the Bahamas. That agreement, signed by both countries, allows them to exchange tax information. Despite that, and despite other agreements with other countries, tax evasion continues. Tax evasion in the Bahamas was revealed thanks to that information leak. Despite those agreements, journalists are the ones keeping us informed. Information leaks enable the government to handle these things, conduct investigations, and carry out audits.

I have some basic questions for the parliamentary secretary. Has the government obtained the information that was in the information leak from the Bahamas? How did it get that information and through what source? Was it from a network of journalists, from a government, or from some other source? What did Canada do with the information it has from the Bahamas leaks? What is it doing right now regarding all the files on Canadians involved in this information leak? What happened to the files of Canadian taxpayers involved in this information leak? Can we expect a verdict, prosecutions, and convictions for taxpayers who tried to cheat our tax system?

● (1835)

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak this afternoon in response to my colleague from Sherbrooke, who is giving me the opportunity to tell him everything that the Canada Revenue Agency is doing to combat tax evasion and offshore tax avoidance.

The government is committed to maintaining a tax system that is open and fair for all Canadians. The CRA has a plan for enhancing its compliance activities through an unprecedented investment of \$444 million announced in April 2016. This additional funding over five years will be used to equip CRA with more resources and tools to crack down on cheats and encourage compliance. Some of this additional funding will allow the agency to hire more tax experts to uncover more cases of tax evasion and tax avoidance.

Let us now move on to other measures. The CRA is setting up new teams to conduct audits of multinational corporations, wealthy, high-risk individuals and associated entities. These new teams will be made up of auditors, lawyers, economists, and experts, which will make the agency even better equipped to combat tax evasion and tax avoidance.

Since January 2015, the CRA has been collecting information on all international money transfers of over \$10,000, including those from Panama, and it has selected the highest-risk individuals for review or audit.

The CRA is currently examining over 2,671 cases related to the Panama Papers and has identified 85 high-risk taxpayers so far who will be subject to a more thorough audit.

I will continue by describing some of the other measures that have been taken by the Canada Revenue Agency, which recently secured a court order requiring a bank to provide it with more information.

Multiple criminal investigations are underway, and search warrants were recently executed. The CRA will also deal with the information on the Bahamas that was recently presented by the journalist consortium. With regard to international tax evasion and avoidance, the CRA has a four-point plan to deal with non-compliance, which includes better access to information, greater focus on non-compliance abroad, additional resources to strengthen our capacity, and international co-operation.

With regard to international co-operation, the CRA has a number of tools at its disposal that allow it to stand in the way of anyone who is using or wants to use tax evasion or avoidance schemes abroad.

● (1840)

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks and for touching on my question in his response.

I would like follow up on the tax information exchange agreements that were signed with a number of countries, including the Bahamas. One issue that came to the forefront when the Bahamas leak happened was whether those information exchange agreements can give us the information we want.

That information has to be available and shared reciprocally. The problem is that the agreements are not reciprocal. We give a lot of information. However, it seems that in some countries, information exchange standards are not the same, which means that we receive less information or poorer-quality information than we give.

Does the member think that the tax information exchange agreement with the Bahamas is effective considering the information leak and the fact that the information came to us via journalists?

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his interest in this matter.

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I want him to know that the CRA has a number of tax information exchange agreements with various countries, agreements that have been effective for quite some time. It uses that information in the course of its audits, which really helps us stop the people who use these kinds of schemes and those who would attempt to do so.

The member mentioned information obtained by investigative journalists. That information also helps the agency in its work.

I would also like to remind the member that the CRA is determined to manage the information that came to light on the Bahamas, just as it did the information from the Panama papers. Working with our international partners and sharing information among countries helps us effectively combat tax evasion and tax avoidance.

In closing, the additional funding allocated to the Canada Revenue Agency in the latest budget gives the agency the resources to carry out audits and to get the tools it needs to effectively combat tax evasion.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, I must come back to a question that I asked on October 26 about young students who worked at various federal departments during the summer as part of the Canada summer jobs program. Because of the Phoenix pay system, as of October 26 those students still had not been paid. I asked the Minister of Public Services and Procurement when she thought those students would be paid and how many of them were still unpaid. I did not get an answer to my question other than that the Liberals would try to meet the October 31 deadline. We finally learned that they were behind schedule.

I want to remind the Liberals that not receiving one's regular salary is an unacceptable violation of Canada Labour Code rights. The minister promised that the Phoenix pay system backlog would be cleared by October 31, which obviously did not happen.

The Miramichi pay centre raised serious concerns about the Phoenix system that went completely ignored. Last Wednesday, there were still 18,000 cases to be settled. Over all the cases, there is still a delay in expense reimbursements in 200,000 cases. I am talking about accommodation, meals, and travel expenses. This is the equivalent of two months' work on the backlog. That is a lot.

