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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the 40 Liberal MPs from Quebec voted in favour of Bill C-29, they took off their masks.

Quebec consumers could not rely on them for protection. The National Assembly of Quebec could not rely on them to defend the Consumer Protection Act. Quebec could not rely on them when the minister of high finance decided to attack the way we protect our people.

Canadian banks are very pleased with the 40 Liberal lackeys from Quebec for being so co-operative and compliant, but nobody else is. Such dishonourable behaviour is unacceptable from members who have the privilege of representing Quebec ridings in Ottawa.

Those 40 Liberal members took off their masks. Ottawa is the only place that matters. If I were them, I would put a bag over my head. They could have stood up for Quebec, but they chose not to. We know what we have to do now.

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[*English*]

OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to rise in the House to recognize the 50th anniversary of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School in Guelph.

Lourdes is probably best known for its national leadership award that annually is designed to inspire students toward leadership as a part of their civics program.

Started by now retired teacher Joe Tersigni, this award has been bestowed upon such great Canadian role models as Senator Roméo Dallaire, the Tragically Hip's Gord Downie, world renowned scientist David Suzuki, our current Prime Minister, and this year, Canada's Chief of the Defence Staff General Vance.

Lourde's 50th is a time to celebrate the students of the present and reunite the graduates of the past.

I congratulate to the wonderful community of staff, teachers, and students at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School—building today's leaders.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Natural Resources seemed absolutely perplexed as to why we were not on bended knees thanking him for approving two existing pipelines.

Well, I am glad I have the opportunity today to give credit where credit is due and to thank the minister for approving Kinder Morgan and the Line 3 replacements.

Now, I wonder if he would like recognition for some of his other achievements as well. Does he want praise for the 100,000 lost jobs and double digit unemployment rates in Alberta under his watch? Does the minister want us to thank him for the \$60 billion of investment that has left Alberta already? Should Canadians thank him for by-passing the National Energy Board and politicizing decisions on major energy projects like northern gateway, increasing the likelihood that more investment and more jobs are going to leave Canada?

I look forward to the day when I can thank the minister for appointing the new National Energy Board review panel that will review the energy east project, unless, however, the political decision has already been made to deny that project. If that is the case, thanks for nothing.

*Statements by Members**[Translation]***14 WING GREENWOOD**

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the people of West Nova are proud of 14 Wing Greenwood's rich military heritage and the contributions made by its members to our military and civilian communities.

[English]

Recently, the President of the Treasury Board and I broke ground on a new \$34 million air traffic control tower and announced an additional \$4 million for infrastructure upgrades at 14 Wing Greenwood, the largest air base in Atlantic Canada.

Ongoing investments will help ensure that military members have the necessary facilities to train, work, and live in the Annapolis Valley for years to come.

With the holiday season fast approaching, and most Canadians making plans to celebrate with family and friends, let us remember the men and women in uniform who continue to serve our country, protecting our rights and freedoms both at home and abroad.

[Translation]

I thank them for their dedication to our country. It is greatly appreciated.

[English]

To members of the Canadian Forces and their families, merry Christmas and happy new year.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they say a week is a long time in politics.

Last week people power prevailed to the south of us. The Standing Rock Sioux and its allies, including many indigenous people from across Canada, were victorious in opposing a pipeline through their lands. Thanks to the activism of many, President Obama listened and acted.

Here in Canada it was the opposite. Our Prime Minister, who promised us all real change, reneged on his commitments, broke his promise to first nations, and disrespected many Canadians in supporting Kinder Morgan. In that case, corporate power won.

What he and his government should know is that times are changing. More and more Canadians are being pushed to the margins. Inequality is growing. In response to the injustice that people experience, more and more indigenous people are resisting, more young people are calling the government out, and more Canadians are saying things need to change. People are saying we need a movement to stop the corporate agenda that is holding us back.

We need leadership that lives up to the aspirations and expectations of the people. I have no doubt from what I saw last week that people power will prevail in Canada too.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, our hometown of Halifax has recently seen a troubling string of gun-related violence. When our community is hurting like this, it can be difficult to know what the next step should be.

A young man in Halifax has come through at a time when his community needs him most. Quentrel Provo is an anti-violence activist and the founder of Stop the Violence. After the tragic killing of his cousin Kaylin, Quentrel began his years-long quest to spread the love through Halifax and beyond, not only through his Stop The Violence clothing brand, but through initiatives like the Stop the Violence march and the #SpreadLoveChallenge social media campaign.

In difficult times such as these, Quentrel and other dedicated anti-violence activists have shown strong community leadership in Halifax, and we are deeply grateful for it. I thank Quentrel for stopping the violence and spreading the love.

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● (1410)

CHRISTMAS

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week my family celebrated the miracle of a new life with the birth of our grandson, Hudson George Falk.

As Christmas approaches, Canadians from across the country will soon be gathering together as families to celebrate all our many blessings. We truly have so much to be thankful for. However, Christmas is more than just a celebration of family. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, and his beautiful promises: promises of a new life, promises of inexplicable joy, promises of a peace that surpasses all understanding, and promises of everlasting life.

As a country, may we continue to focus on Christ's unchanging message, a message from 2,000 years ago, which is the foundation that our great country, Canada, was built upon.

As carols fill the air and church bells echo all around, let us also take a moment to pray for all those around the world who are less fortunate, and for those whom the promise of peace seems so far away.

May the miracle and gift of Christ's birth fill everyone's hearts with love, joy, and peace this Christmas. To the House and to all Canadians, merry Christmas.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the verdict is in. CETA will bring real jobs and benefits across Canada, particularly in Atlantic Canada. Duty-free fish and seafood products are big winners for sure, but so is a lot of New Brunswick Southwest. Located as we are, bordering the U.S., we are the gateway between the European Union and the American markets, a combined population of one billion people.

Our chief negotiator said it best:

We expect significant new traffic coming into Canada. It's largely going to come through the eastern ports. We want to make sure that those eastern ports are able to handle that increased level of traffic.

Therefore, let us work together to identify the infrastructure we need for the future. That is how we all win with trade.

New Brunswick's fishermen just landed a big one.

* * *

EARLY LEARNING

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I want to address a topic on which we should all be able to agree, and that is child literacy.

I am proud to be an advocate in the effort to tackle poverty. I am proud to be a part of a government helping families in need, with transformational measures like the new Canada child benefit. However, some areas require more. We need a plan, not to alleviate but to end poverty in Canada. A national early learning strategy is key to breaking the cycle of poverty.

We are developing an early learning prototype in Saint John—Rothesay. We propose to pilot and measure a program in three early learning centres in three priority neighbourhoods in my riding. I know that alongside Elementary Literacy New Brunswick's, Dr. Erin Schryer, the YMCA's Shilo Boucher, Dr. Rob Moir from the University of New Brunswick in Saint John, and our provincial partners, we will develop a model that can be rolled out across the country.

I do not want Saint John to be known as the city with the highest child poverty. I want Saint John to be known as the city that solved its poverty problem and became a model for the nation.

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INVICTUS GAMES

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, *invictus* is Latin for unconquered. On September 23, 2017, Toronto will host the third Invictus Games.

This international adaptive sporting event for wounded, ill, injured veterans, and active duty service members was created by His Royal Highness Prince Harry in 2015. There will be over 17 nations competing in 12 sporting events and Team Canada will be represented by over 90 athletes.

Harnessing the power of sport helps wounded warriors on their journey to recovery, physically, psychologically, and socially. Hosting the Invictus Games will play a key role in empowering

Statements by Members

our wounded warriors and will activate the powerful gratitude our country has for its service men, women, and families.

I would like to congratulate all competitors, past and present, as they prepare, and personally commend them for their unconquerable spirit, and express my gratitude for their service to their country.

These wounded warriors are inspired by the following words:

I am the Master of my Fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

* * *

● (1415)

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members well know, the forestry sector is the backbone of many rural Atlantic communities. Without forestry jobs, some of the communities in my riding would virtually cease to exist.

American lumber producers have recently filed a complaint against Canadian producers. They have done so before many times, as members know, and have lost every single time. While negotiations continue, the Canadian industry braces for a downturn. However, it is critical to Atlantic lumber producers that we maintain the exclusion that recognizes that Atlantic forestry practices are no different than the American practices. That is the deal we have always had, and that is the deal we are hoping for again. Therefore, I urge the Government of Canada to continue its efforts to ensure that our trade in forestry products with the United States remains fair, free, and mutually beneficial.

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LISTUGUJ HAVEN HOUSE

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Haven House, which celebrates its 25th anniversary. Since 1999, Haven House has provided a safe place for women and families in the Mi'kmaq community of Listuguj. Domestic violence against women and children is not a new phenomenon, but it is one that requires commitment and dedication to prevent and ultimately eliminate. Helping victims of domestic violence with shelters, counselling, and health services, like those provided by Haven House, is critical and essential to a community's well-being.

[Translation]

As a husband and father to four young boys, I certainly appreciate and understand how important the community services provided by Haven House are, because they offer hope, comfort, and security to the people who use them.

As we are in the midst of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, I want to commend the remarkable work of the Haven House team, namely Françoise Gédéon, Carmel Vicaire, Blanche Martin, and Sheila Swasson.

Statements by Members

[English]

I thank them for their dedication and commitment to their community.

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[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am calling on this government to respect the people in the regions.

During the election campaign, the Minister of Transport promised to deal with the Portneuf wharf in my riding, Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

The wharf is key to tourism development in my region and it is very important to the mayor of Portneuf, Nelson Bédard, his municipal council, and all the local residents. It is the longest deep-water wharf in Canada. Unfortunately, its infrastructure is crumbling and becoming less safe all the time. This matter has been dragging on.

A developer has been prepared to acquire the wharf since March 11. On April 11, Transport Canada promised a response. Then the minister's office wrote to me to say that we would have a response no later than August 8. We still have no response. After nine months of negotiation, can we have an agreement?

I would like the Minister of Transport to resolve this issue before the end of the year. That would be a nice Christmas present for the very patient people of Portneuf.

Thank you in advance, Minister.

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[English]

VAUGHAN FOOD BANK

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we enter this holiday season, with all the joy it brings to many, it is important that we not forget those who are less fortunate in our communities. For over two decades in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, the Vaughan Food Bank, operated solely by volunteers and funded by private donations, has ensured that those facing difficult times are not left behind.

Under the leadership of Mr. Peter Wixson, a recent Order of Vaughan recipient, the Vaughan Food Bank serves approximately 750,000 meals annually and provides support to a number of agencies throughout York region and the GTA.

I wish to thank the Vaughan Food Bank for all it does and to extend my warmest greetings to all of my colleagues in the House. May they have a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season and a prosperous new year.

Merry Christmas, *joyeux Noël, buon Natale.*

CANADIAN FORCES

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a shocking truth that it is more likely for a woman in our military to be raped by a fellow CF member than killed in enemy fire. In the past 12 months, more CF members have experienced a sexual attack or rape than were killed in combat during the entire Afghanistan mission.

Statistics Canada reports that among regular force members, 27% of women and 4% of men have been victims of sexual assault at least once since joining the Canadian Armed Forces, with almost 10% of women being sexually attacked or raped. None of these numbers includes those who may have left the military due to sexual trauma before the Statistics Canada survey was distributed. Is it any wonder that there are now two class action lawsuits against the government regarding military sexual trauma? Both the Canadian Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs can and must do much more to prevent sexual trauma and to support those who have experienced sexual assault while serving their country.

* * *

• (1420)

[Translation]

LAC-MÉGANTIC

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three years after the disaster, two out of three people in Lac-Mégantic are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder caused by the events of July 2013. According to all the experts, the only way for them to find peace is to heal their wounds, and that means building a bypass as quickly as possible so that trains no longer travel through the downtown core. The Minister of Transport has said on a number of occasions that he is open to any suggestions that would quickly help the people of Lac-Mégantic.

The town of Lac-Mégantic has done its homework. The project management team has done a huge amount of work to find solutions that will accelerate the building of a rail bypass. The minister is aware of these solutions.

The federal government must show leadership and take responsibility for the project. People from Lac-Mégantic are in Ottawa today. On behalf of the town of Lac-Mégantic and its citizens, I am asking the Prime Minister to keep his word and to do everything he can to help the people who have already suffered enough.

* * *

[English]

THE AGA KHAN

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on December 13, His Highness the Aga Khan will be celebrating his 80th birthday.

[Translation]

For the past 60 years, His Highness has espoused the values of Islam. He has dedicated his life to improving humanity by creating ties among communities and promoting peace, diplomacy, and pluralism around the world.

Oral Questions

[English]

The Global Centre for Pluralism, which he established in Canada, is critical at this particular time. As a Muslim leader, he places great emphasis on the value of a knowledge society and the role of the intellect to advance the well-being of all peoples, irrespective of their faith or conviction.

To quote the Hon. Adrienne Clarkson, the Aga Khan “is a man who is perhaps the only person in the world to whom everyone listens”.

Happy birthday, Hazar Imam. *Bon anniversaire.*

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

ETHICS

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are a few facts.

The Liberal Party of Canada is establishing a direct link between government business and its fundraising activities. The Liberals are inviting people to buy tickets to talk government business with the Prime Minister and the ministers.

Is the Prime Minister denying those facts?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians can rest assured that, at the federal level, we have one of the strongest political financing systems in the country.

The reality is that this system requires a high degree of openness, transparency, and accountability in order to maintain Canadians' confidence in our democracy and system of government.

I can assure Canadians that our party always follows all the rules and that it also supports all the values and principles associated with those rules.

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in May, the founder of Wealth One Bank of Canada, a Chinese billionaire, attended a cash for access event with the Prime Minister. Two months later, his bank received final government approval to start business in Canada. Another guest at the same fundraiser donated \$1 million to the Trudeau Foundation, \$50,000 of which is to build a statue of the Prime Minister's father.

Under these terms, does the Prime Minister understand that this is not only unethical, it is more than likely illegal, or does he just not care anymore?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there a lot of questions about these issues, but that is why it makes me happy to reassure Canadians that indeed we have among the strongest political financing rules in the country, which means that Canadians have confidence in the transparency, openness, rigour, and accountability of our system, which this party has always followed and always will follow.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in September, a prominent Liberal organizer sent invitations

to a fundraiser with the Prime Minister. In those invitations, he said it was important to attend and donate to the Liberal Party “so that our issues are heard and that we begin to form relationships and open dialogues with our government”—not with the Liberal Party of Canada; with the government.

The Prime Minister either understands that this is unethical and potentially illegal, or he is just wilfully breaking the rules. Which is it?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all these questions, it is important to reinforce the fact that at the federal level, we have among the strongest principles and rules around fundraising in the country, and those rules are always followed. This is important, because Canadians need to have confidence in the transparency, accountability, and security of our political financing system. Canadians can and must be reassured.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at a November fundraiser, the organizer told the media that he offered to host the event after the Prime Minister invited him to meet with high-ranking Chinese officials. At that fundraiser, the Prime Minister was lobbied directly on the billion-dollar takeover of a Canadian business, which is currently before cabinet. He was also lobbied to change the rules for immigrant investors and foreign real estate investors. Based on these facts, this was not only unethical, it was illegal.

Does the Prime Minister really believe that he is above the law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to reassure Canadians that the federal level, in terms of political financing, has among the strongest and most rigorous rules in the country. That allows for openness, transparency, and accountability, which can reassure and reinforce Canadians' confidence, because those rules have always been and will always be followed by our party.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not feeling more secure now, because the Prime Minister actually himself confirmed what we are saying. When I asked him about the May fundraiser with Chinese billionaires in Toronto, he said, “That is why we have committed to engaging positively with the world to draw in investment”.

Liberal Party fundraisers are not the place to draw in foreign investment. Why has the Prime Minister so blatantly and so eagerly thrown his ethical guidelines out the window?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the frustration Canadians felt around ethics was part of why we were elected in the first place, and therefore, it is so important to reinforce for Canadians that the rules are always followed. The values and the principles that underscore the strong financing rules that exist at the federal level, stronger than just about anywhere else in the country, can reassure Canadians that we have a system that works to make sure that we are worthy and are upholding the public trust.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see the Prime Minister, really. I feel kind of lucky because I did not have to pay \$1,500 to get in here.

Oral Questions

On behalf of all of those Canadians who do not have \$1,500 to get access to the Prime Minister, I have a very simple question.

Will he now admit that he has used his official position to pour hundreds of thousands of dollars into the coffers of the Liberal Party of Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Again, Mr. Speaker, it is important to reassure Canadians that we have, at the federal level, some of the strongest, most stringent, rules around political fundraising anywhere in the country.

Canadians know they can have confidence in members of the House, because we follow all of those rules, and understand the values of openness, accountability, transparency that are required in order to maintain Canadians' trust in our government.

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CONSUMER PROTECTION

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it sounds like he is running for House leader.

[Translation]

With Bill C-29, the Prime Minister is trying to take away the protections that the Quebec law offers families who are already among the most indebted in the G20. The Prime Minister is attacking the Quebec Consumer Protection Act.

Why? Is he trying to help the banks?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our budget implementation bill is important because it will create the economic growth that Canadians need.

After the middle class and those working hard to join it failed to see adequate economic growth for 10 years, we put together a budget that will invest in the middle class, build a strong economy, and protect Canadians. That is exactly what we are going to do by creating opportunities for the middle class and those working hard to join it.

* * *

• (1430)

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is no reason to do away with Quebec's consumer protection legislation.

This Prime Minister seems perfectly comfortable in not keeping his word, whether it is on forming the most ethical government on the planet, or his solemn promise to change the electoral system—and he has been in power for only one year.

My question for the Prime Minister is very simple. Does he think it is important to attend question period?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a prime minister has a tremendous amount of responsibilities, and a large part of those responsibilities is to come to the House to take questions from his colleagues.

However, I am also very pleased to have an extremely strong cabinet. They are here to answer questions related to their portfolios. I am also very proud to be constantly engaged with Canadians across

the country to listen to their concerns and work with them to build a stronger future.

We are committed to building a stronger and more successful middle class. That is exactly what we are doing.

* * *

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Yes, Mr. Speaker, coding with Shopify.

Speaking of respect for Parliament, respect for democracy, the Prime Minister's Speech from the Throne stated clearly that "2015 will be the last federal election conducted under the first past the post voting system".

My question is simple. Was he lying?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I answer that question in the positive, in that, yes, I am committed to making sure that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I have said many times that 2015 will be the last election held under first past the post.

I do want to go back to an offhand comment the NDP leader made that demonstrates his lack of respect for our economy. The fact that he does not understand that investing in good Canadian businesses, investing in coding, making sure we have opportunities for our youth is not something to joke about.

The Speaker: I remind members to be judicious in their language. We do not accuse other members of lying or deliberately misleading the House.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly, the office of prime minister deserves to be treated with a great deal of respect. I am confident that the Prime Minister will continue to do so, but again today, another fundraising activity involving him, this time in Montreal, is raising questions.

The organizers candidly promoted the fact that participants could have privileged access to the Prime Minister if they paid \$1,500 to attend the event.

Does the Prime Minister realize that, when people do that, they are tarnishing the Prime Minister's image?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we held unprecedented public consultations in order to respond to the real challenges Canadians are facing.

I want to assure Canadians that the rules governing fundraising are among the strictest in the country, and we follow the rules.

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is only unprecedented for the Liberal Party.

I had the honour of being part of a government that travelled across the country, all year round, in preparation for the budget every year, with former ministers Mr. Flaherty and Mr. Oliver. We criss-crossed the country.

Perhaps it is unprecedented for the Liberals, but not for a Canadian government.

Asking for \$1,500 for access to the Prime Minister and to be able to talk to him, now that is unprecedented.

Do the Liberals realize that giving access to the Prime Minister in exchange for money violates the rules of ethics?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will continue its consultations and engagement with Canadians, because we need to respond to the real challenges they are facing.

The Chief Electoral Officer said that political financing laws in Canada are the most advanced, constrained, and transparent in the world.

[English]

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the ethical ship the Liberals sailed in on is sinking like the *Titanic*.

Day after day, more and more people are coming forward, admitting they have paid to play with the Prime Minister. It is abundantly clear to everyone the Prime Minister never intended to follow his own open and accountable government rules.

When will the Prime Minister stop the charade, and put an end to these unethical, shady, cash for access events?

• (1435)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to engage with Canadians. This government will continue to consult with Canadians. This government will continue to respond to the very real challenges that Canadians are facing.

I can assure Canadians that when it comes to the rules governing political financing, they are amongst the strictest in this country, and this party, this government will continue to follow the rules.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, whether it is hosting elites, high priced lawyers, or Chinese tycoons, Liberal fundraisers are marketed as a chance to lobby the government. An IT start-up entrepreneur was told that \$1,500 would get her close to the PM and his rich friends. That is cash for access.

The Liberals' response is an endless loop of "we have some of the strictest rules in the country". We know the rules, because Conservatives wrote them, but the Prime Minister set his own rules for himself and his ministers.

Will the Liberals finally admit their promises and their rules are not worth the paper they are written on?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have had the opportunity to say, time and time again, and I appreciate the opportunity to once again remind Canadians and to assure Canadians, that when it comes to the rules around political financing, they are amongst the strictest in this country.