The Minister of Public Services and Procurement was to appear before the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, but she changed her mind at the last minute. We hope that she will be able to appear before the committee to provide pertinent information about the situation and real answers about the progress made on managing this problem.

Above all, people want to know when this problem will be solved. What is the minister's deadline for ensuring that all government employees, including students, are compensated fairly?

Students have to deal with many problems every day. In fact, since 1990, the adjusted national average for tuition fees has increased by more than 155%. In Ontario, tuition fees have increased by more than 180%. The average debt for a graduate is \$28,000.

According to a survey of 4,500 university students conducted by the Meal Exchange charity, almost 40% of students experience some degree of food insecurity. A further indication of the precarious situation of students is that since 2012 more and more of them have been turning to food banks.

This is cause for much concern. The Liberal government says that it takes the situation of youth seriously, that young people are our future, and that we have to establish the right conditions in order for youth to thrive. However, the government is unable to lead by example and provide youth with adequate compensation.

I would like to know when the minister will fix the situation and how many young people are still not being paid by the current government.

• (1845)

[*English*]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to be very clear from the outset that the ongoing public service pay problems are completely unacceptable. I want to also assure the House that our government is as committed as ever to making sure that public servants are being paid for the work they do.

Every pay period, nearly 300,000 public servants from 101 departments and agencies receive more than \$500 million in payments through the Phoenix payroll system. Representatives from our department are working hard to ensure that every employee is getting paid what they are owed.

[*Translation*]

Representatives from my department are working hard to ensure that every employee is getting paid what they are owed. Temporary satellite pay offices were set up this summer to help resolve the pay problems while allowing the ongoing processing of regular transactions. The system is being improved and efforts are being made to streamline the process and increase efficiency.

[*English*]

The steps our government is taking to make an impact in reducing the backlog and improving the system include the following.

[*Translation*]

For example, we were able to process approximately 100,000 transactions a month in September and October, compared to the 40,000 cases that were processed in May when employees were adjusting to the new system.

Compensation employees are working day and night, seven days a week, to clear the backlog and ensure that each and every Government of Canada employee is paid accurately.

[*English*]

Two weeks ago, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement went to Miramichi to thank the employees for their hard work. While she was there, she delivered a message that we would continue to support them and to keep all satellite offices open as long as needed.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

To date, we have ensured that 64,000 employees have had their cases resolved. Currently, there are approximately 18,000 employees with some form of outstanding pay transactions remaining in the backlog.

[English]

Most new pay requests are expected to be processed within 20 days. However, we are only meeting our service standards 20% to 30% of the time. Because of this slowdown in processing, the number of transactions in the system has expanded so that we now have more than two months of additional work representing 200,000 transactions. We will progressively return to normal processing over the next few months.

[Translation]

The Government of Canada has established a reimbursement process that will ensure that employees who have received overpayments because of payroll problems are treated fairly. A number of repayment options will be made available to them that will take into account their needs and reduce the associated financial burden as much as possible.

The important thing to remember is that we are committed to helping every employee who is having pay problems. That is a priority for us, and we are taking this situation very seriously.

• (1850)

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the information the parliamentary secretary provided, but she did not talk specifically about the students who worked for various departments this summer.

Can she tell us exactly how many young people have not yet been paid by the government's Phoenix system?

It is very difficult to follow up with individuals, such as students, who no longer work for the federal government. How is the government following up with these young people?

The parliamentary secretary talked about current employees, but student employees are a whole different issue. Could she please focus on the students who worked for various departments this summer?

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Madam Speaker, it goes without saying that problems with the public service pay system are unacceptable.

Our priority is ensuring that employees are paid for the work they have done. We are working very hard every day to fix these problems and process employee pay transactions as quickly as possible.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak further to a question I asked on September 26 on housing in first nations communities.

During the last Parliament, as the official opposition critic on housing, I visited several first nations communities as part of an organized Canada-wide tour. I was greatly dismayed to see how bad

the housing crisis is and the unacceptable conditions in which members of these communities are living.

I saw with my own two eyes the overcrowded housing, covered in mould, that was hastily constructed with materials that are not suitable to the weather conditions and built without taking into consideration the traditional way of life of first nations and the Inuit.

The NDP considers housing to be a basic right. In 1976, Canada ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which obliges nations to take appropriate steps to ensure the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.

Unfortunately, the right to housing has never been entrenched in Canadian law. In the spring, I introduced Bill C-264, which aims to add the right to housing to the Canadian Bill of Rights to ensure that everyone can live with dignity and in security. I hope to one day debate my bill with my colleagues in the House.

Recognizing the right to housing also carries the obligation to take reasonable measures to eliminate barriers to housing and to the full exercise of that right. The federal government has sole responsibility for funding housing on reserve.