This party, this government, will continue to follow the rules. This government will continue to respond to the very real challenges that Canadians are facing. I am proud to have some of my own constituents here on the Hill today, and I will continue to work hard for them.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader gets up day after day, and repeats the same lines over and over, lines that the Prime Minister—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. I do not know if you all know, but Santa Claus is on the Hill today. I had a chance to talk to him, and all I asked for was a little peace and tranquillity.

Let us have a little bit of that, while the hon. opposition House leader asks her question.

Hon. Candice Bergen: Mr. Speaker, she is repeating lines that the Prime Minister has asked her to say, words that she knows are not true. The Liberals are not following the rules, and she has to know it.

Will the House leader show the integrity and the leadership that I know she has, and will she admit that the Liberals need to clean up their act, or will she at least tell the Prime Minister that she is not going to keep doing his dirty work for him?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to serve with a government that has lowered taxes on the middle class, that respects the environment and understands we can do more to protect the environment, and that recognizes we need to grow the economy and create the growth Canadians expect us to create.

The member knows very well that when it comes to the rules around political financing, they are amongst the strictest in this country. We will continue to follow the rules. I encourage the member to get to work, and do the hard work Canadians expect us to do.

Oral Questions

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, repeating Liberal spin and outrageous comments a thousand times do not make them true. Frankly, it is embarrassing to watch the House leader allowing herself to be used by the Prime Minister like this. She can tell him no, after all.

The Prime Minister is breaking fundraising rules. The media knows it. The public knows it. Even Liberal donors and supporters know it.

Is there anyone on that side of the House who has the courage to stand up for what is right, and tell the Prime Minister to stop this corrupt fundraising?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. The member recognizes that I am reminding Canadians, ensuring Canadians, that when it comes to political financing, we have some of the strictest rules in this country.

What is more interesting is that the member chooses to keep repeating the same question, but does not understand why she gets the same answer.

I have confidence in her, as well, that we can work together in this place to serve Canadians, and to respond to the very real challenges they are facing.

Let us get to work. Let us work harder for Canadians.

* * *

• (1440)

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals seem to have forgotten what “appearance of conflict of interest” means.

Their bogus survey on democratic reform is anything but scientific. Children can take it. Adults can take it 50 times if they feel so inclined. It is supposed to be anonymous, but respondents who want their answers tabulated have to disclose their gender, age, level of education, sector of employment, email address, income, language, postal code, and minority status.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner is concerned. If it is not scientific, if it really is anonymous, why do they collect all that information?

[English]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the member opposite, and assure him that providing demographic information is completely optional.

All information provided by participants will be administered according to the requirements of federal policy laws and federal policies on public opinion research.

Users of MyDemocracy.ca can access the privacy information at the bottom of the page, which explains the information being collected, and how it will be used.

The government will only be receiving aggregated data, without any personal information. We take protecting Canadians’—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister has even read her own survey, because if we do not give the Liberals all that private information, all of our answers are thrown in the garbage.

We received a call today from Janet, from Alberta. She said when she called the MyDemocracy hotline, she was told these survey questions were approved by the 12-member all-party committee.

That is news to me. I sit on the committee, and we would never have insulted the intelligence of Canadians with such ridiculous questions.

First, the minister threw the committee under the bus, and now the Liberals are trying to blame us for their terrible survey. Thank goodness the Privacy Commissioner is investigating.

Here is a values question for the Prime Minister. Does he have the integrity to keep his own promise?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the tens of thousands of Canadians who have engaged with MyDemocracy.ca. We are proud of the Canadian political scientists who have helped develop this tool. This is a Canadian made application, formed by Canadian academic experts to engage Canadians.

So far, it is working.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the minister told us that we were visiting the wrong website. She might even be right.

If we took democracy surveys at BuzzFeed, *The Beaverton*, or even on the back of a cereal box, we would get less skewed results than what they are trying to pass off as consultation now. We would not have to provide our gender, year of birth, household income, postal code, or even the name of our firstborn child for it to count.

The minister keeps telling this House that we do not need personal information to participate in the survey, but she did not say those answers would actually count.

Is she just using weasel words?

The Speaker: I encourage members to be judicious in the use of words and language here in the House.

The hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions.

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Special Committee on Electoral Reform has good advice about asking questions regarding electoral reform. I am sure members have started to read the report which says:

Finally, the Committee was told numerous times that there is no perfect electoral system as different systems emphasize different values.

Recognizing there is no perfect system, the committee used the values and principles set out in the mandate to develop its recommendations on electoral reform.

MyDemocracy.ca is about empowering Canadians to have their say about electoral reform. I encourage all members of this House, and Canadians, to get involved.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my staff has researched the identity of “Cliff”, cited yesterday by the minister as the defender of MyDemocracy.ca. It turns out he is Cliff Van Der Linden, the CEO of Vox Pop Labs, who was paid a quarter of a dollars to design it. That is a relief, because at first it seemed that the minister was referring to Cliff, the clueless mailman from *Cheers*. After all, due to the complete lack of security features, Bostonians like Cliff, Woody, and Carla can participate in the survey; Norm can sign in without even leaving his barstool.

Given this lack of security, how can Canadians trust that the results of the survey will mean absolutely anything at all?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all thrilled that tens of thousands of Canadians are participating in MyDemocracy.ca. Providing their personal information is completely optional. Responses will remain anonymous. Any data collected will be administered according to the requirements of the federal Privacy Act. I encourage all members and Canadians to participate in this unique and innovative initiative.

• (1445)

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, Vox Pop Labs are the folks who brought us Vote Compass, the online survey notorious for telling participants they should vote Liberal. A Queen's University professor answered Vote Compass five ways and was always labelled a Liberal. Reports showed that any consistent answer to all 30 questions on that survey caused respondents to be labelled Liberal.

As a result, the CBC ombudsman warned about its data, saying “it is challenging to interpret which uses were authentic and which ones might have been contrived”. Given that MyDemocracy.ca has all the same problems, will the Liberals just take this survey offline?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud to be hearing from as many Canadians as possible about their values on their electoral system. We are proud to be working with Canada's political scientists in developing this tool. We look forward to hearing from as many Canadians as possible, using this initiative and many others, before introducing legislation in the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one need only listen to the minister to understand why people are cynical about politics.

Here is what the media had to say this morning about the minister and her new consultation process. *Le Devoir* said that “respondents are asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with statements that are, at best, nonsensical and at worst, biased”.

A *La Presse* article headlined “Hypocrites' Ball” states that “the Liberal government waded into this debate, but is now starting to look pretty foolish”.

Those words were written not by me but by journalists and political analysts.

Oral Questions

Can the minister tell us whether she will respect the people and hold a referendum when she decides to change the voting system—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions.

[English]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I continue to appreciate the member opposite's passion for a referendum, and I encourage all members of the House to read the committee's report. We will respond to that report in due course.

* * *

[Translation]

YOUTH

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised to be accountable and yet, during this past year, he has not answered any of my questions concerning youth.

Young people's concerns about Kinder Morgan, marijuana, precarious jobs, or electoral reform are not reflected in the measures proposed by the Liberal government. I will not even mention his many broken promises to first nations youth.

If the Prime Minister will not be held to account for his lack of action, why does he not resign and appoint a minister of youth who is truly interested in youth issues?

[English]

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to indicate how proud we are that we have a Prime Minister who recognized a long time ago the challenge faced by youth, and is taking it so seriously that he is the minister of youth. Not only that, we are proud to have announced the creation of an expert panel on youth employment. It is going to be reporting in December. It is only one of the initiatives that we are doing to help young people in Canada.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question again for the minister of youth is this. When the Prime Minister gave himself the job of minister of youth, many young Canadians expected he would champion their issues. Over a year later, the youth minister has been one of the worst-performing ministers in the Liberal cabinet. He has encouraged police to hand out criminal records for pot possession, backtracked on his promise of a fair new voting system, and is failing to address the very serious issue of rising precarious work among young people.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and resign as minister of youth?

Oral Questions

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to put on the record that, in fact, we have invested \$165 million in the youth employment strategy; \$73 million in work-integrated learning, giving young people the chance to get the skills they need; \$85 million in union-based training; \$175 million in transfers to the provinces for training; and \$1.5 billion to increase Canada students grants. And this is only our first year in office.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, the Minister of Infrastructure announced over \$100 million in funding for Calgary public-private projects. This money is aimed specifically to help plan and design the Green Line. However, all over Alberta, there are small communities who have never received any money for public transit.

My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. How will these small communities benefit from our historic investment in public transit?

• (1450)

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a result of our close collaboration with the Government of Alberta and local municipalities, we announced public transit investments last Saturday for communities like Airdrie, Banff, Fort Saskatchewan, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Strathcona County, Medicine Hat, St. Albert, Lethbridge, and others. Some of these communities are receiving transit funding for the first time in the last decade.

These projects will help grow the economy, create jobs, and build more sustainable—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. It has been very quiet, generally speaking, during the questions, but not so quiet during the answers. I ask members, like the member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, who was talking throughout that last answer, and others, to listen to both the questions and the answers.

The hon. member for Carleton.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week, the finance minister released a helpful PowerPoint presentation on the economy. It showed that in the last Conservative term in office, we were creating, as an economy, 15,000 net new full-time jobs on average every month. This year we have been losing on average 2,000 full-time jobs per month.

The finance minister promised that a big deficit spending splurge would create lots of new jobs. He got the big deficits. Where are the jobs?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to remind the member what we did to consult

Canadians. On budget 2016, more than 500,000 Canadians engaged with us. We received more than 5,000 submissions.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne: I will come to the jobs if members can be patient.

We put in the budget measures that will help Canadians and the middle class. The member knows well that our historic investment in infrastructure is helping to grow the economy in our country and create jobs for Canadians.

That is what we promised. That is what we are delivering to Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member said that he will come to the jobs in a moment if we are just patient. Well, Canadians are going to have to be very patient, because it has been a year, and the government has not created a single net new full-time job. In fact, in 2015, we added, as a country, about 12,300 net new full-time jobs per month. This year, we have lost a grand total of 30,000 full-time jobs. All of this data can be found in the finance minister's own PowerPoint presentation.

Will the finance minister turn to page 6 of that presentation and see the destructiveness of his policies and reverse them?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, talking about data, according to Statistics Canada, since November 2015, there have been 183,200 jobs created. We have seen 1,000 jobs at Bell Helicopter. We have seen 1,000 new jobs created by GM Canada. We have seen Thomson Reuters commit up to 1,500 new jobs in Canada.

Do members know why? According to Jim Smith, the president and CEO of Thomson Reuters, “We applaud the Canadian federal, provincial and municipal governments for making jobs, innovation and the knowledge economy a top priority”.

That is why we're investing—

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the job situation in Canada is worrisome, but the future looks even worse.

According to CBC/Radio-Canada, the Minister of Finance presented very troubling information to the elite. The finance department's forecasts indicate that job creation will decline by 1.9% next year. We know that the government finds it difficult to provide exact figures. The government is refusing to acknowledge that no full-time jobs have been created since it came to power.

Will the government give us the facts? According to its own data, is Canada headed towards a 1.9% reduction in employment next year?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us get the record straight, which indicates that employment increased by 10,700 jobs in November. The unemployment rate has fallen by 0.2% to a low of 6.8%. Compared to November 2015, employment in Canada over the year since then is higher by 1.0%.

Clearly, we have a plan, and it is working.

* * *

• (1455)

*[Translation]***THE ECONOMY**

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously the government does not have a plan because, whatever it is doing, no full-time jobs have been created. What is more, according to the government's own forecasts, there will be a 1.9% drop in job creation. That is completely unacceptable. We know that the government is good at keeping secrets.

I have asked the government 13 times when it plans to balance the budget. I want to take this opportunity to ask the Prime Minister to reassure Canadians.

When will Canada balance the budget?

I know it is not a \$1,500 question. It is a \$30-billion question.

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

It is no secret that the former Conservative government left the country over \$100 billion in debt. Canadians remember that.

We presented Canadians with a plan for economic growth.

Canadians asked us to help families and to grow the economy. That is what we did in budget 2016. That is what we did in the fall economic update. Our government is committed to helping Canadian families and creating jobs and economic growth here in Canada. That is something that the members opposite were unable to do for 10 years.

* * *

*[English]***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a recent study echoed what indigenous educators and leaders have been voicing for years, that improving the level of education and employment of young indigenous people will boost the economy in Saskatchewan by \$90 billion. Yet following federal cuts, the Province of Saskatchewan redirected funding from NORTEP-NORPAC. This has students and staff uncertain about their future.

Will the government help NORTEP-NORPAC to ensure that it remains autonomous and thriving, or will it continue to leave the future of our young people at risk?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not a situation I am well aware of right now, and I would entertain the question and a conversation with the member afterwards to see what we can do.

* * *

*[Translation]***AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government cannot be bothered to work out a better deal for Canadians in the Canada-Europe trade agreement. It is going ahead despite the fact that a number of problems remain outstanding. Like Canada's dairy producers, Canadian vintners will lose a lot of money because of this government's concessions.

When will the minister come up with a plan to help Canadian vintners cope with the negative repercussions of this trade agreement?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CETA is a very progressive agreement. We will monitor its impact here. We have already promised to help dairy farmers. We will monitor the impact of the agreement on Canada as we go forward.

* * *

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

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister defended ripping 280 jobs out of Vegreville. Here are some comparisons. It is like removing 290,000 jobs from Toronto, 187,000 from Montreal, 113,000 from Vancouver, 60,000 from Ottawa, and 55,000 from Edmonton.

This unnecessary and unfounded edict will hurt families, businesses, and communities in the region. When will the Prime Minister do the right thing and stop this cold-hearted, mean-spirited attack?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand the impact of the Vegreville relocation on the community. We also understand the important work being undertaken by the member opposite in defence of her constituents. The testimony we heard at committee yesterday was very, very moving.

We understand that this decision will have an impact on community members, and we are taking every measure possible to minimize those impacts. That includes guaranteeing a job for all of the workers who currently work in Vegreville, should they wish to work in Edmonton.

We will continue to work with the member opposite in this regard and defend the workers of Alberta.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but get up because the member for Alberta asked the Prime Minister an important question about jobs and I bet if it was 290,000 jobs in Toronto, he would get up and answer it. Job losses are at an all-time high in Alberta.

Oral Questions

Considering we probably will not see him again, the least the Prime Minister could do is respect Albertans, respect the member of Parliament, and get up and answer her question.

• (1500)

The Speaker: Order. I would remind members that they are not to bring attention to the presence or absence of a member in the chamber.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague answered that question with full detail and a tremendous amount of compassion.

The fact is the party opposite talked for 10 years about standing up for Alberta and yet when we approved a pipeline that is going to make a difference in the lives of millions of Albertans, what did those members do? They started talking about how it will never get built, so do not bother investing, do not bother hiring people for it. They are talking down the economy of Alberta and real decisions we took for political gain. That is why people are disgusted with the approach that members opposite are taking.

The Speaker: Order. Where is Santa Claus when I need him?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is the Liberal arrogance that Albertans have come to expect from the Prime Minister.

The Alberta MP asked a very good question about jobs. If it was 290,000 jobs in Toronto, the Prime Minister would have been paying attention and he would have answered the question. She deserves respect. Albertans deserve respect.

Why does the Prime Minister not get up, do the right thing, and give the people of Vegreville their jobs back?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to serve with four outstanding MPs from Alberta who are fighting every single day for Albertans. They are the ones who are making sure we have stabilization funding. They are the ones who are making historic investments in infrastructure. They are the ones who are making sure that we work with Business Development Canada to create opportunities for small businesses. They are the ones who led the charge when it comes to pipelines.

All of these initiatives will create jobs. It is good for Alberta. It is good for Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian Heritage wrapped up its series of official languages round tables that will shape the government's new action plan. These cross-Canada consultations are an example of our government's leadership on official languages.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage share some more examples of the government's accomplishments in this area over the past year?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Sudbury for that important question.

I am proud of our government's positive leadership on official languages. Here are just a few of the things we have done: reinstated the francophone immigration program, arranged for the appointment of bilingual Supreme Court justices, reinstated university education at the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and reviewed service delivery rules.

My Public Safety colleague and I are committed to ensuring that all new RCMP officers providing security services on Parliament Hill are bilingual.

* * *

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport received a letter from the Town of Lac-Mégantic that is very clear. The federal government can help the people of Lac-Mégantic. More than three years after the tragedy, the wounds have yet to heal, and they are reopened every time a train passes through town.

Instead of passing the buck to local elected officials who must relive the tragedy every day, can the minister do what the people of Lac-Mégantic and all Canadians expect of him, which is to show some leadership, take charge of the file, and make sure no train whistle is heard in downtown Lac-Mégantic ever again?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no issue that I care more deeply about than the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. I have been to Lac-Mégantic three times. I held a public forum. I listened to the residents. I know they want a bypass. I met with citizens groups on three separate occasions. Just last night, I spoke with the mayor of Lac-Mégantic, Mr. Cloutier. I committed to work with him to see if we could speed up the process. I plan to speak with the Government of Quebec, which is responsible for the environmental assessment.

This is a very important file, and we want to get it right.

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, based on the response to my question from last Friday, clearly, people who have been waiting for 20 years for cellular service are going to have to wait even longer, because this government has absolutely no plan.

It is not just the remote countryside that lacks service. Sometimes just five minutes away from the main city, there are dead zones, as though the technology did not exist.

When will the government start listening to people from rural communities? They have solutions at the ready.

• (1505)

[English]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, this is a very important issue. We have been talking about our innovation agenda. Within that context, we need to have a strong and vibrant telecommunications sector that can provide this kind of service to our constituents. That is why we are working very closely with them to make sure we have additional investments to provide more choice and availability of service. We are working on spectrum to make sure we maximize the possibility of spectrum there to be able to provide solutions in these rural and remote regions, and where there are connections and issues around connections. We are going to make sure we address this issue in a meaningful way.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges facing Atlantic Canada is finding ways to welcome new Canadians, growing our communities, and strengthening our economies. As one of 32 Atlantic MPs, from the rural riding of Tobique—Mactaquac, ensuring economic growth is a main priority.

Could the Minister of Immigration please update the House on the details of the Atlantic immigration pilot project and how communities can be involved in its success?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his very hard work on this issue, because engaging communities is at the very heart of the Atlantic immigration pilot project.

We know that the key to retaining newcomers is helping them successfully build their lives and put down roots in the Atlantic region. For example, we have just learned about a catering company in Moncton, started by Syrian refugee women, with support from the local community and local businesses. This is why the pilot project will mobilize communities and bring together businesses, schools, student groups, municipalities, and volunteers to welcome and help integrate new families.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are bungling the replacement of Canada's search and rescue aircraft.

Cascade Aerospace, one of Abbotsford's largest employers, has proposed saving the taxpayers \$1.5 billion by completely modernizing the current fleet of Hercules aircraft. It now appears the Liberals have refused to consider that proposal. This decision will kill hundreds of jobs in Abbotsford and will cost Canadian taxpayers dearly.

Why will the defence minister not stand up for B.C. jobs and protect Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I proudly stand for B.C. and all of Canada. Our search and rescue is a critical component for Canada. This is a project that was started in 2004, and I am proud to say that this government is going

Oral Questions

to get this done, because Canada needs to have a very sound search and rescue capability, and this is one promise that we plan to keep.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order.

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

* * *

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, representatives of the Coalition des citoyens de Lac-Mégantic are here in Ottawa today.

In 2013, the member for Papineau signed their petition in support of the construction of a rail bypass in Lac-Mégantic. Today, they are sending a clear message to the Prime Minister. They are asking him to keep his election promise by announcing the construction of a rail bypass.

My question is clear. Will—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Transport.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would rather not have to repeat myself, but our government and our Prime Minister know that the people of Lac-Mégantic were deeply traumatized by the 2013 disaster, which took the lives of 47 people.

I have visited the town three times. I met with its citizens and listened to them. I am working hard on this matter. We want to speed up the process if we can, but we must do our due diligence. As soon as we have something to report, we will make an announcement.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising out of question period and in a moment I will ask for unanimous consent to table a document.

The Minister of Democratic Institutions claimed in question period that Canadians did not have to provide their personal data in order to participate in the MyDemocracy exercise, personal information like income, gender, postal code, etc., but the privacy statement on her own website claims the following, “While answering the profile questions is optional, not answering these questions will result in your input not—”

• (1510)

The Speaker: The hon. member is getting into debate. I would ask him to get to his request for unanimous consent, if he has one. Get to the point of order, please.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, the very last sentence says, and this is what I wish to table, “While answering the profile questions is optional, not answering these questions will result in your input not being included as part of the overall results of the study”. I am not sure what Liberals meant by participation and consultation, but—

The Speaker: I asked the member to come forward with his request and I did not hear it.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was not going to rise on this point of order today, but after the exchange between the Conservative leader and the government today and the obvious lack of respect for the people of Alberta, I thought I would rise on this point of order.

Yesterday, during the vote on a private member's bill, the member for Lakeland stood and we applauded. I thought I heard from the other side a disparaging comment about the people of Vegreville. I would like to give the hon. member who said it an opportunity to apologize, not just to the people of Vegreville but to the member as well.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil for raising his point of order. He says he thought he heard something. If a member wishes to apologize for something he or she said, I am prepared to hear that. I do not see anyone rising.

I do not know what else the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil has to add to this.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I believe there were Liberal members who heard this as well. I believe it was the member for Newmarket—Aurora, so I would like to give him an opportunity to apologize.

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am baffled by this. I did not say anything disparaging at all, so I do not know how to address this.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS*[English]***EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CANADA**

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of tabling, in both official languages, the “Canada Account Annual Report 2014-15” prepared by Export Development Canada.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 15 petitions.

STATISTICS ACT

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-36, An Act to amend the Statistics Act.

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

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the Bilateral Mission to the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Mauritius held from March 16 to 20, 2015.

If I could have a moment, I want to mention that the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, the late Mauril Bélanger, led that delegation and, hence, there has been a delay in submitting this report.

● (1515)

[Translation]

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

[English]

The first concerns to the bilateral visit to London, United Kingdom, and Valletta, Malta, from March 12 to 19.

The second concerns the CPA election seminar for the Parliament of Guyana and the capacity building programme workshop for committee chairs and clerks, held in Georgetown, Guyana from March 31 to April 6.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Finance, entitled “Creating the Conditions for Economic Growth: Tools for People, Businesses and Communities”. Perhaps better known as pre-budget consultations, this report is the result of the efforts of many presentations from over 300 groups and individuals, and more than 400 submissions.

Special thanks must go to Clerk Suzie Cadieux, and assistants William Stephenson and Jean-Denis Kusion, analysts with the Library of Parliament, Dylan Gowans, Florian Richard, Michaël Lambert-Racine, and Claire Annett, who was a research assistant. Also, a special thanks to the chief of the analyst team, June Dewetering, who tried to get everything just perfect.

Finally, a special thanks to members of all parties who worked on this report, and worked endless hours in travel and meetings in this town to get the information in the report being tabled in Parliament today.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the dissenting report of Canada's official opposition regarding the pre-budget consultations. Given the poor results achieved by the Liberals' first budget, we were pleased that the committee decided to choose economic growth as the theme of this year's prebudget consultations. Unfortunately, the committee chose to ignore criticism of the government's current approach and any new idea that could make a difference for Canadian workers, asking in its report that the federal government double down and move forward with a plan that is not working and that will involve more reckless spending, weaker economic growth, fewer jobs, and a heavier tax burden. For all of these reasons, the official opposition is presenting this dissenting report.

* * *

[English]

PROTECTION OF THE NORTH COAST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA ACT

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-328, An Act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 (oil transportation).

He said: Mr. Speaker, thanks to my British Columbia colleagues, in particular my friend from Nanaimo—Ladysmith, I am proud to introduce a bill that would finally and forever protect B.C.'s north and central coasts from the threat of oil tankers and spills.

After more than a decade fighting the 1,100 kilometre diluted bitumen pipeline of the Enbridge northern gateway, communities across the sea united to finally end this nightmare of a project. It threatened our economy, our environment, and our very way of life. First nations and non-first nations, hunters, fishermen, environmentalists, rural and urban, all united together, standing shoulder to shoulder, for more than a decade to defeat that pipeline. The bill would finally finish the job and protect our coasts for generations to come.

The Prime Minister himself, and many in his cabinet, voted for this legislation in previous Parliaments. In order to restore some faith with British Columbians, it would be nice to see the Prime Minister follow through on some of those commitments. The Liberals cannot continue to betray our good province without consequence. Supporting this clear, permanent protection for our coast would be a true and worthy legacy of this Parliament for generations to come.

The Speaker: I would remind all members that presenting private members' bills is not the time for debate.

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

* * *

● (1520)

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-329, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (asbestos).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am excited, with the support of the member for Newmarket—Aurora, to introduce a bill to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, modifying section 94. This would place asbestos on the prohibited materials list, meaning no person shall manufacture, use, sell, offer for sale, or import asbestos.

Asbestos has destroyed the lives of far too many workers. While short-term gain may be good, the long-term consequences for society are expensive. Let us ensure that people around the world do not suffer needlessly for our inactions. Let us do the right thing, and ban this toxic substance, once and for all.

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

* * *

[Translation]

TAX CONVENTION AND ARRANGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2016

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill S-4, An Act to implement a Convention and an Arrangement for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and to amend an Act in respect of a similar Agreement, be now read the first time and printed.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have here a petition regarding community television and media signed by dozens of people from my riding. It reads:

We, the undersigned Canadian residents, acknowledge:

That the Broadcasting Act stipulates that the community, private and public elements of the Canadian broadcasting system should complement one another to ensure that a range of local, regional and national programming is available to Canadians.

...we ask the government to enable a network of community-operated media centres to ensure i) the survival of community TV ii) the availability of local media in towns and neighbourhoods not served by public or private media iii) all Canadian residents have access to multi-platform media skills training and content distribution in the digital economy.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise in the House today to present a petition on a rebate for people with disabilities on behalf of a constituent of mine in Cambridge, Ontario. Over 1,900 Canadians have supported this petition.

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition signed by more than 500 people who are calling on the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and hon. member for Saint-Laurent, as well as the hon. Minister of International Development and La Francophonie and hon. member for Compton—Stanstead, to add Tunisia to the list of developing countries in Canada's international development program.

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present two petitions. The first is from residents of the Vancouver area.

The petitioners call on the government to be mindful of the threat to the coastlines, that spills from oil tankers are inevitable, even if they are double-hulled. They ask the House of Commons to establish a permanent ban on crude oil tankers on the west coast of Canada to protect British Columbia's economy, fisheries, and tourism, as well as its coastal ecosystems.

BOTTLED WATER

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents primarily of the Victoria area, as well as from some of the Gulf Islands.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to discontinue the purchase of bottled water for use in federal government institutions, other than in cases where potable water is unavailable.

HEALTH

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions.

The first is e-petition 458. It points out that access to health care is a right for all Canadians, and that hepatitis C is the single-most burdensome infectious disease in Canada, affecting 250,000 Canadians, but fortunately it has a cure.

The petitioners call on the government to develop a national strategy, to work with the provinces and territories, to develop an effective action plan to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

● (1525)

HOUSING

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as members of the House know, affordable housing in British Columbia is a very large and serious challenge for many people.

Petitioners from my riding of Vancouver Kingsway and elsewhere request that the Government of Canada, working with the provinces, invest in social housing, renew funding of long-term social housing operating agreements, and preserve rent subsidies and funds for necessary renovations to preserve the 620,000 social housing units that were built in our country between 1970 and 1994.

MEDICAL CANNABIS

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present e-petition 190 on behalf of the medical cannabis patients in Canada. This petition has received over 10,000 signatures from Canadians in every province and territory.

The petitioners call upon the Minister of Finance to make medical cannabis, a physician-authorized substance, to be tax exempt as are all other prescription medications. The Excise Tax Act outlines that drugs authorized by a health care practitioner that are not available over the counter are zero rated. These Canadians are simply asking for equality under the law.

As we begin the process of taking cannabis out of the hands of criminals and into the controlled, regulated system, it is imperative that we protect the well-being of tens of thousands of Canadian patients who legally use this substance as a part of their medical treatment regime.

[Translation]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Longueuil—Saint-Hubert who have come together to fight for community television. They point out that the Broadcasting Act stipulates that the Canadian broadcasting system comprises private, public, and community elements, each of which has a role to play. The petitioners enjoy the services provided by TVRS, and they have come together to sign the document I am tabling in the House today.

[English]

HOME CHILDREN

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition signed by the citizens and residents of Canada.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to offer an unequivocal, sincere, and public apology to those home children, or child migrants, who died while being ashamed of their history and deprived of their family, to the living yet elderly home children who continue to bear the weight of that path, and to the descendants of home children who continue to feel the void passed down through generations, while continuing to search out relatives lost as a result of a system that victimized them under the guise of protection.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to submit a petition in relation to community television and media.

Routine Proceedings

Dozens of residents of Pontiac have signed a petition which asks the government to enable community operated media centres that would ensure not only the survival of community television, but also the availability of local media in small towns and neighbourhoods that are not served by private or public media. The petitioners also call upon the government to ensure that Canada residents have access to multi-media platforms, media skills training, and content distribution capacity in the digital economy.

I am quite proud of one of my constituents, Catherine Edwards, who is the head of the Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations. She has worked very hard on this, so it is an honour to stand and deliver this.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 569 to 571.

[Text]

Question No. 569—**Mr. Gérard Deltell:**

With regard to the attendance by the Finance Minister on October 13, 2016, at an event hosted by the Laurier Club in Halifax, Nova Scotia: (a) what are all the details of all expenses related to travel and hospitality incurred by the Finance Minister and his exempt staff related to his trip to Halifax on or around October 13, 2016, including the amount spent on (i) air transportation, (ii) other transportation, (iii) hotels, (iv) per diems, (v) other expenses; (b) was government-owned aircraft used for any portion of the trip; (c) what are the details of any official government meetings or announcement the Finance Minister had on October 13, 2016, including (i) time, (ii) location, (iii) list of attendees; and (d) did the Finance Minister receive approval from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner prior to attending the Laurier Club event, and if so, when was approval received?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the expenses related to travel and hospitality incurred by the minister and his exempt staff related to his trip to Halifax on or around October 13, 2016 were \$5,020.73 in total, of which (i) air transportation was \$3,231.04; (ii) other transportation, \$573.11; (iii) hotels, \$757.77; (iv) per diems, \$458.81; and (v) other expenses, \$0.00.

With regard to (b), government-owned aircraft were not used for any portion of the trip.

With regard to (c), on Friday, October 14, Minister Morneau held an open town hall in Halifax as part of the pre-budget consultations for budget 2017. A photo opportunity and media availability took place at a local business in Dartmouth prior to the pre-budget consultation.

In particular, with regard to (c)(i) and (ii), the photo opportunity and media availability were held at 10:00 a.m. local time, at the Bodega Boutique, 104 Portland Street, Dartmouth, NS; and the pre-budget consultation was held from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. local time, at the Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market, 1209 Marginal Road Halifax, NS.

With regard to (c)(iii), representatives from the following organizations attended: Nova Scotia Association of Realtors, Laing House, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia Community College's

Truro Campus, Efficiencyone, Canadian Medical Association, Leave Out Violence, Maritime Lumber Bureau, Metroworks, City of Halifax, Clean Foundation, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Easter Seals Nova Scotia, Municipality of the District of Digby, Nova Scotia Home Builders Association, the mortgage sector, CMBA Atlantic, National Bank, Common Goods Solutions, and Remax Nova.

With regard to (d), the Department of Finance does not have information regarding the minister's private engagements.

Question No. 570—**Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the national debt of Canada: (a) what was the national debt on November 4, 2015; (b) what is the current national debt; and (c) what is the projected amount of national debt for the end of each of the following fiscal years (i) 2016-2017, (ii) 2017-2018, (iii) 2018-2019?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the federal debt, or difference between the Government of Canada's total liabilities and its total assets, is calculated on a monthly basis, once the annual financial results for the previous fiscal year, including the closing balance of the federal debt, have been finalized, audited, and published. The federal debt stood at \$613.3 billion as of October 31, 2015, the month-end closest to November 4, 2015.

With regard to (b), based on the most recent finalized monthly results available, of August 31, 2016, the federal debt stood at \$622.4 billion.

With regard to (c), as per the November 2016 "Update of Economic and Fiscal Projections", the projection of the federal debt is (i) for 2016-17, \$642.0 billion; (ii) for 2017-18, \$669.8 billion; and (iii) for 2018-19, \$695.7 billion.

Question No. 571—**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:**

With regard to the attendance of the Minister of Finance at a fundraising event and the statement in the House from the Leader of the Government on October 20, 2016, that, "This event was open, and anyone who purchased a ticket was welcome to attend. The event was made public online,": (a) what was the website address where the event was made public; (b) what were the dates, locations, and ticket prices for all similar type events where Ministers have been in attendance since November 4, 2015; (c) what are the dates, locations, and ticket prices for all similar type events which Ministers are currently scheduled to attend; and (d) what are the website addresses for all similar type events which Ministers are currently scheduled to attend?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this question does not relate to the administrative responsibilities of the government, the government has no information to provide.

Government Orders

[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 response to Questions Nos. 568 and 572 to 574 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 568—**Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to materials prepared for the Minister of Public Safety between September 1, 2016, and September 30, 2016: for every briefing document or docket prepared, what is the (i) date, (ii) title or subject matter, (iii) department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 572—**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:**

With regard to grants and contributions under \$25 000 provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, since November 4, 2015: for each contribution, what is the (i) recipient's name, (ii) location, (iii) date, (iv) value, (v) type, (vi) purpose, (vii) project number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 573—**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:**

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, since November 4, 2015: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 574—**Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to funding for clean water projects and programs in indigenous communities referenced in Supplementary Estimates (A), 2016-17: (a) what was the total amount allocated for such projects; (b) for each project with funding allocated, broken down by department or agency, what is the (i) amount allocated, (ii) amount spent, (iii) description of project, (iv) location; (c) what is the total amount allocated for each department or agency for such projects; (d) what is the total amount spent by each department or agency, as of present, for such projects; (e) what is the complete list of indigenous communities currently under a boil-water advisory; and (f) which of the projects referenced in (b) are in communities that are (i) currently under a boil-water advisory, (ii) have been under a boil-water advisory in the previous 12 months?

(Return tabled)

• (1530)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTION FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

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 from November 23 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. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-30. I commend all my colleagues in this House who have spoken to this bill over the last few days. It is a very important bill. I especially commend the member for New Brunswick Southwest, who made a great statement today on this bill. I would also like to recognize our trade minister for all the hard work she has done on this file. She has worked extremely hard on this important agreement, and along with our Prime Minister, on representing Canada across the world as an open, trading country.

I would also like to give recognition to our international trade committee, which I am very proud to sit on as the chair. I would like to thank the members of the committee for their work and engagement during this process. It is a very active committee. We are dealing with softwood lumber and problems with the meat sector in the United States. We also, over the last year, had a dialogue with Canadians and stakeholders on the TPP. We went right across the country. We had thousands of people come forward. During those proceedings, for the first time, the committee had an open mic at the end of each meeting, so we had a lot of feedback on the TPP across this country.

I am here to talk about the agreement with the European Union. Recently we had an excellent meeting with the European Economic and Social Committee, and we will continue to work closely with our European counterparts. They are very excited about this agreement.

Thinking of how Canada was formed, we go back hundreds of years. I guess it was 400 years ago that trade started between Europe and Canada. At that time, it probably started off with fishermen, with probably Spanish and Portuguese fishermen coming and getting fish and trading it back and forth. Other immigrants came over the years and created trade. We had farmers, and of course, the fur industry was another big one, with the voyageurs. Trade with Europe was very important in the early years, and it still is.

Government Orders

As the country expanded and immigrants came, most were from Europe. Ukrainian people came over. A lot of them are in my riding, but many of them went out west and developed the grain fields, and those products were traded back and forth.

Our connection with Europe goes way back, with over 400 years of trade. That continues to be so, though many of the products have changed.

The proposed comprehensive economic and trade agreement with the European Union is a modern, progressive trade agreement that, when implemented, will generate billions of dollars in bilateral trade and investment, providing greater choice and lower prices for consumers and creating middle-class jobs in many sectors. That is what our government stands for. We want to increase the middle class and have it do better, and trade is important. Countries that trade have a larger middle class and have more efficient and competitive industries.

CETA is the product of hard work and frank discussions. We have some of the best negotiators in the world on our team. There was a lot of commitment from our Prime Minister and the Minister of International Trade, our committee, and countless other people behind the scenes. I also have to commend the work of the former Conservative government on this agreement. The Conservatives set the groundwork for this. They started the negotiations, and they did a good job. They did not finish it, but they started the process, and we finished it. I have to commend the former Conservative government for initiating this, getting it going, and making it happen.

Negotiating a trade agreement such as the Canada-European comprehensive economic and trade agreement benefits Canadians. It creates new job opportunities and helps many people. The United States is still our biggest trading partner, but we have to look at other markets and see other trading partners. The European Union is tremendous. I think there are over 500 million citizens there. It is a big market, and they want our products. Canada's exports to the EU are diverse and include a significant share of value-added products in addition to traditional exports of resource-based products and commodities.

• (1535)

We have precious stones and metals. We have machinery and equipment. Minerals, fuels and oil, mineral ores, aerospace products, and fish and fish products are some of the top merchandise we sell to the EU.

Atlantic Canada, where I am from, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, is closest to Europe. This will be a big advantage for us. Our two export sectors that will particularly benefit from CETA will be metals and mineral products, and of course, the fishing sector.

In Atlantic Canada, we have more than 400 small harbours. They each have 20 or 30 boats. We cannot eat all the fish in Atlantic Canada, and the rest of the world wants our fish, so it is very important that we have markets around the world for our fish products.

When it comes to exporting our products, Atlantic Canada has ports we can ship from. We ship our products year round. We have good deepwater ports that are ice free. We are two days closer than many other ports, such as Montreal, Boston, and New York. Atlantic

Canada is well-positioned to do well, not only with products but by being the entry and exit point for products coming and going.

My home province of Nova Scotia will benefit significantly from CETA and will have preferable access to the EU market. The EU is Nova Scotia's second-largest export destination, and it is its second-largest trading partner, with a large portion of that share coming right from my island of Cape Breton.

Once in force, CETA will remove the boundaries for Nova Scotia exports and will create new markets and opportunities in the EU. Nova Scotia will benefit from improved exporting conditions. CETA will provide us with a competitive advantage over exporters in other countries that do not have free trade agreements with the EU. The United States tried to do an agreement like we did, but it did not succeed.

I have a neighbour in Cape Breton who is from Germany. His company is called PolyTech windows. They are beautiful windows. He is looking at making the windows in Nova Scotia and exporting them to the United States. We will not only benefit back and forth but we will be a gateway into the United States for a lot of products from the Europeans that we can add value to in Canada.

Between 2013 and 2015, Nova Scotia's merchandise exports to the EU were worth \$465 million. As I said, fish and fish products were the largest share, at 45% of exports. Following fish and fish products were agriculture and agrifood.

Nova Scotia is unique. We have a lot of different products that have great potential, whether it is potatoes, blueberries, apples, or even beef. We have good beef in Atlantic Canada. It is grass-fed beef, and that is what Europeans like, so we have a great opportunity.

I visited an operation in Lunenburg where they grow the haskap berry, which is a very nutritious product. They are looking at exporting that product to the EU and doubling their production.

When we look at all these different products we can trade and sell, we have a great opportunity.

This important agreement also hits home on a personal note. My parents came to Canada from the Netherlands. They came to Cape Breton, and that is where we started our farm. We also trade. We sell strawberries to Iceland, calves to the Caribbean, and lettuce to the United States. As farmers, and as we have heard from farmers right across this country, whether it is beef farmers, canola farmers, or pork producers, we see this as a big opportunity.

Government Orders

In closing, when other countries are closing their doors to trade and immigrants, Canada is opening our doors. The benefits as a result of CETA for the Atlantic provinces are going to be tremendous. CETA is a modern, progressive trade agreement that could generate billions of dollars in bilateral trade and investment and provide greater choice and lower prices for consumers.

● (1540)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke quite rightly about the skill Canadian negotiators generally demonstrate at trade negotiation tables around the world, but it is an overstatement to say that it was a perfect job done on CETA.

I would like to get his comments on two different aspects of CETA.

First, the Europeans had some 170 geographic indications protected under CETA, and the Canadian negotiators received exactly zero, mainly because Canadian negotiators proposed not one geographic indication. There is no protection for Saskatoon berries, Montreal smoked meat, Nanaimo bars, maple syrup, nothing.

Second, Newfoundland gave up its minimum processing requirements for fish in exchange for a promise from the previous Conservative government of compensation in the amount of some \$400 million, and it is adamant that it would not have given up the minimum processing requirements without that absolute pledge from the federal government.

Could my hon. colleague tell us what he thinks about CETA and its inability to get a single geographic indication protected for Canadian producers? Could he also tell us whether his government intends to honour the \$400-million commitment made to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

Hon. Mark Eyking: Madam Speaker, all of these countries in Europe ended up coming to the table. Not only that, but all the provinces and territories came to the table here. The member is talking about the geographic portion, but when all the premiers from across this country sat down, they agreed with the agreement. Witnesses did not bring those issues up.

This is a tremendous agreement. The Europeans say that it was almost a miracle to have that many countries agree on this agreement. So many provinces and territories in Canada agreed on this agreement.

The NDP has a hard time with some of these trade agreements, but I encourage that party to come on board with this one. It is not only going to help farmers and fishermen but is going to allow products here with lower tariffs. It is a tremendous agreement.

I know—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to say that someone else has to ask a question as well, and there may be other people. The member could perhaps continue his thoughts then.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, there are many concerns over CETA.

Let us focus on agriculture alone, something my colleague is familiar with. Many dairy farmers have been voicing their concerns from the start. The losses to the dairy sector will be monumental.

The Liberals agreed to provide compensation, but it does not even cover the \$116 million in annual losses the dairy farmers are currently reporting. The compensation provided by the Liberals is not really a compensation. That money is meant to be invested in very costly modernization. Very few family farms can afford that kind of modernization. In fact, they need investments to compensate for their losses.