A few weeks ago, in response to a request for information from my colleague from Timmins—James Bay, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada had this to say about current housing conditions:

According to a needs assessment study based on the National Household Survey 2006, the housing shortage on reserve is expected to rise to approximately 115,000 units by 2031. Data from the 2009-2011 National Assessment of First Nations Water and Wastewater Systems indicates that 20,000 units need to be built on reserve in order to reduce the average number of persons by household to four people per home (on-reserve average), and 81,000 houses are needed to reduce it to the 2.5 Canadian average. Moreover, as of 2011, almost 41% of households on reserve are dwellings in need of major repair and mould or mildew has been reported in 51% of units.

Despite that information, the government decided to fund the construction of only 300 new units per year in 2016 and 2017; in other words, it only agreed to fund 3% of the 20,000 units needed to address the crisis.

When the minister answers our questions saying that she finds the situation unacceptable, I have to agree. However, she also likes to tell us that her government is making historic investments in first nations. If you look at information from her own department, it is clear that the minister needs to do a lot more to convince me that she is truly committed to addressing this crisis.

As long as the government fails to cough up enough funds to address this unacceptable situation, I think we can hardly describe its investment as historic.

The government is not doing enough to support affordable housing for non-indigenous Canadians, let alone for indigenous Canadians. First nation and Inuit people are not second-class citizens.

When will the minister do what it takes to resolve this situation?

Adjournment Proceedings

•(1855)

[*English*]

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to respond to the question from my hon. colleague. I know that she, along with many of us in this House, realizes the gap in housing faced by indigenous communities. We also realize that it is absolutely unacceptable.

Housing and infrastructure, we know, are fundamental to the needs of indigenous people, just as they are to all people in Canada. We know that they are a critical part of healthy and sustainable communities and the social framework we always talk about in this House for raising people out of poverty and giving them a safe and secure environment.

Coming from an indigenous background, representing a large indigenous riding, and working with indigenous people all my life across Canada, I know that safe and sensible housing is an absolute necessity for basic health and community safety.

It is a major factor in many first nations, Inuit, and Métis regions of Canada in developing strong, economic platforms for their communities and their residents.

The government is listening to indigenous communities, and we have very much been attentive to their concerns, and we have continued to discuss with them solutions. As these solutions are coming forward, we are taking action.

We invested \$8.4 billion in budget 2016 to create transformational change for indigenous people over the next five years.

We know that the systemic problems faced by indigenous communities across Canada did not arrive overnight. They were arrived at through years of traumatic experience and colonialism in this country. We also know that we will not resolve all these issues overnight, but we also realize that we have to give it our full attention and our full commitment.

We have provided more than \$554 million over two years to address urgent housing needs on reserve. We have not seen such deplorable conditions among first nations people on reserve in Canada as we are seeing today.

We have already allocated \$268 million to support the construction, service, and renovation of over 3,000 housing units across first nations. This is part of \$829 million in targeted funding for first nations community infrastructure.

In addition, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has already committed \$64 million this year to renovate and retrofit over 2,800 homes and has committed \$3.7 million for skills and capacity development in 324 first nations communities.

In order for us to make the kind of progress we want to make with indigenous people across Canada, it requires more than commitment and more than planning. It requires tremendous and historic investments, and that is what we have been doing.

We have not only invested in housing for first nations communities at a record level in Canada but have done the same for Inuit housing as well. We launched the first ever Inuit housing program in the country.

•(1900)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Madam Speaker, I understand that this is an important matter for the parliamentary secretary, but I have another question for her. When I asked my question in September, this is the answer I was given:

The 2016 budget includes an investment of more than \$554 million over two years for the construction, maintenance, and renovation of 2,007 units. Agreements are already in place for two-thirds of the funding and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the CMHC, is investing in renovating and repairing 2,500 units.

Let us make sense of all these numbers. According to the minister, 20,000 new housing units are needed just to address the current crisis, and this does not include the need for major renovations. They have budgeted for the construction, renovation, and maintenance of only 2,007 units over two years, and are building only 300 new units a year. That is not very significant or historic.

Can the minister commit to building the 20,000 units needed to address the crisis, yes or no?

[*English*]

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, we are already making progress in solving the problem, and it is not an easy problem to solve.

In the amounts that I quoted, what I omitted to say was that \$4.6 billion of this program is carved out just for housing and infrastructure in first nations communities across the country. That includes new housing developments in many first nations communities. We have already started the negotiations around the funding agreements.

It will also include ensuring that we have a five-year component agreement that deals with water and waste water on reserves as well, ensuring that communities have those kinds of services.

What I want to say to the member opposite is that when we look back over the last 10 years, we do not see increases in housing investment for first nations, infrastructure investment for first nations, or other critical, necessary funding. We have never seen these programs in principle for Inuit communities.

It is a great start, and we are going to keep going.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7 p.m.)

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