What are the Liberals going to do to provide the dairy farmers with better support than this compensation that is contingent on modernization?

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Eyking: Madam Speaker, I am proud of the money that was put on the table by our agriculture minister for our dairy farmers and the industry. The money is not just for the farmers but is also for the industry to help it adapt and grow.

If Canadians like some of the products that are going to come in from Europe, our dairy farmers and processors in Canada are going to step up to the plate and have similar products.

There is going to be an adjustment period, but we have the money available for farmers and producers to help them adjust. There will be mutual benefits for both as we go down the road.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke about financial compensation for farmers. However, 60% of Canada's cheese production is from Quebec.

Why is it that under the financial compensation package we are not allocating 60% of the money to Quebec or based on the number of producers per province? Each province is given money on a population basis. About 23% of the financial compensation will be going to Quebec, even though it produces 60% of Canadian cheese.

When there was a problem in the auto sector, all the money was given to Ontario, because that is the province where the auto sector is. When there were problems in the fishery, we compensated people in eastern Canada, because that is where the fishery is. When the prairie provinces had a wheat problem, they were the ones who got the money.

Now Quebec is the one with the problem. Why is Quebec not receiving its fair share?

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Eyking: Madam Speaker, I am well aware of the Quebec dairy industry, and yes, most of the money will go to Quebec because of size and whatever.

Government Orders

Think about the wine industry, and how it developed with NAFTA. The money that was put in by the Canadian government helped it evolve, and look at it now. It has doubled in size. I see the same thing happening with our dairy industry. We are going to help it increase its production and provide better products, so I think we have a good thing going.

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on Bill C-30, one of our government's blueprints for Canada's dynamic agriculture and agrifood industry.

Agriculture is hugely important in my riding, and has played an enormous role in my life, having grown up on a large farm and having produced myself. After finishing university and coming home, I was farming on my own, learning life's lessons through the farm. I worked within primary agriculture off the farm, and in food manufacturing and food processing.

It has really helped me throughout the years to become the person I am. I would like to thank my parents for giving me that opportunity. Growing up in an agricultural household has played a significant role in my life.

I was a supply-managed egg producer for six years, up until just recently. My wife and I recently exited the egg business. Over the last six years, I have had the ability to learn about a supply-managed system and the challenges and opportunities that evolve because of it. It has afforded me the opportunity in my life to learn those lessons, and to see the opportunity that agriculture offers to allow family operations to transition from one generation to the next, not only within primary agriculture but also through secondary and finished production as well. We can link these easily to CETA.

Canada is a medium-sized open economy. Our economic prosperity depends on an open trading environment. One in five Canadian jobs depends on trade. Canada's agriculture and food exports exceed \$60 billion a year. Half the value of Canada's agricultural production is exported, which is why our government strongly supports free trade.

The Canada-European trade agreement demonstrates Canada's continued leadership with regard to the opportunities for Canada's farmers and food processors on the global stage, which has been nothing short of breathtaking. I hope it continues in that same fashion.

I believe CETA will allow agricultural producers to flourish. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the global demand for food is projected to increase by 60% by 2050. Much of this demand will come from the growing middle class around the world, which is on track to exceed half the planet's entire population over the next 15 years.

A lot of this production is not going to come from new agricultural operations. It is going to come from the growth that will be sustained through the industry, through people who are able to innovate and accept technology, and grow their businesses through that. This is good news for farmers in my riding and across the country. There is no doubt of the benefits CETA will bring Canada's agriculture and agrifood industry.

We are talking about access to Europe, a region that is among the world's largest market for food. That is why timely implementation

of CETA remains a top priority for our government. Since taking government, 99.991% of my constituents believe in the global economy, and our government's efforts to place Canada on the world stage. When we are talking about agriculture in my riding, we are not only talking about dairy. We have a vibrant dairy sector, but we also have a very vibrant beef sector. We also have a very vibrant maple syrup manufacturing sector, so we need to look at the total picture and include all the industries when we talk about trade.

CETA will provide a strong foundation for Canada and the EU to demonstrate leadership on an inclusive, progressive approach to global trade. At the same time, we know that some sectors of agriculture will be impacted by CETA, namely our dairy and cheese producers under the supply-managed system.

While CETA does offer enormous opportunity for many of our farmers, such as our maple producers, beef producers, and aquaculture industry, there will also be greater access for European cheeses to Canada. Canada has provided additional access to the EU on two specific dairy products, cheese and milk protein substances. New imports of European cheese under CETA will represent 4% of Canadian cheese consumption and 1.4% of milk production overall. The supply-managed system has been preserved under CETA.

The Government of Canada fully supports supply management. In fact, we were the government that created it. That is something of which we are extremely proud. Supply management provides a fair return for farmers, stability for processors, and safe, high quality food products for consumers, something I know is important to many farmers in my riding and to constituents across the country.

We recognize the importance Canada's supply-managed sectors play in ensuring a strong rural economy, accounting for over 25,000 direct jobs and over \$34 billion in overall economic benefit to the country.

● (1550)

As my colleague, the hon. Minister of Agriculture, likes to say, Canada has the responsibility and the ability to feed the world. We need look no farther than the innovation that has already occurred within the agriculture sector, and the ability to capitalize on the innovation in the future.

Canada is the fifth largest exporter and the sixth largest importer of agriculture and agrifood products in the world. With our small population and huge production capacity, Canada is today's world leader in agricultural trade on a per capita basis. Trade accounts for one out of every five jobs in Canada. Canada's dairy industry alone generates farm gate sales of \$6 billion, and processing sales of \$17 billion, and 22,000 direct jobs.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and his colleagues continue to consult closely with Canada's supply-managed sector regarding the transition through CETA.

Government Orders

The Minister of Agriculture has met with the Dairy Farmers of Canada, the Dairy Processors Association of Canada, provincial dairy associations from across the country, and young dairy producers. These meetings were very productive with many ideas and fresh thinking. Discussions mainly focused on how to strengthen the sector in the face of domestic and international challenges, and how to transition assistance for new markets under CETA.

Responding to these concerns, the government is committed to putting in place a transition package to help the sector adapt to the new CETA commitments. This government has said from the get go that we need to help dairy producers and processors make the transition when it comes to CETA.

That is why in early November, the Minister of Agriculture announced an investment of \$350 million for two new programs to support the competitiveness of the dairy sector in anticipation of the entry into CETA. The government is supporting the continued strength of the dairy sector by helping ensuring dairy producers and processors continue to innovate and improve productivity.

The two new programs identify \$250 million over five years for a dairy farm investment program that will provide targeted contributions to help Canadian dairy farmers update farm technologies and systems, and improve productivity through upgrades to their equipment. I have had over two dozen calls from dairy farmers wanting to know the specifics of these programs, when they will take effect, and how they can access these funds.

There will be \$100 million over four years for a dairy processing investment fund that will help dairy processors modernize their operations and in turn improve their efficiency and productivity, as well as diversify their products to pursue new market opportunities. These programs will complement the dairy sector's ongoing investment efforts, help in both current and future generations of dairy farmers and processors to remain profitable over the long-term under a strong supply-managed system.

With regard to the allocation of CETA cheese quotas, the government is currently reviewing the results of the public engagement process that concluded at the end of August. The Minister of International Trade's decision will take stakeholder views and interests into consideration before determining how to allocate the new CETA cheese quotas.

The allocation policy for the cheese tariff rate quotas will be finalized following the passage of CETA implementation, legislation, and before the agreement enters into force.

While there are challenges, the Canadian dairy sector remains a progressive, innovative industry. The Canadian dairy farmers are doing a great job of meeting the needs of consumers on food quality, animal welfare, the environment and, of course, great tastes and high nutritional value of Canadian products.

Consumers love Canadian dairy products. Production continues to grow every year. Butter consumption has risen by 10% over the last decade. Yogourt consumption has increased over 60% during the same period, and is expected to continue growing.

Canadian dairy farmers are among the global leaders in their industry when it comes to the environment. Canada's dairy sector has

a smaller footprint for carbon, water, and land than most other leading dairy industries around the world.

Today, Canadian dairy farmers are able to produce 14% more milk than they used to 20 years ago, thanks to better genetics, nutrition, and farm management practices. They are able to accomplish this with 24% fewer cows while producing 20% fewer greenhouse gas emissions. That is thanks to advances in animal genetics and nutrition.

Forward-thinking Canadian farmers have contributed to the success of the Canadian dairy industry in many ways. Canadian dairy genetics are exported to over 80 countries around the world, and of course, who can forget our famous Canadian cheeses which are winning top prizes at some of the world's leading competitions.

• (1555)

We all want a bright future for Canada's dairy sector. The agricultural sector continues to create jobs and be a leader in innovation, not only within the dairy sector but across our agricultural industries.

To help build that future, we are investing in science—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member's time is up. Maybe the member will be able to finish his speech during questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing my friend and colleague did not talk about much was that CETA will lead to increased costs of prescription drugs for Canadians.

In fact, Jim Keon, president of the Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association said:

A study prepared for the CGPA by two leading Canadian health economists in early 2011 estimated that, if adopted, the proposals would delay the introduction of new generic medicines in Canada by an average of three and a half years. The cost to pharmaceutical payers of this delay was estimated at \$2.8 billion annually, based on generic prices in 2010.

When the Liberals were in opposition, they agreed with the NDP that greater analysis was needed, as well as compensation to the provinces.

Will the member opposite explain why the Liberals are comfortable signing-off on CETA without any further analysis of how these increased drug costs will impact the people in their riding?

Mr. T.J. Harvey: Madam Speaker, I know the member is very passionate about the subject.

I know it is really hard for members opposite, especially directly across from me, to recognize the benefits of a trade agreement. This is an agreement that we have seen, and not only ourselves but I believe the members opposite farther up the row. They would agree, if we look at the overall, broad concept of the agreement, it is a 100% win for Canadian companies, not only within agriculture but across the board.

Government Orders

When the dust settles and the agreement is completely ratified, everybody in this House will be 100%, completely confident, that we have done our due diligence on this side of the House to ensure that we have signed-off on a very progressive trade agreement with one of the largest, fastest growing populations in the world, and that Canadian consumers and Canadian citizens are going to be able to see the benefits of this agreement for years to come.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member knows very well where the NDP stands with respect to the paltry compensation that the Liberals gave the dairy industry, particularly in Quebec.

Another affected agricultural industry seeking compensation from Canada is the vintners' association. The European Union exports 180 million litres of wine to Canada, while Canada exports only 123,000 litres to the European Union. This openness has our wine producers fearing the worst.

In order to protect wine producers, are the Liberals planning to properly compensate this industry?

• (1600)

[*English*]

Mr. T.J. Harvey: Madam Speaker, when we talk about the wine sector in Canada, it has actually flourished under an open market system in which free trade has abounded for a long period of time.

I respect the hon. member's opinions about the dairy sector. I come from a family, where my wife and her parents are dairy farmers. They are very excited about the opportunities that could come from CETA.

If we look at it from a progressive stance of being within the dairy industry, there are going to be challenges as we transition from where we are today to where we are going to go through this open, progressive agreement. However, there are also going to be major opportunities for Canadian business and, specifically, there will be major opportunities for Canada's cheese and milk producers. Not only that, there will also be amazing opportunities for Canada's wine producers.

We are a trading nation. We have openly said that. Canadians are well aware that, given our small population and large land base, we have to be a trading nation. That is something we have done quite progressively over the years. We have used our large land mass, and our ability to innovate and use new technology to grow our businesses in a progressive manner that allows us to be competitive, not only in Canada or North America but on a global scale.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about a very important trade agreement for Huron—Bruce, the riding I represent.

Huron—Bruce is a large rural riding in southwestern Ontario, and to the west of it is Lake Huron, which creates a unique opportunity for agriculture with regards to climate and precipitation. We are also blessed to have some of the most fertile soil in North America. Therefore, when we look at the opportunities for markets for our crops, which have tremendously high yields, this is a great opportunity for us and one that will continue to grow for many years.

Obviously, everyone in the House by now understands the size of the European market, with 500 million people and \$17 trillion to \$18 trillion in economic activity. CETA will have about a \$1.5 billion impact on the agriculture industry here. It will reduce or eliminate 94% of the tariff lines for agriculture, which is an important point to note. We saw this with the Canada-Korea trade deal and other trade deals as well.

When these tariff lines are looked at in a broad spectrum, we may not think they are so bad with 10% here and maybe 14% there. However, some tariffs are quite punitive, with some at 114%. Our farmers cannot then be competitive when other countries have direct access. Therefore, eliminating 94% of the tariff lines for agriculture will be tremendously important. It will really give producers in my riding and across the country an opportunity to really grow this market and to be able to serve the 500 million consumers in the EU.

I consider Huron—Bruce the breadbasket of Canadian agriculture. Just to give members an idea of the size of it, the farm gate receipts of just that part of Bruce County I represent are more than those of all the Atlantic provinces combined. My two colleagues who preceded me talked about the huge opportunity for them in Atlantic Canada and how important it is for that economy, which puts into perspective just how significant it is for the riding I represent of Huron—Bruce.

Before I go into some of the details, I would like to talk about the quality of farm producers that we have in Huron—Bruce. As I said, we border Lake Huron, and we all appreciate the fresh water and the great opportunities it presents. However, the farmers in Huron—Bruce are innovative, aggressive, and they represent the environment. They take the environment into consideration in all they do, and they have great respect for it. Rivers, creeks, and streams flow into Lake Huron. Some of the farmers in Huron County were innovators over 30 years ago with no-till drilling, which has since been proven in terms of soil quality. There are many different workshops and collaborations between the conservation authorities and farm groups to make Huron—Bruce unique in terms of the yields farmers get and their respect for the environment and Lake Huron.

There are also some tremendously successful companies in Huron—Bruce, which will obviously be dealing with the European Union, and already do. I will mention a few of them.

Gay Lea in Teeswater just made a huge announcement a couple of weeks ago of a \$60 million expansion at a time when a lot of jobs are leaving Ontario. It is a co-operative, which I think means a lot. It has hard-working men and women who come to work every day and do a great job.

Also in Teeswater, we have the Dairy Goat Co-operative. This is a very innovative and relatively new organization, which has really grown.

• (1605)

We have some of the most productive greenhouses in Ontario, and likely in Canada, in Exeter, Ontario.

Government Orders

The Hensall District Co-Operative Inc., whose headquarters is out of Hensall, has grown across the province. It is one of the leading co-ops in North America and continues to innovate and work with farm producers, as well as machinery builders and manufacturers, to really allow the farmers to do what they like and need to do to maximize profits, such as P-N-H Innovations, Thomsons Ltd., Dupont Pioneer, Hayter's Turkey Products Inc., and many pork, beef, and cash crop farmers.

I would be remiss if I did not mention all of the companies in Huron—Bruce that build barns and provide cement foundations and footings. Everything from excavation to building can be done in my riding of Huron—Bruce, which is quite impressive.

I will also mention the farm machinery dealers. Often our farm machinery dealers are not mentioned, but I think they should be. Huron Tractor is a great example, as is Delta Power Equipment, McGavin Farm Equipment Ltd., Hyde Brothers Farm Equipment, and Robert's Farm Equipment, which are located up and down the shoreline. The farm machinery dealers are important because they provide great service and sales to our farm producers, so that when there is a breakdown at 2 a.m. when a farmer is harvesting his or her crop, they are there to make the repairs so the farmer can continue.

With respect to the beef sector, obviously there is beef grown in both Huron County and Bruce County. However, Bruce County is certainly one of the capitals of beef production in Canada. I know that the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound is a former beef producer. There is 64,950 tonnes of Canadian beef there that will have full access to the EU market. It is a huge opportunity. Beef producers will have to make some changes to really meet the demands of the European market, but over time it will be a great opportunity for farmers to take another look at that specialty market.

With respect to the pork sector, some of the most modern pork facilities in the world are located in Huron—Bruce, as well as some of the most innovative farmers we could meet. I have had a great opportunity through the years to meet with many of them to see how they have grown and innovated in their farm operations. The European pork market is, and was, really the last frontier for Canadian pork farmers. It represents a market of 80,000 tonnes without tariffs. The European Union pork market is a big market, and Canadian pork farmers are going to have a great opportunity. Two-thirds of the pork grown in Canada is exported around the world. This will be a great opportunity. Again, reducing and eliminating these tariffs is what will allow these farmers to finally break through and service these markets, which will have a meaningful impact. We know that across the spectrum, but specifically with respect to pork and beef, the genetics, the quality of our feed, the health and safety, and the treatment of animals is second to none in the world. We have a great Canadian agriculture story to tell, and our farm producers will be able to do that.

Another component I will mention, strictly from an Ontario basis, is access for barley, corn, oats, and soybeans. In Huron—Bruce, corn and soybeans are two of the three large staple crops. Most people would not believe how big the yields are in Huron—Bruce, but it is the climate and soil that contribute to that. Through the years, as this deal rolls out and producers and resellers are able to really get into Europe and meet the needs of all of those markets, it will be a huge opportunity.

I should also mention that in Goderich we have the deepest port on the eastern shores of Lake Huron. It allows a lot of grain and salt to be shipped, although salt is not something that we are talking about here. That port will be hugely important, as will be the rail lines that run in many different directions.

I look forward to any questions, as well as the continuing debate on CETA.

• (1610)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was really encouraged by the member's comments, especially with regard to the pork industry. It is an industry that I have personally followed for the last number of years, and the assessment by the member is quite right that the industry as a whole stands to benefit a great deal.

When we talk about trade and the expansion potential of the pork industry, it is important to recognize that the ripple effect is quite tremendous. The Burns Meat Ltd. parking lot, for example, in Brandon is filled with vehicles. Those vehicles are bought in the community, as well as homes. The ripple effect is quite significant, and that is why trade and this agreement are so important.

On the whole issue of timing, would the member agree that it would be wonderful for a bill of this nature to pass before the end of the year, or does it really matter, from his perspective, when the bill passes?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Speaker, we can mark on the calendar that December 7 might be the first time the member and I have ever agreed on anything.

There are many other countries that will need to ratify this through their own parliaments, so I will leave the timing alone. I would say the sooner, the better, as it would be great for all producers.

The economic impact on farms is huge. The processing side, the small abattoir side, the processing jobs that go along with that, the transport jobs, and even the servicing of the transport trucks, are hugely important. All contribute. It could be by a factor of 6:1 or 7:1. Whatever it is, it is huge. The farm gate receipts in Huron County alone are nearly \$1 billion. If we multiply that out, it is huge for my area.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have visited the member's riding many times and it is a beautiful spot in Ontario for sure.

I know there are a lot of small communities and working-class Canadians in the member's riding who would be very concerned about the changes that would take place with CETA in terms of the cost of pharmaceutical drugs. Every single Canadian would be impacted by these changes. Twenty-five per cent of the implementing legislation consists of changes to pharmaceutical drugs. We already have the highest pharmaceutical costs of all OECD countries and there is no compensation to be had for the provinces, as the previous government spoke about.

Government Orders

The economic impact would be \$850 million annually in terms of additional spending by Canadians on pharmaceutical drugs. I am sure that in the member's riding, like in my own riding of Essex, there are many people who are already struggling day to day to afford the cost of medications.

Is the member concerned that CETA would lead to increased costs of prescription drugs for those in his riding given that Canadians already pay more for prescription drugs than nearly every other OECD country?

• (1615)

Mr. Ben Lobb: Madam Speaker, that is a fair question. I would say to the member, with all due respect, that the provinces and the federal minister need to get at this immediately. It has gone on for far too long. There is a lack of buying power. The federal government and all of the provinces combined have an opportunity to really get tough on the pharmaceutical companies. They play us for fools, as far as I am concerned, and I really hope the health minister steps up.

Here I will speak about the province of Ontario. It is a disgrace in the province that some drugs are not included, such as the shingles vaccine, and that some seniors are covered and others are not. I cannot even list how many letters I have written to the health minister to try to help seniors and people in vulnerable positions with the high cost of drugs.

I will also mention that in Parliament right now, there is a debate with the Liberals about taxing 13.5 million people's health benefits. It is ridiculous.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, Bill C-30 concerns the implementation of the Canada–European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, or CETA.

Trade with Europe is much too important to be taken lightly. It is Quebec's second largest trading partner. We export about \$9 billion in goods and services, and a number of European companies, such as OVH, have set up operations in my riding, Salaberry—Suroît.

The NDP and I want to promote a stronger trade relationship between Canada and the European Union, although there are still major concerns and quite a few outstanding issues regarding this agreement. In Canada, like in Europe, this agreement has sparked a vigorous protest movement. In October, the regional government of Wallonia prevented Belgium from signing on to CETA; it believed that the investor-state provisions could adversely affect them, and several individuals, including some Canadians, also raised alarm bells and said that the matter needed another look. The Walloons agreed to sign on because they managed to retain their right to withhold consent to ratification if the investor-state provisions were not deleted or changed.

Our dairy producers expressed serious reservations about the impact of a massive amount of dairy products arriving on the Canadian market and on the Quebec market in particular. As well, a request for compensation was received this week from wine producers who fear losing their ability to produce here and their ability to sell on the Canadian market.

The Liberal government promised to compensate dairy producers, but this support falls far short of what they would find acceptable. Citizens groups have spoken up about how drug prices will be affected by changes to intellectual property and by generic drugs taking longer to get to market.

CETA is a source of concern for many. As the Dairy Farmers of Canada put it, CETA represents a 2% decline in dairy production, or Nova Scotia's entire annual production. The dairy industry needs to be compensated for these losses.

The Conservatives had promised a \$4.3 billion compensation package over 15 years to supply-managed farmers affected by CETA and the TPP. The current Liberal government decided to establish a fund of \$350 million over five years for dairy producers.

The losses sustained by farmers will be permanent; they will not end five years from now. On top of that, the assistance being offered is paltry and not nearly enough to compensate this sector. According to the most conservative estimates, dairy farmers are going to lose \$116 million a year.

The \$50 million the Liberals are offering will therefore meet only 45% of the farmers' needs each year, which does not even cover the minimum losses that farmers are estimating. The Liberals have not appropriately compensated dairy farmers for the loss of market share.

In addition, the programs the Liberals have put in place are not meant to compensate farmers, but rather to modernize their production systems. The government is, in effect, denying that losses will occur under CETA.

The dairy farmers in my riding are already greatly affected by the diafiltered milk problem. American exporters are getting around Canadian laws by selling their diafiltered milk here. We need to enforce our cheese compositional standards immediately. The future of our dairy farmers, our family farms, and local jobs here in Canada is at stake. Across the country, the agrifood sector employs one in eight Canadians. We cannot ignore this sector when negotiating trade agreements with other countries.

It has been estimated that \$200 million was lost in 2015. A farmer might lose \$1,000 a week. The Liberals promised farmers that they would resolve the issue of diafiltered milk, but they have not lifted a finger so far. I am still waiting for news from the government, who is supposed to be helping farmers across Canada, as well as those in my riding, Salaberry—Suroît.

• (1620)

Trade relations also have to be based on equity between the partners and carried out in compliance with laws and regulations. CETA is worrisome in this regard as well. The investor-state provisions will allow foreign companies to challenge Canadian laws without going through our domestic courts.

Government Orders

There is so much uncertainty here that we have no idea how we can even appeal such claims or how members of the tribunal will be selected. We know full well that the companies will be able to hire foreign workers without a labour market impact assessment.

Municipal, provincial, or federal governments will no longer be able to require local employees be given priority without risking a trade challenge. Canada is already being sued and has won only three out of 39 cases against foreign investors in Canada. This is rather disconcerting.

In other words, any decision taken by any level of government could end in compensation for foreign companies. Canada is already one of the most sued countries under ISDS. This legal system has not been fully defined. We cannot give the Liberals carte blanche on this. There are many very important elements that could compromise our industries and our values.

The Liberals keep repeating that they cherish Canadian values. That is not evident in this bill. They are trying to ram it through. We even heard a member say that this bill must be passed before the end of the year. Knowing that 28 EU countries must ratify it and that this could take up to five years, why the urgency?

Why did the committee move a motion in camera to prevent those wanting to submit a brief from doing so? The committee is preventing everyone who will not appear as a witness from submitting a brief. In terms of transparency, accountability, and responsibility with respect to consultations, the Liberals are falling far short. Furthermore, they are not answering questions from farmers, wine producers, and producers from the east and the Maritimes who earn their living from the fishery. That is very troubling.

We cannot make an informed decision, for there is still much we do not know about the investor-state provisions. The Liberals also have not explained how they will protect environmental, health, and security regulations from foreign challenges.

The European states clearly indicated that this agreement would not be ratified unless the investor-state provisions were removed. Once again, the Liberals have not provided any information on this. Will they change these regulations? Will they provide a bit more information? As I said, there is a lot of uncertainty here.

The government is leaving us open to a situation where the agreement cannot be ratified by some countries in the European Union.

Let us talk about health. The changes set out in CETA may increase the cost of drugs for Canadians. The agreement will change the intellectual property rules regarding drugs. This will increase the cost of drugs by over \$850 million a year, because it will take longer for generic drugs to reach the market.

Since Canada's population is aging, we will need access to drugs. This is just one more hardship for our seniors. There is no guarantee that they will be able to make ends meet since they are already struggling to put food on the table and get access to health care. Now, they may have to pay more for their medication.

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions has also warned that these regulations could make it more difficult to bring down prices with a national pharmacare program.

For all these reasons and more, I cannot vote in favour of this bill.

● (1625)

I hope that the Liberals will do the responsible thing and consult experts, reconsider some of their positions, and make informed decisions so that we sign an agreement that is truly fair to all workers and all Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I always find it interesting whenever we engage in debate on the issue of trade with my New Democratic friends. I know it has been suggested in the past that the NDP will not be supporting this agreement. Could the member provide any clear explanation about why, outside of the pharmaceutical issue, the NDP members feel so passionately about voting against CETA?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Madam Speaker, let me say again that this is a super-important agreement because we know that they are Canada's second largest export partner. However, we need to take an approach that involves as little risk as possible. We must be able to respect workers, health, anything concerning the environment and the rights of the public.

As for the investor-state mechanism, as I said, a lot of information is still missing. We do not know how certain decisions could be appealed or who will sit on arbitration panels. We do know that we were sued 39 times under NAFTA. This means that Canada is the country that has been taken to court the most and we have no way to defend ourselves. We cannot hand the Liberals a blank cheque.

In my riding, the Liberals offered dairy producers \$250 million in compensation, while the Conservatives had offered \$4.3 billion. How is it that, all of a sudden, this industry is not so important to the Liberals anymore, even though they claim to defend supply management? There is a lot that does not add up.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge the work done by my colleague, especially concerning dairy farmers.

I am sure I will not be able to change her mind about the agreement with Europe. In fact, that party has some rather restrictive views when it comes to trade agreements with other countries. However, with respect to dairy producers, the member has indeed just raised a very important point, and I would certainly agree with her.

Government Orders

In my riding there is a dairy producer who has invested \$1.5 million in his farm. The compensation provided by the government supposedly for innovation to help producers get through this crisis would mean he would get about \$5,000 a year. This is not an amount of money one can leverage into investments of \$1.5 million.

What does the member think that the government should have done to protect dairy producers under this agreement?

• (1630)

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Madam Speaker, I want to point out that with regard to trade agreements, we supported Bill C-13, which was just introduced and which will move forward. This means we are capable of really thoroughly analyzing international trade proposals.

There are a lot of missed opportunities in Bill C-30 concerning the agreement with the European Union. As for anything related to dairy production, clearly, what the Liberals are offering is completely inadequate. They say they consulted those affected. Dairy producers were very vocal on several occasions to let them know that this was completely laughable. They are going to lose 2% of their production under this agreement. Dairy producers have been a real bargaining chip for a number of years now. There needs to be enough compensation to at least cover the \$116 million per year loss. This is the bare minimum. We need to at least compensate them for that.

In the area of agriculture, wine producers are also seeking compensation because 180 million litres of wine will be coming in from the European Union. That is troubling as well. We have asked the Liberals to support the wine industry.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 Nanaimo—Ladysmith, The Environment; the hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, Transportation; the hon. member for Calgary Confederation, Health.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, as my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît just said, we on this side of the House believe that trade with Europe is too important to be taken lightly.

If we look at all the flaws in the agreement before the House, we see that indeed, the government did not do its homework. It should do its homework before introducing such a bill.

We have concerns about some of the aspects of the bill. In fact, the same concerns have also been raised in Europe. Of course, the issue of financial compensation for dairy farmers affects Quebec, Ontario, and farmers in western Canada.

The Conservatives were planning to provide financial compensation that would have eased the transition for farmers and those working in supply management.

If we look at what the Liberals are offering, we see that the Liberal Party members who were elected in dairy farming regions did not defend the interests of the farmers. The financial compensation they are offering is a drop in the bucket. The farmers are going to need a lot more than that if we are to move forward with this agreement.

[English]

It is very clear that there are problems with this agreement. When we look more globally at how both of the old parties have approached trade issues over the past decade and a half, we can see that there needs to be a much more progressive fair trade approach when we talk about these trade agreements.

As members are well aware, we are now living under a record trade deficit. It was bad under the Conservatives; it is even worse under the Liberals. Obviously there is something that is not working when we see a larger and larger trade deficit over the course of the years. What does that mean? We are certainly seeing a debt load for the average Canadian family that is increasing as well; a debt load that increased substantially under the Conservatives and is even worse under the Liberals.

When we look at what the result has been over the past 10 or 15 years, particularly in the manufacturing sector, we see that under the Conservatives we lost over half a million good manufacturing jobs. These are family-sustaining jobs. These are the kinds of jobs that people can work at during the day, come home, feed their family, and think about investing in the future. These are family-sustaining permanent jobs in the manufacturing sector. The Conservatives lost over half a million of them over the decade that they were in power.

Now, the Liberals came with the idea that they would take a different approach, and indeed they have not. We have seen further hemorrhaging of over 30,000 good manufacturing jobs, the kinds of family-sustaining jobs that Canadians depend on, over the course of just the last year alone.

We have seen under both parties an approach that, when we look at their economic files and their approach on trade, has not been to the benefit of regular working families. We have to ask why it is that both the previous and current governments seem to say that they have trade as a priority and have managed not only to provoke real problems with this particular agreement, as we saw in Europe just a few weeks ago, but have managed over time to lose so many good, family-sustaining jobs and at the same time put us at the worst level Canada has ever been in terms of trade deficit.

Part of the answer to that question is the emphasis of both governments on exporting raw logs, raw bitumen, raw minerals. We have seen the value-added sector evaporate and we have seen manufacturing jobs destroyed because we have governments that just want to ship raw materials out of the country. They do not want to provide the value added, to have Canadians make things, which has always been the hallmark of Canadians. Canadians are proud to make things, and we do it very well. I come out of the manufacturing sector myself. I was a factory worker, and I believe strongly that the quality that Canadians produce is the best in the world. Yet we have seen just over the past decade and a half under successive governments, and it does not seem to matter whether it is a Liberal or a Conservative government, a gutting of those types of jobs that used to sustain communities right across the country.

Government Orders

•(1635)

We have had some of my colleagues, like the member for Essex and the member for Salaberry—Suroît, very articulately talk about the problems with this agreement. How is it, when we go back to the issue of trade, that there is a broader problem with how successive old-party governments have approached trade issues? I want to put out a few of those problems in the few minutes that are left to me.

First off, both governments, Conservative and Liberal governments, seem to forget about regular working folks. We have seen that with the destruction of the manufacturing sector. They want to export raw goods, rather than having Canadians do what we do best, which is make things.

Second, both parties reject the fair trade model. We have not seen Liberals or Conservatives, at any point, bring forward some of the fair trade models that we have seen around the world that have been effective. Mercosur is one example, where they actually have poverty alleviation as part and parcel of the trade agreement. At no point, have we seen, from either of the old parties, any reference to fair trade.

Third, we look at the export supports. As a former trade critic I can speak to this. I met with trade commissioners in various parts of the world, in Europe and in South America, and there is not even a budget, often, for trade commissioners to even buy a cup of coffee for a potential client of Canadian goods or services.

All other trading nations invest in export supports. They put money into providing product supports and product publicity. In Canada, we asked the question a few years ago and found out about \$13 million globally was spent to support all Canadian products. If we look at Australia, they invest half a billion dollars in the same area. The European community spends many times what Canada spends, just on its wine sector. The Americans, just in their beef sector, spend many times what Canada spends for all products and services.

Both of the old parties have simply not understood that exports are not just signing an agreement; it is very much having people on the ground providing support for those products coming from Canada.

Another problem has been the lack of due diligence from both governments, whether Conservatives or Liberals, it has not made any difference. There is no really intense economic analysis prior to signing these agreements. There is certainly no due diligence. Committees are just supposed to push it through without any due regard to what the actual impacts are afterward, and there is no evaluation after the fact, either. We have trade agreements that largely benefit other countries. When we actually look at who benefits as we sign each of these agreements, imports from those countries tend to grow and exports from Canada, not necessarily. In some cases, yes; in some cases, no; in all cases, there has not been due diligence.

As my colleagues have pointed out, there seems to be a saying “no” to manufacturing, saying “no” to value added, saying “no”, as we have seen, to dairy farmers and the supply-managed sector, with the Liberals cutting over 90% of the compensation that should have been due to those dairy farmers and the supply-managed sector.

Yet, at the same time, there is a “yes” to lobbyists; particularly, lobbyists who are pushing for intellectual property extensions that increase the price of drugs on the Canadian markets, in the Canadian health care system.

If the old parties had done their homework, they would understand that adding \$850 million onto the cost of drugs, in the Canadian health care system, is simply not a good idea. We need a better health care system, not a worse one.

And, of course, there is the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism that has created such a reaction in Europe. Of course, this is something that most countries have backed away from. Canada, under both of the old parties, whether Liberals or Conservatives, continues to push investor-state, even though most people around the world would disagree with that approach.

There are reasons why this agreement has had so many imperfections and there are reasons why we have a record trade deficit and a record debt load on Canadian families. It strikes to the heart of how these parties govern. They do not govern in the interests of regular families. I would suggest that has to change.

•(1640)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his wonderful speech and for his work on the trade files in previous Parliaments. He certainly has been an asset to me in helping me in my new role. I want to talk about what he spoke about, around working-class people.

There is another section of working-class people who will be impacted dramatically in CETA and that is those who are in the maritime jobs sector. CETA will for the first time legally allow foreign-owned vessels and foreign crews to transport goods between Canadian ports, which is called cabotage, and will open up domestic dredging contracts to foreign suppliers. CETA will lead to the immediate loss of approximately 3,000 Canadian seafarers' jobs. These are high-quality, well-paid jobs.

The industry as a whole supports over 250,000 direct and indirect jobs. Foreign boats will bring in foreign workers with no requirement for LMIA's. These workers can be paid as little as \$2 an hour. We are going to be permitting more foreign flagged vessels and we are going to hurt yet another sector, but unfortunately, the Liberal government does not want to speak about the impacts of this deal and address them so that we can get it right.

Does the member agree that these are serious concerns that deserve parliamentarians' consideration before we rubber-stamp this agreement?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I would like to praise the member for Essex as a very strong member of Parliament who is actually a bit of a canary in the coal mine saying to the Liberal government it should not be ramming through this bill, they should be examining the implications of it before they sign off or ram through something that is going to have negative impacts on so many Canadian jobs.

Government Orders

The member for Essex does a wonderful job of standing up for her constituents and standing up for all Canadians and I would like to praise her for that work. She raises the issue of cabotage. The Liberals have absolutely no idea because they did not do any of the economic analysis or impacts before they rushed through this Conservative agreement. They have no idea what the actual negative impacts are. We have already talked about the dairy sector. We are talking about cabotage. We are talking about a whole range of areas where the Liberal government has not even done its homework. How many jobs will be lost in these sectors?

The question has been asked consistently and yet the Liberals have been unable to answer because they have not done their homework. They do not actually know. I think this as good as any other reason should mean rather than ramming this through, they should be going to a full analysis before any parliamentary votes on something like this.

• (1645)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in fairness to people who might be watching this, they should be aware of the fact that traditionally New Democrats do not vote in favour of any trade agreements. They might mention one or two in which through a voice vote there might have been an occurrence or an implication that they might have actually voted possibly, maybe, who knows. The bottom line is that they have not been behind a trade agreement.

We need to recognize the many countries that have seen the value of this trade agreement. Many provinces, many stakeholders who are onside with this agreement see the value because they recognize the importance of Canada being a trading nation. Overall, this agreement is good for Canada. It is good for Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it and every region of our country will benefit by this agreement.

Outside of the New Democratic Party in the House of Commons, could the member indicate if there is any other government in Canada that actually opposes CETA?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I think my colleagues have already mentioned the agreements that we voted in favour of. This is the big question that the Liberals need to answer at some point: Why are they so opposed to fair trade? When they talked about real change a year ago, they said they were going to bring real change. Real change is bringing forward bad Conservative deals, no matter how many jobs are lost. Without the economic analysis, they have been unable to answer the jobs lost in the cabotage sector, in terms of manufacturing, what the impacts are of adding another \$850 million on drug costs. Liberals have not been able to answer a single question and they have not explained why they are so opposed to fair trade.

Back to the member, why are they so opposed to fair trade agreements?

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand in this place to add comment on Bill C-30, Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement Implementation act

The overwhelmingly positive economic impacts of Canadian businesses gaining preferential access to the world's wealthiest trade area cannot be overstated. This deal will reduce or eliminate approximately 99% of customs duties between Canada and the European Union. This will enhance the competitiveness of Canadian businesses whenever they sell a good into the European market.

Conversely, this will make it less expensive for Canadian businesses to buy specialized goods, like heavy machinery and parts that may not be available in Canada.

A joint Canada-EU study concluded that CETA could bring a 20% boost in bilateral trade and a \$12 billion increase to Canada's economy. That is why the previous Conservative government was relentlessly focused on signing trade agreements around the world.

This focus led to Canada's first trade agreement with a major Asian economy in South Korea, and the first major trade agreement with a South American economy in Colombia. These footholds are hugely important for exporters who want to export their products to Asia or South America. For an economy that relies on the service sector and exports, these deals are of paramount importance.

That is why the previous government launched negotiations for Canada's most ambitious free trade agreement with Europe in May 2009. After years of negotiations with the European Union and its 28-member countries, negotiations ended in August 2014, and a deal in principle was reached during the summer of 2015.

The Liberals were handed the CETA on a silver platter. Yet, for reasons that may never be explained, they nearly blew it. For several days after Wallonia, a small region in Belgium, announced that it would be supporting the agreement, there were legitimate fears that the deal had collapsed.

On October 25, as the minister was in the House defending her record on this deal, she stated, "when it comes to CETA, Canada has done its job." The argument that because Canada had worked hard up to that point and therefore it was acceptable to let Europe do "its job now", was fraught with so many problems I cannot even begin to list them. These deals do not sign themselves. Canada must always fight for its interests, and not sit and wait and hope for the best.

Thankfully, the pro-trade powers in Europe that strongly supported this deal got it moving again. They did so because CETA could serve as a template for a similar agreement between Europe and the United States at a later date.

The Minister of International Trade has been repeating over and over that she got CETA over the finish line because she made this deal more "inclusive and progressive". The only thing that has changed from the deal in principle negotiated by the Conservatives and the agreement we are discussing today is the investor-state dispute settlement process. Nothing else has changed.

Canada has always been recognized as a country with the strongest record for human rights, rule of law, democracy, regulation, and the list goes on. CETA has always been a progressive and inclusive agreement because Canada has always been a progressive and inclusive country. Saying otherwise would be disingenuous.

Government Orders

Concerning the investor-state dispute mechanisms I mentioned, investor-state dispute arbitration tribunals are made available in nearly 3,000 bilateral investment treaties. Even Belgium has investment provisions with 182 different parties. These are not new, and many work quite well.

Under the investor-state dispute settlement process, foreign investors can sue the host state before an arbitration tribunal, appointed on a case-by-case basis by the two affected parties, if they believe the treaty governing trade between the two countries has been violated. This system is used for dispute mechanisms in over 3,000 bilateral trade agreements, including NAFTA, and its strengths and weaknesses are known and understood.

Civil society groups have questioned the appropriateness of applying a dispute settlement mechanism created to resolve private-commercial disputes to international public law disputes, because it is felt to favour the companies from larger countries. Critics have also raised concerns over the potential for the arbitrator to have bias and the potential for conflict of interest.

● (1650)

In response to these criticisms and in preparation for negotiations with the United States on a free trade agreement, the European Union began developing the concept of an investment court after the deal in principle with Canada was agreed to in 2014. The investment court would be a primary tribunal of 15 judges and an appeal tribunal of six members. The members would be named by the EU and Canada. It would be administered by the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

The court of first instance would sit in benches of three members each and would decide the original complaint. As with any new process, it is hard to know exactly how this will unfold. Who within each country will be responsible for appointing judges to the court? What will their training and fields of expertise be? How long will they sit for? Will the judges be idle if there are not many challenges? Or will they be allowed to work and consult in addition to their duties on the court?

Considering Canada's population is less than a tenth of the size of Europe's, how many of the 21 jurists would be Canadian? In the case of Wallonia, how many jurists would come from that region over jurists from France or Germany? There is no common law, in international disputes between corporations and governments, that jurists could draw guidance from when deciding cases, so it is hard to speculate whether the outcomes of legal challenges would be any different.

One of the main criticisms of the investor-state tribunals is that due to their decentralized nature, the arbiters do not necessarily consider the decisions of other arbiters. Therefore, their rulings are inconsistent. However, this new system does not necessarily fix this. If these investment courts become the norm, there could be hundreds of different courts deciding trade disputes. How consistent their rulings would be remains to be seen. Furthermore, a permanent multilateral investment court would only be consistent in its rulings relative to the treaty that governs the trade between two countries.

As with any new process, as I have said, it is hard to know exactly how it will unfold. If this new court satisfies European negotiators,

then it should be included as the treaty's primary dispute mechanism. The question remains, why do the Liberals believe that this has made the CETA more inclusive or progressive? The fact is that jurists on the new court will render their decisions on the evidence and the text of the trade agreement, which remains the same as what the Conservatives negotiated 15 months ago.

Quite frankly, getting this trade deal done should have been the government's first priority. Now that it is signed, I hope it will place a relentless focus on getting the trans Pacific partnership completed at the earliest possible opportunity. The more markets Canadian producers can sell into without the competitive disadvantage of tariffs, the better off we will be as a country.

● (1655)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, rules in international trade are very important. They prevent dumping, for instance.

Our Canadian companies can benefit. For instance, in drywall, American companies have been dumping a lot of their product here. For me, it is very important that we protect Canadian jobs and also have uniform rules in international trade that people respect. These international tribunals can be used in a good way. They can be used to protect Canadian jobs. However, we have to ensure that other nations and companies respect that.

I hope the hon. member can agree that at the end of the day we are here to protect Canadian jobs and Canadian industry, and to allow them to have a fair and even playing field. We are also here to project our influence into the world in manufacturing and other businesses.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his observations on the benefits of trade agreements to the parties that enter into them.

As I noted in my remarks, a joint Canada-EU study concluded that CETA would bring a 20% boost in bilateral trade and up to a \$12 billion increase in Canada's economy.

As with any trade agreement or government policy for that matter, some industries will definitely benefit more than others. It is really up to government to ensure that the needs of everyone are taken care of and that everyone benefits.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, when the Conservative government recognized that CETA would lead to significant losses for Canadian dairy farmers, it offered \$4.3 billion in compensation. The Liberal government has stated that only \$250 million is needed over five years.

Government Orders

Why is there a big gap from the last government to the present government? Could my colleague comment on that please?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I do not think that is a question I can answer. I do not know how governing members came up with those numbers.

What I can tell you is that I have met with a number of dairy farmers and their organizations. They said that they were satisfied with the transition package that the previous Conservative government had put forward. Does that mean the work is done? No, there is still work to be done.

Our dairy farmers and processors need to decide between them what they need to do to maintain or grow the Canadian market when more European products come into Canada. At the end of the day, they will be able to do that.

• (1700)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member to address her answers through the Speaker and avoid the word “you”. That will save a lot of interruptions.

We have time for a brief question, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it will be a more of a comment.

When the agreement was signed and the minister came forward, she clearly indicated that this had been a high priority for the Government of Canada. That was why she spent as much time as she did overseas. The minister also made reference to the fact that the agreement was initiated by the Conservative Party.

Would the member not recognize at the very least that this agreement was achieved not because of just one government, but it took two governments to make it ultimately happen?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, this agreement is the result of years of hard work, especially by our world-class trade negotiators who did all the heavy lifting. We welcome the opportunity to see this deal come into force.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-30 on the free trade agreement with Europe. You probably know that I was the deputy international trade critic in the last Parliament.

I am very familiar with this issue and I am pleased to now debate it because it allows me to point out the NDP position on trade agreements in general. I can talk about agreements negotiated since the last Parliament because I was elected in 2011.

We examine free trade agreements through three different lenses. First, we determine whether a free trade agreement promotes human rights, environmental rights, and the rights of workers. That is why, in the past, we opposed several free trade agreements negotiated by the government, and in this case by the Conservative government.

One in particular was the agreement with Colombia, where workers' rights and their right to associate are frequently violated.

The agreement with Panama was problematic because of taxation issues arising from the fact that Panama is a tax haven. The free trade agreement exacerbated the tax evasion problem. We also opposed the agreement with Honduras, and I was a member of the committee that studied that agreement.

The second criterion is reciprocity. We look at whether free trade agreements confer reciprocal rights and responsibilities on both parties. In this case, the two parties are Canada and Europe. That was one of the lenses through which we examined all trade agreements in the past.

The third criterion is whether Canada will be better off economically with such an agreement. Will the agreement be good for the Canadian economy as a whole? Those of us on this side of the House understand that, in any trade agreement, some sectors will be winners and others will be losers.

This third criterion is the one that is problematic in the agreement with Europe. First of all, there is the issue of generic drugs. Changes are going to be made to intellectual property rights that will have repercussions on the pharmaceutical industry. Various groups have studied the agreement and the repercussions it will have on drug accessibility programs and on the provinces' ability to provide generic drugs quicker.

Ultimately, the extension of intellectual property rights under this agreement, especially with regard to drugs, could mean additional costs of about \$850 million, according to some estimates.

What is odd is that the government did not do any impact studies to see how much more this would cost either the private sector or the provinces. As we all know, a number of provinces have pharmacare programs. The government refuses to study the issue of the additional costs to our pharmacare programs, which the provinces usually pay for. It just keeps telling us that this agreement is a good thing.

We know, however, that the parliamentary budget officer has asked for an assessment of the additional drug costs the provinces will incur under this agreement, and that Health Canada replied that those figures remain confidential.

A second aspect of the free trade agreement with Europe we need to look at involves compensation for the cheese and dairy industry. When the Conservatives first signed the agreement, which has been signed three times already, Prime Minister Harper arrived, and we began discussing compensation for the cheese and dairy industry, to help its members through the transition. This compensation was estimated by the Conservatives at that time at \$4.3 billion over 10 years.

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Obviously, the Liberal government was in the hot seat and was asked what kind of compensation would be provided to the industry to help it through this difficult period. We know that the higher cheese quotas will allow over 17,000 tonnes of different kinds of cheese into the country, which will be in competition with ours. We need compensation. The industry had asked for this compensation to help them through the transition.

• (1705)

The Conservative government promised \$4.3 billion over 10 years. The Liberals said not to worry, that they would help with the transition, and that they would also provide compensation. However, the compensation they plan to provide is \$350 million over five years. That is approximately \$70 million a year, whereas the compensation that was promised previously totalled \$430 million a year. Cheese and dairy producers are outraged, and I can see why. Twelve per cent of the economy of the region that I represent in the House is dependent on agriculture, mainly the dairy industry.

I therefore cannot understand why the federal government has decided to give such minimal compensation to an industry that will be so heavily affected. The government has not given any convincing arguments to justify such a low level of compensation. I see some Liberal members from Newfoundland and Labrador here. No mention has been made of the compensation promised to Newfoundland and Labrador's fish and seafood processing industry, and we still do not know what the government intends to do in that regard.

The government is calling this a progressive agreement, but ultimately, it was negotiated by the Conservatives. Some members of the House may have already noticed a disconnect. What is more, the Conservatives planned to provide more compensation than the Liberals. There are therefore a number of problems with this agreement. There may be a reciprocity issue. In order to find out, we need to conduct an assessment of the impact on the Canadian economy. We do not know if there is a reciprocity issue because the Liberals never conducted an impact assessment.

In terms of human rights, the rights of workers and environmental rights, I think we can acknowledge that Europe and Canada are pretty similar.

The third aspect involves determining whether Canada will come out ahead, that is whether the Canadian economy will benefit from this agreement. That is far from clear, because the Liberals have not managed to convince the House and the Canadian public that the free trade agreement with Europe would be generally beneficial. Yes, we hear about the trade volume numbers, but these numbers do not reflect the possible impact on the various government programs, such as pharmacare, or our industries, such as the dairy and cheese industry.

When the Liberals and Conservatives tell us that we are dogmatic when it comes to trade, they try to hide the fact that they have never turned down a free trade agreement. We are the only party in the House that bothers to look at the details of these trade agreements.

A trade agreement is like a contract. You need to look at the terms and conditions. Back when the Liberals were the third party on this side of the House, when Stephen Harper came back from Brussels

saying that they had signed an agreement with Europe, the first thing the Prime Minister, who at the time was the member for Papineau, did was to congratulate him for signing this free trade agreement and to tell him that the Liberals would support it. He then asked when they would be able to look at it.

They are willing to sign free trade agreements without studying them. Is that responsible? Name someone who thinks it is responsible to sign contracts without looking at what is in them. The same can be said about the Conservatives. They negotiate agreements and accept them without even looking at them.

We, on the other hand, are doing our due diligence. We study all the trade agreements brought before us and make decisions based on what is in them, on their provisions and the net benefit we can get out of it as a country.

No one, then, can claim that the NDP's position on trade is dogmatic and ideologically driven. We are the only party that acts responsibly. In this case, since the Liberals have refused to give us the information required, I am unable to vote in favour of this bill at second reading.

• (1710)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is hard to believe that the member would stand up and say that his is the only party being responsible. Let us flash back to the TPP. Before the TPP details even came out, everyone knew that the NDP was going to vote against it.

The only consistent thing that comes from the New Democrats on the trade file is no, no, no. I am hearing through the grapevine that they might actually support the Ukraine deal, but to try to give the impression that they are responsible on trade, to quote my daughter the other day in the chamber, really?

Does the NDP not recognize the hundreds of millions of dollars in benefit? This is really important, because it would help all Canadians in every region of our country if this bill were to pass.

Mr. Guy Caron: Madam Speaker, they are the ones who actually supported CETA before seeing it. They are the ones who are actually neglecting to say that we supported the trade agreement with South Korea. We supported the one with Jordan. Why? It was because we did our homework. We studied those agreements with the lens I just mentioned.

They talk about our opposition to TPP, when they actually had a position that said, "We love CETA. We will support it. When can we see it?"

We are talking about CETA right now. We are talking about the same trade deal they supported before seeing it.

As I said, this party has supported trade deals on this side of the House. We have rejected some. On the other side of the House, they have always supported all trade deals, even those with some controversial regimes, like Colombia, where we actually put human rights first, and they neglected to do that.

Government Orders

That is why we feel that our position is the responsible one. They are the ones being dogmatic and approving basically everything that comes along in terms of trade deals.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre has to be in his seat to ask a question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, could the member give me a page or show me something in writing that says that the NDP members stood in their places and voted in favour of a trade agreement? I have not been able to see that. I am wondering if the member across the way would accept the challenge and demonstrate that to me.

I understand that the NDP members implied once that maybe they would have supported an agreement, maybe through a divisional vote. However, is there a case where they actually stood in their places in the House and voted in favour of an agreement? I have not seen that. That is not to take away from the NDP's ability to say no, but I am curious about whether the member would accept that challenge and get back to me.

Mr. Guy Caron: Madam Speaker, the member only has to look at third reading on the trade deal with South Korea. We voted in favour.

He is challenging us in terms of costs versus benefits. He is talking about all the benefits it can bring. I agree that there could be some benefits for Canada. Some sectors will win, and some sectors will lose.

The government is mute on the cost to the various governments in terms of the increase in drug costs. There will be massive increases for the provinces.

The government is hiding the fact that the previous government promised \$4.3 billion in compensation over 10 years to the dairy and cheese industry, and the Liberals are saying, "We will just be offering \$350 million, because we do not feel that you are that important. We do not feel that your pain will be that great".

It does not make sense. The Liberals are the ones who are minimizing the impact of this deal. We are the ones who are actually studying it.

● (1715)

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to get in on this.

The record of the NDP is pretty clear. I do not know who has a more clear record on this. In fact, it goes back to the auto pact, over 50 years ago. The NDP did not like the auto pact, which was fantastic for the industry. The NDP did not like the auto pact. It did not like the free trade agreement with the United States. It did not like NAFTA. It does not like TPP. It does not like CETA. I would like to check it out to see if the deal with Korea was a voice vote. Maybe the NDP sent everyone else away and had only three people in here.

Would the hon. member agree with me that there is probably no major political party in the western world that has been as consistently against all major trade deals as the NDP?

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member's time has elapsed. However, I will give the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques a brief opportunity to answer his colleague.

[*English*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Madam Speaker, he is talking about the auto pact. Conservatives opposed the auto pact at the time.

We look at each and every trade agreement. We vote for those we feel will have the greatest benefit for the country and will help Canada, and we oppose those that will not help.

Conservatives support all trade agreements, regardless of the impact they will have.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Be a little more calm than the other fellow.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Yes, Madam Speaker, I hope to bring some calm and unity to this debate.

It would benefit Canadian policy, all parties in the House, and the advancement of Canadian trade interests if we took some of the ideology out of trade, and actually started taking a very sober, thoughtful, researched, and intelligent approach to trade.

Over the last 10 years, perhaps one of the most damaging aspects of the Harper government was the propensity to make every issue of policy one of ideology, whether it was an exhortation that someone stands with either the government or with child pornographers, or if someone had any criticisms or concerns about a particular trade deal, that person was against Canada as a trading nation.

That kind of foolish and simplified ideology did a lot of damage to this very important issue. I hope that Parliament and all parliamentarians can listen to one another, and recognize there are pros and cons in trade agreements and, really, it is our job as parliamentarians to weigh them against one another.

It is utter folly to point to any trade agreement, and fail to recognize that there are no costs to an economy in a trade agreement. Anybody who stands in the House and tells Canadians that signing a trade agreement will be absolutely 100% beneficial for the Canadian economy is not telling the truth. On the other hand, it is also the case that trade agreements inevitably have benefits to our economy.

Once again, it is the job and duty of responsible parliamentarians to roll up our sleeves, examine these agreements, and come to a decision, on balance, on whether we think over time they will be of net benefit to Canada. That requires us to listen to one another.

Let me de-ideologize a bit of this discussion. Every member in this House understands that Canada is an exporting nation. We all understand that trade is critical to Canada's economic development. It is a very important piece, and we are all in favour of it. When any member of the House gets up and says that New Democrats do not believe in trade, that is putting ideology above common sense and intelligent debate, and it should be rejected by every thinking Canadian.

Government Orders

On the other hand, every party has contributed something to this debate. The Conservatives, of course, have never seen a trade deal they did not like. The Liberals have never failed to support an agreement that they did not read, and New Democrats have always brought a concept of what we refer to as fair trade to every analysis. All of those things, I was being somewhat facetious, contribute to this.

The Conservatives have been strong supporters of opening up markets for Canadians, and should be applauded for that. The Liberals have also, at times, taken a varied approach. I know that the member for Winnipeg North likes to attack the NDP, but he forgets that the Liberals opposed the Canada-U.S. trade agreement, and said that they would revoke NAFTA once they were elected.

There were periods of time when the Liberal Party was not in favour of liberalized trade, so for Liberals to make it seem like the NDP never opposes trade agreements, when they themselves did not oppose two of the marquee trade agreements in our country's history is somewhat perplexing to me.

I am going to straighten something else out. New Democrats have, in fact, supported trade agreements in the House. I was the trade critic for the official opposition when we stood in our places in the House and voted in favour of the South Korea trade agreement at third reading. Second, the NDP also supported the South Korea trade agreement with Canada, and we did that by a vote on division.

The Liberal House leader knows that full well, so I wish he would stop this disingenuous game of asking whether the NDP supported the South Korea trade agreement, when he knows that it is normative in the House for bills and issues to pass on division. It is a perfectly acceptable way to vote. That is what happened with the South Korea trade agreement.

There are a few principles that guide New Democrats' approach to trade. First, we like to examine three things that we think are of profound importance.

• (1720)

First, we like to examine the identity of the trade partner with whom we are proposed to extend preferential economic benefits of liberalized trade. We like to make sure that it is a country that respects the environment, basic labour rights, human rights, has fundamental democratic principles and rule of law, or at least is demonstrably moving in that direction.

Everybody in this House knows this. That is why we put sanctions on countries like Iran, which is the opposite of free trade. We actually refuse to trade with countries, when we come to a decision that their behaviour on the international stage is simply unacceptable. We like to make sure that the entity of the country we are trading with meets basic standards, basic Canadian values.

Second, we like to make sure that the economy that we are proposed to be trading with is of significant or strategic value or importance to Canada.

The Conservatives stood in this House and bragged about the raw numerical number of trade agreements they signed. Yet, who did they sign these trade agreements with? It was with Panama, Honduras, Jordan, and Liechtenstein. These are countries that, in

their own rights, have some importance, but these are hardly the kinds of large significant strategic economies that really make a fundamental difference to the Canadian economy.

Third, New Democrats do what we think Canadians send us to Parliament to do; that is, we examine in detail the actual terms of each agreement itself. We cannot say that we are in favour of a trade agreement without actually understanding the terms of the agreement.

I want to go through a few reasons why we are troubled by the agreement between Canada and the EU.

First, and foremost, of course, is its provisions respecting the investor-state dispute resolution mechanism.

The NDP has been concerned about this for a number of years now. I remember three years ago, asking Steve Verheul, the chief negotiator of Canada, whether it was his opinion that CETA had sufficient protection to make sure that Canada could make decisions to regulate and legislate in the public interest without fear of being sued by corporations which might claim that their profits have been interfered with, as a result, and he said, yes.

When we read the language, the language has never been clear enough to give us that complete confidence. As it turns out, the NDP's concern has been justified by the fact that when Wallonia held up CETA in Europe just a number of months ago, it was over its concern that the investor-state provisions were not clear enough. What did the parties do? What did the EU do and what did Canada do? They clarified. Why was it necessary to clarify? If the agreement had been clear from the beginning that nothing in CETA would interfere with a state's ability to legislate or regulate in the public interest, there would be no need to clarify. However, it did need clarification.

Frankly, those concerns exist today. Canadians want more trade. They want liberalized trade. They want to facilitate the flow of goods and services, and people between jurisdictions. However, I would venture to say that Canadians would agree with New Democrats, when they say that they do not believe that a corporation's right to make a profit should ever interfere with a country's domestic sovereignty, and ability to pass regulations or legislation in the public interest.

If this chamber decides that we want to protect the Canadian environment, if we want to bring in a national pharmacare system, if we want to allow provinces to bring in public auto insurance if they want to, if we want to bring in health care programs, if we want to protect culture, if we want to take any measure in this democratic chamber that we think is important for the people of Canada, and then be accountable to the Canadian people. That should never be overridden, ever, in a private tribunal or in a foreign jurisdictional court, by people who are placing the interests of a corporation's right to make profits over that. That remains a concern.

Second, we know that CETA is going to do significant damage to the Canadian economy, in many ways.

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At the end of the day, one may have a reasonable difference of opinion about whether it is worth it or not, but how do we know that? Because both governments, Liberal and Conservative, are going to offer compensation. We do not offer \$4 billion of compensation to the agricultural sector, like the Conservatives did, if that was not an admission that damage would be caused.

The Conservatives offered \$1 billion in compensation to the auto sector; \$400 million in compensation was offered and then taken away by the Conservatives to Newfoundland for giving up its minimum fish processing requirements; and provinces have been promised compensation if and when the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in this country go up, as they inevitably will, by CETA. Who knows, maybe billions of dollars of compensation will be offered then.

CETA has some good aspects and some bad aspects. The New Democrats will continue to stand up for fair trade, in the interests of Canadians, to make sure this deal is good for Canada.

• (1725)

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have travelled with him on several missions to Europe, and the topic of CETA was always first and foremost for the most part.

The investor-state dispute mechanism that the member talked about is of great concern to me as well in many respects, from the beginning until now. His point about regulating or legislating in the public interest is a key component.

According to the Lisbon treaty, over 90% of the competencies of this will be ratified within the European Parliament; however, there is that sliver of slightly less than 10% of the competencies of the individual 28 member states. They will have to vote on it. My understanding is that the dispute mechanism is involved as well in that particular vote, which is of great concern, because there are 28 votes that have to take place.

How does the member feel about that, and the concerns of Wallonia? Does he echo the same concerns that it did in this particular agreement?

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, I would like to compliment my hon. colleague for the wonderful job he does as chair of the Canada-Europe Parliament Association and his thoughtful approach, not only to CETA but to all matters between Canada and the European Union.

The member raised an excellent point. One of the reasons New Democrats are very concerned, and are not prepared in any way to support this agreement at this point, is because of the uncertainty over the investment chapter in the ISDS provisions. My friend is quite right, it has been hived off now, and will be subject to ratification by all 28 member states of the European Union.

We do not yet know what would happen if one state or more fails to ratify that provision. Does it mean that the entire agreement is null and void? Does it mean that only the investment chapter is null and void? What does it mean for Canada if we sign an agreement, and the European states have taken away the right of Canadian corporations to sue in Europe, but we may be vulnerable to corollary lawsuits from European corporations here?

These are very important questions, and I am glad my hon. colleague has raised them. It is another reason to be very cautious at this point. I also want to congratulate my colleague from Essex for raising that point very clearly in the House.

• (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time for debate has expired. The member will have two and a half minutes the next time this matter is before the House.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

CRIMEAN TATAR DEPORTATION (“SÜRGÜNLİK”) MEMORIAL DAY ACT

The House resumed from November 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-306, An Act to establish a Crimean Tatar Deportation (“Sürgünlik”) Memorial Day and to recognize the mass deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 as an act of genocide, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my Conservative colleague from Edmonton Griesbach for introducing this bill. I am very pleased to take part in this second hour of debate. I also thank him for introducing Bill C-306, establishing a Crimean Tatar Deportation Memorial Day and recognizing the mass deportation of 200,000 Crimean Tatars in 1944 as an act of genocide.

On November 12, 2015, the Ukrainian parliament recognized the mass deportation of the Tatars in 1944 as a genocide, and that this people's return only became possible with the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The Ukrainian parliament also designated May 18 as an official day of commemoration of this genocide and the mass deportation of the Tatars. It has also been urging other nations and international organizations to do the same.

As a Polish Canadian, in fact born in Poland, I am very familiar with the many crimes of the Soviet regime and of the communists in the land of my birth and in central Europe as well. Millions were victims of various communist regimes, among these the Crimean Tatars. The forced deportation of thousands of Tatars resulted in death by starvation, disease and multiple acts of violence targeting the community that were committed by the Soviet regime.

This bill from the member for Edmonton Griesbach does not create a new legal holiday or non-judicial day. It is simply a special day for Canadians of Tatar origin to commemorate an important event in their family and community history.

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This bill has the support of Mustafa Abduldzhemil Dzhemilev, the former chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, a member of the Ukrainian Parliament since 1988, and a former Soviet dissident. This bill also has the support of Refat Chubarov, chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People and a long-time Ukrainian parliamentarian. The Canadian Association of Crimean Tatars, the League of Ukrainian Canadians, and the International Council in Support of Ukraine also support this bill. Many communities in Canada and around the world support the member for Edmonton Griesbach's bill.

Tatar historian and dissident Ayshe Seitmuratova also supports this bill. She is a legend in the community because she was part of the effort to document this crime. She described how her brothers and her parents were forced onto Soviet trains in their pyjamas in the winter. The Crimean Tatars called those trains crematoria on wheels. Historian Ayshe Seitmuratova also described how Russian guards tossed many dead and dying people from the trains.

Half of these Crimean Tatars died of disease or starvation during their first years in exile. Their descendants and the survivors were not permitted to return to their homelands until the 1980s.

Very few archives, books or even mosques survived the atrocities of the Soviet troops, as they destroyed many historical and cultural sites. Today there are very few survivors of this genocide left. The history of this crime of 1944 has been passed down to future generations through the spoken word, stories, Tatar poetry and songs.

As for the question or doubt about this Soviet crime of forcing the mass deportation of Tatars, article II of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide reads as follows:

...genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

A list follows:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

As we can see, according to this definition, this was indeed a genocide committed by the Soviet forces, by the Soviet government against the Crimean Tatars.

● (1735)

The crime of the Holodomor, the recent invasion by Russian military forces, and the illegal occupation of Crimea, as well as the massive deportation of Tatars in 1944, are all part of the Soviet pattern of behaviour we are seeing today in the Russian Federation whereby only force matters.

In our debates in the House on countless parliamentary initiatives, we often talk about creating commemorative days, weeks, or months to recognize various groups in Canada. Adding one for Crimean Tatars would be most appropriate, considering the events that are unfolding in Ukraine today and that have taken place in Crimea in the past.

Recognizing this genocide and the forced deportations will greatly improve relations with the Crimean Tatar community and enrich Canadian cultural diversity by recognizing a part of history that had a huge impact on that community and its heritage.

The Russian government is currently occupying traditional Crimean Tatar territory, Tatar activists have disappeared, and Russian authorities have shut down Tatar media outlets. The oppression and discrimination against this population continues. The Deputy Chairman of the Mejlis, Ilmi Umerov, was imprisoned in a psychiatric institution by Russian authorities. Only after intense international pressure from major western nations was he eventually released.

Crimean Tatar media outlets have been closed, including the ATR TV network. Tatar language schools have been shuttered, as well as Mosques, and most of those associated with either have been imprisoned. Gatherings to remember the 1944 deportations, on memorial days for example, have been banned in every year of the Russian occupation of Crimea. These acts of marginalization are intensifying and mirror the events of 1944.

The *Sürgünlik* is a genocide and another crime committed by Soviet authorities. A memorial day is a friendly gesture that we can offer to ensure that these events are not forgotten over time.

I want to commend the leadership of the hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach, whose efforts made this initiative possible. I urge all members to vote in favour of this bill introduced by that member.

The term *sürgün*, which is part of the word *Sürgünlik*, is used by Crimean Tatars to denote the deportation itself. This Turkish term also translates as "expulsion" and "exile". By extension, *sürgün* also means "violent expulsion" and "prolonged exile". Since 1944, this has been an important part of community life for Crimean Tatars and, as such, an important part of their identity.

Many Canadian associations support this bill, as well as Rustem Irsay, president of the Canadian Association of Crimean Tatars, and Orest Steciw, of the League of Ukrainian Canadians. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress and its president, Paul Grod, as well as Moustafa Djemilev, member of the Ukrainian parliament and commissioner of the president of Ukraine for the affairs of Crimean Tatars, also supports it. Everyone agrees that this important bill should receive the support of Parliament.

Prior to today's debate, I was honoured to meet Garry Kasparov, a civic leader who opposes the regime of the Russian president. He is also the president of the Human rights Foundation and a political expert at Oxford Martin School. He is also known as the 13th world chess champion.

He reminded me that history tells us that we must never forget the acts perpetrated by the Soviet Union against the people of the region. Russian propaganda against the Crimean Tatars will erase the historical facts and the Tatars ties to their ancestral lands by spreading disinformation. As the saying goes, those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

This memorial day will be part of the international effort to counter Russian propaganda, which seeks to rewrite this region's history and wipe out every trace of Crimean Tatars. We must not let them.

● (1740)

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am also rising to speak to Bill C-306, an act to establish a Crimean Tatar Deportation (“Sürgünlik”) Memorial Day, tabled by the member for Edmonton Griesbach.

On this aspect of the bill proposing recognition of the mass deportation of the Crimean Tatars and the ongoing atrocities perpetrated against them, I believe the member will find considerable support.

Ukraine has passed such a bill, memorializing that date of the atrocities and the removal of the Crimean Tatars.

Stalin's forced expulsion of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 was among the more heinous crimes against humanity committed during a century littered with atrocities. The entire Crimean Tatar people, the indigenous people of Crimea, were exiled to the Soviet east in 1944 by the totalitarian regime of Joseph Stalin.

Hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children were forcibly and violently deported. Almost half lost their lives during the first year of exile, for no crime other than their language, culture, and traditions. Most reprehensibly, the women and children were separated from the men, and the men forced to fight in the Stalin forces.

The vast majority of those remaining in the Tatar community returned home to Crimea from exile in the early 1990s. This was largely due to the welcoming policy of the government of independent Ukraine. It is for this reason that the Crimean Tatars and their political and civic institutions are fiercely loyal to Ukraine. Today again, the Tatar people are living in fear as they have again been exiled, this time by Putin.

Little mention is made currently of the Russian Federation's illegal annexation of the Crimea in 2014. Crimean Tatars almost uniformly opposed the Russian Federation's annexation of the Crimea in 2014.

According to Amnesty International, Crimean Tatars have faced repressive measures, from media outlets being shuttered to activists being arrested and “disappeared”. Tatars have been forbidden to publicly commemorate the day of remembrance of the last deportation.

Last month Russia banned the Mejlis, the Crimean Tatar assembly, accusing it of extremism. As a result, anyone involved in one of the more than 250 local Mejlises across Crimea now risks arrest. They either live in fear in Crimea or they are living in fear on the borders of Crimea, their original territories.

According to eastern European scholar Anssi Kullberg, many historians believe that the true motivation behind the genocide of Crimean Tatars was the geopolitical location of the Crimea seen by the Soviets as an obstacle and bridgehead in the way of Stalin's aspirations to gain control of the Turkish Straits and Constantinople,

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and now, in modern times, we are seeing the same, with Russia wanting to claim Crimea.

The systematic erasure of the Crimean Tatars was holistic in nature with even Crimean Tatar place names changed to Soviet ones; mosques converted into movie theatres, or worse; homes, livestock, and gardens seized; and mention of Crimean Tatars was deleted or abbreviated in reference works. In other words, they were erased.

Crimean Tatars were forbidden to reside in, or speak of, their homeland. It was not even possible to preserve a Crimean Tatar identity in personal documents.

The decision by Russia to again suspend the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people and ban all its activities essentially denies the Crimean Tatar community the right to freedom of association and therefore denial of their basic human rights.

In November 2015, Ukraine's Parliament recognized this crime as an act of genocide against the Crimean Tatar people, and established May 18 as the Day of Remembrance of the Genocide of the Crimean Tatar People.

According to Paul Grod, National President of the UCC:

Today, the indigenous Crimean Tatars, together with the Ukrainian people and other ethnic and religious minorities living in Crimea, face severe repression by their Russian occupiers. It is vital for all members of Canada's Parliament to support this important legislation and to ensure that Canada continues to take concrete actions to oppose Russia's illegal occupation and annexation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula.

● (1745)

Only last year I had the honour of standing alongside representatives of all the main parties in this chamber, all expressing support to the stalwart leader of the Crimean Tatars, member of parliament, Mustafa Dzhemilev. It is critical that we deliver on those words and lend support to their long-standing struggle for recognition of their human rights.

I support this legislation going to committee and for consideration of potential amendments. There are some concerns with the name of the bill and the preamble.

It is my hope that perhaps more might be done, rather than just naming a memorial day, to enable them to live in peace as a community.

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to speak to Bill C-306, an act that seeks to recognize the mass deportation of Crimean Tatars by Soviet authorities in 1944 as an act of genocide and also to establish a Crimean Tatar memorial day.

The deportation of the Crimean Tatars was a great tragedy. In the span of a few days, families were taken forcibly from their homes. They were forced to leave the land they loved and they were supposed to try to settle in areas foreign to them. Many perished. For decades, Crimean Tatars were not allowed to return home, as my hon. colleague has just said.

This government has recognized this tragedy in the past and supports the intent of the bill to create a memorial day to not only commemorate the suffering of the Crimean Tatars but also to inspire us as we honour the indomitable will and resilience of Crimean Tatars.

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Despite the myriad of horrors inflicted upon them, they persevere, their culture thrives, and Canada is enriched by Crimean Tatars who call Canada home.

However, the government does not support this legislation. The government agrees that the mass deportation of Crimean Tatars by Soviet authorities was a tragedy in the deepest sense of the word. What Stalin did to these people was horrific.

We recognize the appalling loss of life and tremendous suffering that was endured as hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children were deported from their ancestral homeland in Crimea.

The preamble to the bill suggests that the forced relocation of the Tatars of Crimea was an act of genocide. Theft, deportation, and death were horrors inflicted upon the Crimean Tatars in 1944 at the hands of Stalin. This was a crime against humanity. Crime against humanity has a specific meaning and as articulated in 2002 with the creation of the International Criminal Court. I will read part of the definition that the International Criminal Court in its founding treaty, the Rome Statute, used for crimes against humanity:

For the purpose of this Statute, 'crime against humanity' means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack: (a) Murder; (b) Extermination; (c) Enslavement; (d) Deportation or forcible transfer of population;...

It is clear that what happened to the Crimean Tatars constitutes a crime against humanity.

In 1989, the U.S.S.R. recognized that the deportations were a grave offence contradicting the foundations of international law.

The term "crime against humanity" is a powerful term and one that should not be used lightly. I am using it this evening because the suffering inflicted upon the Crimean Tatars was just that. However, where a crime against humanity recognizes the existence of mass atrocity, genocide requires that the mass atrocity be deliberately perpetrated not only to remove, but to deliberately destroy a group of people.

The test for genocide in international law is a high one. The crime of genocide was established through the genocide convention that was adopted in 1948 and entered into force in 1951.

Under the convention, it is not enough to establish that mass expulsions of civilians took place. Rather, it must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt that such atrocities were perpetrated as part of a campaign to destroy in whole or in part an identifiable national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. This is a high threshold.

Canada has recognized six genocides to date: the Armenian genocide, the Ukrainian famine, the Holocaust, all predate the genocide convention. The Rwandan genocide, the Srebrenica massacre, and the genocide against the Yazidis of Sinjar in Iraq all occurred after the genocide convention was adopted.

In all three of the latter cases there was recourse to an internationally recognized investigation or a judicial decision in which determination of genocide was ultimately made.

The Rwandan genocide was recognized by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The Srebrenica massacre was recognized by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former

Yugoslavia. The genocide committed against the Yazidis of Sinjar in Iraq was recognized by the United Nations independent inquiry on Syria.

In the case of historical genocides, we do not have recourse to the courts but instead must rely on other sources. In the case of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, Ukraine is the only country to have formally recognized the event as genocide, having done so just last year. No other state or multilateral organization, including the UN, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Parliament, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, has recognized the deportation as genocide.

● (1750)

Beyond the lack of international recognition, there is a lack of historical consensus. The majority of historians do not believe Stalin intended to destroy the Crimean Tatars because they were Crimean Tatars, despite the horror they suffered.

Most historians do not label this tragedy a genocide. This absence of international recognition or historical consensus informs our view. Rigorous determination, in this case by historians, should be the basis for deciding whether genocide occurred. By doing so, we ensure that the word maintains its ability to convey the horror it represents.

Guided by the objectives of honouring Crimean Tatars, and preserving the integrity of the meaning of the term genocide, it is the position of this government that Bill C-306 be opposed at second reading. Nevertheless, I want to underline that this government is committed to remembering the tragedy of the forced deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944. We mark the 72nd anniversary of the deportation on May 18 of this year, and we will continue to commemorate the anniversary of this terrible event. This approach respects the integrity of the definition of genocide, and the historical memory of the Crimean Tatars.

Let me again reiterate that the 1944 deportation of Crimean Tatars was a crime against humanity and that this government agrees with the intent of the bill to create a memorial day. We do not support the use of the word genocide in this case. We must not recognize genocide without appropriate rigour. That rigour protects the legacy of all victims of genocide. As such, this government votes against this bill, and we ask our fellow parliamentarians to join us.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak today in support of my colleague from Edmonton Griesbach and his bill, Bill C-306. This is an act to establish a memorial day to honour victims of the Crimean Tatar deportation, the Sürgünlik, and to recognize the mass deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 as an act of genocide. As my colleague stated when he tabled Bill C-306 in September, "The bill condemns a very dark chapter in history and takes a principled stand in support of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law".

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Some of my colleagues have wondered out loud, respectfully, why we in this House should create another day that memorializes a tragic chapter of history of which most Canadians are unaware, a tragedy commonly overlooked and lost among more powerfully documented and commemorated horrors and crimes against humanity that occurred during the Second World War. My answer to those who ask is that it is from the detail of history that societies learn the essentials of humanity and how to avoid repetition of such horrors today and in the future.

To those who question the relevance of another memorial day, asking how many Canadians of Tatar descent live among us, I answer, not many. Officially, according to the last census, there are fewer than 3,000. In fact, the numbers may be somewhat larger, given that many descendants of survivors of the Tatar genocide are incorrectly considered to be Russian. Whether 3,000 or more, the strength of this wonderful, diverse country is drawn from our community of communities, large and small, and respect among them for the histories, the trials and tribulations, and the stories of survival, of cruelty, and of gross inhumanity.

The Tatar people were, back in the 13th century, a dominant population in Crimea, a powerful trading crossroads of the Mongol Empire, later falling under control of the Ottoman Empire. From the 18th century, Catherine the Great annexed the Crimean peninsula as part of her vast expansion of the Russian Empire. During the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, Crimea was the last holdout of the White Army.

The Crimean Tatars were not spared the horrors of the Holodomor, Stalin's man-made famine in the early 1930s that resulted in the deaths of millions of Ukrainians. In 2008, as members know, Canada became the first country to officially recognize the Holodomor as genocide.

That brings us to the Crimean genocide. During World War II, after the Nazi army invaded the Crimean peninsula, thousands of Tatars were conscripted into the German army, along with Russians and Ukrainians. When the Germans were expelled from Crimea in 1944, the Russians took vengeance on the forced collaboration, even though many more Tatars had fought on the Russian side, a number of them awarded Hero of the Soviet Union medals. Nonetheless, Stalin declared the entire Tatar nation, including non-combatants, women, children, and thousands of men still fighting in the ranks of the Red Army, *izmeniky rodina*, traitors of the motherland.

Then, on May 18, 1944, Soviet Red Army troops and soldiers from the dreaded NKVD, Stalin's secret police, surrounded the tiny Tatar communities, hamlets really, in the south Crimean mountains and on the coast. They rounded up men, women, and children, shooting all who resisted, packed them onto train cattle cars, and transported them to destinations deep in Soviet central Asia. Many thousands died on that journey, their bodies simply dumped from the cars.

One massive group of deportees arrived in the desert Republic of Uzbekistan, where they were dumped and died by the thousands of starvation and exposure. Survivors remained in secret police labour camps until 1956, when Nikita Khrushchev opened the camps, allowing them to try to make their way home. Barely half of the Tatar people survived.

Tragically, when those who did survive arrived home, they found that their communities had been expropriated by Russians. They were denied resettlement and were dispersed around eastern Europe and other parts of the world.

● (1755)

However, this Tatar diaspora taught its children well, ensuring that future generations would know their true homeland. For a brief period after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it seemed as though they would be able to return. Some 250,000 Crimean Tatars did return, and from hundreds of original squatter camps, new communities were built. Returning Tatars gradually came to compose at least 12% of Crimea's population.

Then came the Russian invasion and occupation of Crimea and eastern Ukraine. The Tatar legislature, the Mejlis, was banned, Russia calling it an extremist organization. So the centuries old Russian marginalization, persecution, and depression of Tatars continues today.

That brings us to the question of commemoration of the tragic, inhuman 1944 deportation. On November 12, 2015, the parliament of Ukraine recognized the 1944 mass deportation of the Crimean Tatars by the Soviet regime as a genocide. With this recognition, the Ukraine parliament established May 18 as an official day of commemoration.

Passage of Bill C-306 would similarly designate the 18th day of May each and every year as the Crimean Tatar deportation, or *Sürgünlik*, memorial day in Canada. The bill has been endorsed by a number of highly respected organizations. The League of Ukrainian Canadians, for example, says that the timing for passage of Bill C-306 could not be more appropriate. The league points out that while the Russian government is conducting purges today of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainian patriots in occupied Crimea, the bill would send a strong message to Crimean Tatars living under occupation, that the world, that Canada, has not forgotten them.

The Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people writing to the sponsor of the bill, the member for Edmonton Griesbach, says that this is yet another way for Canada to determine its solidarity with Ukraine and its people and, when passed, the bill will create a precedent in the western world and hopefully be taken up by other countries.

The League of Ukrainian Canadian Women, in a letter of endorsement for Bill C-306 wrote, "By recognizing the deportation of Crimean Tatars as an act of genocide, the Parliament of Canada would show its continuing leadership in defence of human rights and the protection of indigenous people".

The letter continues, "The present-day regime of Vladimir Putin aims to punish Crimean Tatars and other Ukrainian compatriots for their principled position and non-recognition of the occupation".

The letter concludes, saying, "we...call on Members of Parliament from both sides of the aisle to take a principled position and support the bill in the name of recognizing the wrongdoings of the past to prevent their repetition in the future".

That says it all. I would urge all members of the House to support this worthy bill, Bill C-306.

Private Members' Business

•(1800)

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Crimea's seductive beauty has enchanted visitors over the centuries. It is also the ancestral home of the Crimean Tatars. As blessed as Crimea is in natural beauty, tragic has been the history of its indigenous peoples, the Crimean Tatars.

The Crimean Tatars evolved from an amalgam of tribes who have lived in Crimea since time immemorial. The indigenous people of the peninsula came to be known as Tats, a term to describe converts to Islam not of pure Turkic descent. The Tats were the dominant demographic grouping of the peninsula, and along with the neighbouring Nogai Steppe Tatars, they evolved into the ethnicity of the Crimean Tatars.

A Crimean Tatar polity emerged on the maps of Europe as a formal state in 1449, the Crimean Tatar Khanate. Why these ethnographical and historical facts are of such importance is that President Putin's justification for the most recent Russian military invasion and annexation of Crimea is based on a false narrative that Crimea is historically Russian.

The correct historical narrative is that once again Crimean Tatars are suffering ethnically targeted arbitrary arrests, torture, and disappearances as a consequence of Kremlin imperialism. The current repression of Crimean Tatars has been documented by numerous international human rights organizations, such as the Crimean Human Rights Group and the Human Rights Information Centre in their joint report "Peninsula of Fear."

How did Putin's Kremlin arrive at its false narrative that Crimea is historically Russian land with Crimean Tatars an inconvenient reality, a reality to be dealt with by policies that echo Tsarist and Soviet policy?

In 1449 when the indigenous peoples of Crimea formed their state, the Crimean Tatar Khanate, the borders of Russia's predecessor state, the Principality of Muscovy, were over 1,000 kilometres distant. In 1783, 340 years later, the Russian empire invaded and annexed Crimea for the first time. So began Russian occupation of Crimea, which continued for 160 years until 1954. Notably, Crimean Tatars formed 80% of the peninsula's population during the first 100 years of occupation. Russia's 160-year occupation was a period of multiple ethnic cleansings, culminating with the Qara Kün, the Black Day of 1944.

Following the annexation of Crimea, among other atrocities, Catherine the Great deported all of the Christian Crimean Tatars to die in the frozen steppes. This was followed by mass deportations of Muslim Crimean Tatars to Turkey in 1812, 1855, the 1860s, the 1880s, and in 1918. Notwithstanding those deportations, at the beginning of the 20th century, the Crimean Tatars continued to constitute the largest ethnicity of Crimea.

Towards the conclusion of World War II, Stalin, a sequential practitioner of genocide, decided to eliminate the Crimean Tatars once and for all. It was a time when the infamous phrase *net naroda, net problemy*, or "no people, no problem", was frequently invoked.

A number of nations have a self-image defined by genocidal horror: the Armenians by the Meds Yeghern, the Ukrainians by the

Holodomor, the Jews by the Shoah, and the Crimean Tatars by the Sürgünlik.

Soon after midnight in the early hours of May 18, 1944, the terror began throughout Crimea. Units of the 32,000 strong NKVD special force rounded up the deportees. They were loaded onto truck convoys, taken to Simferopol and Bakhchysaray and then reloaded onto cattle cars for transport to the Central Asian steppes.

Crimean Tatars who lived in mountainous regions inaccessible to NKVD trucks were found and shot. The inhabitants of the Arabat Spit, a group of inaccessible fishing villages, were herded onto a barge that was then sailed into the Azov Sea and scuttled. A nearby boat with Soviet machine gunners made sure that no one survived.

Within three days, there were no more Crimean Tatars, or as Communist officials in Moscow stated at the time, they had "created a new Crimea according to Russian order." Crimean Tatar books were burned. All Crimean Tatar towns and villages were given Russian names, Muslim cemeteries and mosques razed. Even the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* removed and erased the Crimean Tatars from history.

•(1805)

Crimea was cleansed of over 200,000 Tatars. Over the next four weeks, a procession of lingering death of thousands of railway cars crammed with people travelled 4,000 kilometres across the scorching steppes of Central Asia. The Crimeans called them "crematoria on wheels". They died of suffocation, hunger, and thirst. Along the railroad tracks, a trail of decomposing bodies. Close to 30,000 of the human cargo perished. Approximately half subsequently died in the Central Asian steppe due to hunger and disease, far from the prying eyes of the world.

As he had with the genocidal famine of Ukrainian peasants in 1932-33, Stalin created the physical preconditions for the elimination of a people.

I will now turn my attention to determining whether the Sürgünlik constitutes genocide.

Raphael Lemkin, a Polish Jew born in eastern Europe in the epicentre of the 20th century's blood lands, coined the word genocide based on its study of and exposure to the horrors of the Armenian genocide, the Holodomor, and the Holocaust. He dedicated his life's work to seeing the passage of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide on January 12, 1951.

Not only did Lemkin coin the term, he defined it, and the definition became article 2 of the convention. The convention's intent is clear from its title, structure, and articles. It is not meant to make legal findings of genocide; it is meant to prevent and punish.

It should be underscored that Lemkin was part of the American team that prepared the Nuremberg trials where the term "genocide", although not a legal term, was included as a condemnation in the indictment against the Nazi leadership. Determinations of genocide can be made by tribunals, parliaments, and governments based upon Lemkin's definition. Courts, on the other hand, can make legal findings of personal guilt of the crime of genocide.

Private Members' Business

The Sürgünlik matched Lemkin's definition. It could not be clearer. The article reads "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such "(a) Killing members of the group". One needs only to record the scuttling of the boat with the villagers of the Arabat Spit on board, or the hunting down of Crimean Tatar shepherds in the mountains. The article continues, "(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group". One needs only to note the mass confiscation of property and deportation. Finally, "(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part".

Let us break clause (c) into its component parts. Was Stalin's action deliberate? It was, in fact, a special operation that was premeditated, meticulously planned, and executed by specially assembled forces of his NKVD. Were the conditions calculated to bring about the physical destruction, in whole or in part, of the Crimean Tatars? One need only to recite the recollections of Russian eyewitnesses and the horrific statistics of death both in raw numbers and percentages. Ninety thousand died, which was almost 50% of the population.

According to Lemkin's definition, a determination of genocide needs only one of the article's determinants of genocide to be met. The Sürgünlik meets not one but three of Lemkin's determinants. In fact, it was not only a plan for the destruction of the Crimean Tatars as a people, it was meant to erase that they had ever existed in Crimea: Genocide as well as historical ethnocide, which brings us to the present day.

Putin's military invasion and annexation of Crimea on the basis of false claims of ethnic Russian grievances and false historic land claims has broken the fundamental international principle of the sanctity of borders. We have not seen such actions in Europe since the 1930s.

Today in occupied Crimea, the oppressed and targeted Crimean Tatars, the victims of a Stalinist genocide, see large Stalin portraits officially on parade during Kremlin holidays. Putin has embarked on a policy of imperial expansion into neighbouring countries and the rehabilitation of the cult of Stalin. Seductively beautiful Crimea has truly become a "Peninsula of Fear" for the indigenous people of this "Blessed Land".

• (1810)

I firmly support our government's policy of engagement. However, we must be vigilant to ensure that diplomacy does not slip into policies of appeasement. Engagement requires speaking truth to malevolent power and not fearing to speak the truth about the Kremlin's current international crimes against humanity.

We must not deny the Kremlin's past crimes against humanity. Speaking the truth of the past strengthens us in confronting current evil, which brings us to the legislation before us.

Genocide was committed against the Crimean Tatars. We must not deny it.

[Member spoke in Ukrainian as follows:]

Slava Krymskym Tataram. Slava Ukraini.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach has five minutes to reply.

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to continue the debate on my bill, Bill C-306, the Crimean Tatar Deportation ("Sürgünlik") Memorial Day Act. I appreciate my colleagues' contributions to this debate, and I am grateful to hear statements of support from all corners of the House.

I would like to address a request from the member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

I ask the House for unanimous consent to table this document. It is the "State Defence Committee Decree No. 5859ss", dated May 11, 1944, at the Moscow Kremlin. This decree sent the Crimean Tatars into exile. There can be no more damning evidence than the evil nature of this document.

Seven days after Josef Stalin signed this order, the indigenous people of Crimea were rounded up and deported en masse to Central Asia. At the stroke of his pen, Stalin dispatched more than 200,000 people to what historian Robert Conquest called the "human dumping grounds". In the 1960s, Conquest was among the first western historians to study the deportations. With the full story still deeply hidden behind the Iron Curtain, he began portraying these events as genocide.

Within the Soviet Union itself, a few brave dissidents drew similar conclusions. Petro Grigorenko, a former Red Army general turned activist, told a gathering of exiled Crimean Tatars, "What was done to you in 1944 has a name. It was genocide". For saying that, General Grigorenko spent five years in a psychiatric hospital and then was exiled.

As historians delved deeper into the broad question of ethnic cleansing and genocide, the deportations of 1944 were often considered a prime example.

Norman Naimark, a Stanford University historian, agreed, calling the 1944 deportations an "attempted cultural genocide".

Brian Glyn Williams, a professor of Islamic history at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, also calls it genocide. He is the author of the most comprehensive academic history of the Crimean Tatars.

This brings me to the arguments made by some government members, among them the member for Winnipeg North. In particular, during the first hour, he argued that Canada should let an international body make our decisions for us. He said that members of this House should not exercise their own judgment when we consider events of the past.

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This is not Canada's historical position. In 2008, all members of the House came together to declare the Holodomor in Ukraine a genocide. Indeed, the member for Winnipeg North invoked the Holodomor as he fought efforts to recognize the injustice done to the Crimean Tatars. Had we applied this new logic, we would not have recognized Holodomor as a genocide. There is ample historical evidence, expert research, and survivor testimony to justify this recognition, yet no international court or body has bothered to do so. Instead, Canada joined Ukraine and a growing number of other countries and jurisdictions in using our own judgment to draw conclusions from the available evidence.

That is what I am asking the House to do for the Crimean Tatars. The call to defer to non-existent international investigations is a legal smokescreen. Members should not sacrifice their own judgment to this ahistorical, un-Canadian position. The many letters of support I have received show that Canadians want us to speak up for Crimea and Ukraine.

I would like to thank the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women, and the Ukrainian Youth Association. Since we last met, they have added their voices to the many groups and people supporting the bill.

Canadians cherish the close friendship between Canada and Ukraine. They understand that the fate of the Crimean Tatars is closely linked to the fate of all Ukraine, and they know that Canada has a critical role to play in support of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars as they fight for the freedom and sovereignty of their country.

Colleagues, in this spirit, I ask for support for my bill at second reading.

•(1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is there unanimous consent for the member to table the document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And more than five members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until

Tuesday, December 13, 2016, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am here today to stand up for the coast and ask the government about its oil spill response plans.

Along with my New Democrat British Columbia colleagues, we represent the waters that the 2013 tanker safety review identified as being one of the four areas in Canada with the highest probability of a large oil spill and one of the two areas in Canada with the highest potential impact of an oil spill. Therefore, it matters to us. It matters to our constituents and our economy.

Just last week, there was an alarming increase in oil tanker traffic approved by the government to go through these waters. It is bitumen oil tankers that will be moving through the Salish Sea. This is against the wishes of coastal first nations, local governments, and almost everybody on the coast who participated in the undermined regulatory reviews. It is all downside, no upside, for the coast and the increase in risk is tremendous.

I want to talk about that risk and what the government's plans are to accommodate it. A sevenfold increase in tanker traffic laden with bitumen means, inevitably, an increase in risk. The impact of bitumen is something that we are still learning about. It is an unrefined product, it is viscous, it is sticky, it needs a diluent in order for it to flow through pipelines, and the volatility of the diluted bitumen was identified in the Kalamazoo spill in the U.S. several years ago as being extremely volatile and having a big human impact.

Only two days after the spill happened, the diluents containing benzene, toluene, and micro polyaromatic hydrocarbons began gassing off in the area, causing symptoms such as nausea, dizziness, and headaches among the local population. Oil spill expert Riki Ott spoke in my area. She was on the ground after the *Exxon Valdez* spill back in the 1980s. She reported that micro-polyaromatic hydrocarbons are major health hazards causing cancer, asthma, and hormone and reproductive problems by jamming immune system and DNA functions.

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The risk is alarming to first responders, in particular, who might be first on the scene in the event of an accident and the impact on the physical environment is also something that we found had not been properly studied by the government. Vancouver's Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Tsawout First Nations commissioned a study in 2015, saying "collecting and removing oil from the sea surface is a challenging, time-sensitive, and often ineffective process". Even in the calmest conditions, it is very hard to control.

A 2013 study by Environment Canada said that spilled bitumen exposed to sediment in marine settings sinks and chemical dispersants tested on dilbit were not effective. In fact, they made the oil sink beneath the surface of the water, which made it even harder, of course, to recover.

I want to know the government's consideration of dilbit, how to clean it up in the marine environment, and how it was able to approve the Kinder Morgan tanker traffic expansion without being able to assure Canadians and the House that it actually has a plan in place to recover bitumen from the ocean when it, inevitably, spills.

• (1820)

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government believes that economic growth and protecting the environment go hand in hand. Improving marine safety, including oil spill response, is a key part of the mandate the Prime Minister has given to the Minister of Transport.

Over the past year, the minister and his officials have been talking with Canadians across the country on how best to improve marine safety. Indigenous and coastal communities were engaged. We repeatedly heard that Canada had an excellent track record. We have a very robust and comprehensive marine safety system that protects Canadians and our coastal environments.

However, we also heard that there was always room for improvement and that there were real gaps in the system that needed to be addressed.

On November 7, the Prime Minister announced a \$1.5 billion oceans protection plan, an ambitious nation-wide plan that will meet or exceed any international standards, and is supported by commitments to indigenous co-management, environmental protections, and science-based standards. Achieving a world-leading marine safety system for all of Canada's unique coasts is at the heart of the oceans protection plan. This means preventing accidents before they happen, and being prepared to respond to any of them with the adequate resources and authority.

We heard that communities, mariners and regulators needed transparent and high-quality information on marine traffic. We are moving forward with a commitment to get state-of-the-art information and tools in place, on the ground, equipment and systems to aid in navigating ships safely, and regulatory tools that give communities a direct say in the types of measures that should be in place in sensitive areas.

Our government has been developing a new approach to how we prepare for and respond to incidents and oil spills in particular. A risk-based and geographically-specific approach is one that replaces a one-size-fits-all system, and recognizes the unique factors that

contribute to risk in a given area. That is why the minister will be formalizing a moratorium on crude oil tanker traffic on British Columbia's north coast. This will provide the highest level of environmental protection for the Great Bear Rainforest and ensures British Columbia's northern coastline, which is integral to the livelihoods and cultures of indigenous and coastal communities, is protected and preserved.

The oceans protection plan makes a significant investment in protecting our coasts, while supporting a vibrant and beneficial marine trade, one that includes getting Canadian resources and products to markets overseas.

Over the next five years, investments of \$1.5 billion will be made. Let me point out that this is an unprecedented amount of investment. Never has a government made such an investment in building a world-leading marine safety system, preserving and restoring marine ecosystems and working with indigenous communities and stakeholders to achieve it.

Under the oceans protection plan, our government will have the tools it needs to prevent accidents, and act in the event that they do happen. The Canadian Coast Guard will be bolstered with new tools and authorities, and we will ensure that polluters pay adequate compensation. Plus, we will have world-leading science to better inform prevention and response actions.

I would like to reiterate that this government has taken action where it counts. We can grow the economy and the middle class, while protecting the environment. We do not believe the two are mutually exclusive.

• (1825)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, in 2011, I asked Transport Canada to study bitumen when I was Islands Trust Council chair. In 2013, Stephen Harper said, "We're going to study bitumen." The only thing mentioned in the oceans protection plan that was announced last month was, "We are going to study bitumen in the marine environment and we're going to take five years to do it."

How on earth could the government commit our community to a sevenfold increase in bitumen oil tanker traffic without having done the science? That is not an evidence-based decision.

When the National Academy of Sciences, commissioned by the Washington State government, came up with a study that said that bitumen in the oceans was a very dangerous thing for our region, the National Energy Board refused to hear the evidence. Then government broke its promise to redo the National Energy Board process. Therefore, we do not have access to the science.

We are very worried, and the government has not done its responsibility to look after our coasts.

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Ms. Kate Young: Mr. Speaker, as previously stated, our government believes that protecting Canada's coasts can go hand in hand with supporting the middle class and growing our economy.

Unprecedented investments are being made by this government in building a world-leading marine-safety system, preserving and restoring marine ecosystems while partnering in advancing co-management with indigenous and coastal communities.

We will change the way we prevent and respond to marine incidents for the better. We will address the long-standing issue of abandoned and wrecked vessels, and ensure that the polluter pays. That is a commitment we have made to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

The safety of the public and the protection of our environment are a priority. Moreover, we believe that Canada, as a trading nation, can get resources and products to market safely.

We have taken action, and the oceans protection plan will preserve our unique coastline for generations to come.

TRANSPORT

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to once again ask my question regarding the Vancouver Airport Authority and why it is not allowing Canadian catering companies to operate out of the airport.

The minister deferred his response at the time, committing to get back to me at a later date. I do respect that, but it was more than a month and a half ago and I am still waiting. I still have not got a response from the minister, either by correspondence or informally in the chamber, so I look forward to the response tonight.

Here is why this issue is so important. The CEO of Vancouver International Airport defended the airport's decision not to allow Canadian catering companies to operate in this manner by stating:

Vancouver Airport Authority decided not to permit additional in-flight caterers at YVR at this time for the purpose of maintaining healthy competition between the two full service caterers currently operating at the airport.

Quite frankly, only allowing two companies to operate is protectionism, and this protectionism is keeping Canadian-owned businesses out of the sector.

Vancouver Airport is a corporation under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, and has entered into a ground lease with the Minister of Transport in order to operate. The Minister of Transport is responsible for appointing some of the airport's directors. He has the ability to act. He has the responsibility to make his thoughts on this matter known, and the airport must then listen.

I hope he will show leadership and not just sit on the sidelines and wait for a decision from the Competition Tribunal before declaring that what is going on at YVR is unnecessary anti-competitive behaviour. Will the minister act?

• (1830)

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek for her question regarding the issue involving the Vancouver Airport Authority, and its decisions surrounding the granting of its operating licences.

Let me begin by outlining the operation of airports in Canada. The national airports policy, established in 1994, provides a framework that defines the federal government's role and the role of airport authorities with regard to airports.

Under that policy, the Government of Canada transferred responsibility for the management, operation, and development of Canada's major airports to the private sector. As a result, this created world-class airports at no cost to the middle class Canadian taxpayer.

Given this, let me point out that the Vancouver Airport Authority is a private, community-based, not-for-profit corporation. Therefore, according to the policy, it is the authority who is responsible for the management and operation of the Vancouver International Airport. This includes granting physical access to the airport.

Transport Canada is responsible for setting safety and security standards for all Canadian airports. This is done through policy setting, airport transfer agreements, airport certification, and regulation.

Second, let me further elaborate that the relationship between the Government of Canada and each individual airport authority is governed by a long-term ground lease agreement. Under the terms of the ground leases, airport authorities are fully responsible for the operation, management, and development of their respective airports.

Furthermore, the ground leases allow airport authorities to enter into subleases with third party tenants, without any involvement from the Government of Canada.

In summary, Transport Canada, in its role as landlord and regulator, is not involved in the day-to-day decision-making regarding the management and the operations of airports. That responsibility lies in the hands of the airport authorities.

Given its role, and the responsibilities of the airport authorities, as established by the national airports policy and ground leases, this government would not be a party to any dispute between airport authorities and their subtenants.

This matter, involving the Vancouver Airport Authority and its decisions related to the management of the Vancouver International Airport, has been referred to the Competition Tribunal. Because it is currently being adjudicated, I trust the member opposite can appreciate that it would be inappropriate for me to comment publicly on the matter.

Having said that, I recognize the important role that airports play in their communities, and as facilitators of global connectivity and economic growth. However, we need to let the tribunal do its job, and allow the parties related to this case make their representations before the tribunal.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, this is not about the Competition Tribunal making a decision. This is about Canadian owned companies not being allowed to operate at a major Canadian airport. I am surprised that I have not heard from the minister on this issue, since I raised it in October.

Once again, Transport Canada owns the airport. The Minister of Transport appoints a number of its directors. He does have the ability to act, to at least make an inquiry. He has the responsibility to make his thoughts on this known, and the airport must then at least respond.

When can we expect the minister to make a decision on whether or not he has anything to say about the Vancouver International Airport not allowing healthy competition that is in the best interests of travellers?

• (1835)

Ms. Kate Young: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, under the 1994 national airports policy, the Government of Canada transferred responsibility for the management, operation, and development of Canada's major airports to private, not-for-profit, non-share, capital airport authorities. As such, airport authorities manage their own subleases, both their financial terms, and any lease or rental increases.

Transport Canada, as landlord and regulator, is not involved in an airport's day-to-day operations and decision-making. It would not be a party to any dispute between the airport and its subtenant. Given that this matter has been referred to the Competition Tribunal and is currently being adjudicated, it would be inappropriate to make further public comment.

HEALTH

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate you sticking around for this late show tonight. It is my first late show, and I appreciate the pages and everyone in the room for sticking around when they want to see the Christmas lights being lit up outside here.

The reason I am here is, back on October 18 of this year, I asked a question in question period regarding the fentanyl crisis and I was not happy with the response from the parliamentary secretary to the minister of health, the member for Brampton West. She did not answer my question, basically, and that is why we are here today.

The fentanyl crisis is getting worse in the country. It is certainly a major national emergency in my mind. It is an epidemic. Just in B.C. alone, almost 1,000 people have died this year overdosing on fentanyl. In my province of Alberta, the numbers are not as bad as that, but certainly it is a crisis all over the country. We hear daily about the deaths that are occurring because of this drug.

It is because of the severity of this emergency crisis, that the Standing Committee on Health, of which I am vice-chair, postponed the study on the national pharmacare strategy that we were doing to address this national opioid crisis. We brought in many experts, doctors, nurses, ER staff, first responders, the EMS, the police, and officials from the fire departments around the country. We talked to pharmacists, social workers, and we even brought in recovering fentanyl and opioid addicts into our witness chairs to discuss with us the severity of this issue.

There were two particular presentations we received. One was from the commissioner of the RCMP and the other, the Canada Border Services. They indicated to us that 98% of illicit fentanyl is coming from China into our country. I had attempted in this meeting to have the Chinese ambassador appear before the committee to

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explain what his government is doing to help Canada tackle this deadly drug epidemic. I put the motion forward, and the Liberal government would not have a representative from the Chinese government come here to address this issue.

The Liberals are ignoring the obvious. China is the primary source of illicit fentanyl here in Canada, and the Liberals would rather deal with the deadly street drugs after they are in the hands of Canadians, instead of targeting the source, which is China.

Why is pleasing the Chinese government more important to the Liberals than saving the lives of Canadians? That was the question I had asked, and I would like a response to that question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for the opportunity to address the question by the member for Calgary Confederation on fentanyl in Canada.

Our government is very concerned about the increasing rates of opioid-related overdose deaths across Canada and the devastating impact this crisis is having on individuals, families, and communities at large.

It is clear that problematic opioid use, including fentanyl, is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted and dynamic approach, an approach that is comprehensive, collaborative, compassionate, and, above all, evidence-based.

That is why, in June, our government announced an opioid action plan that focuses on better informing Canadians about the risks of opioids; supporting better prescribing practices; reducing easy access to unnecessary opioids; supporting better treatment options for patients; and improving the evidence base upon which our policy decisions will be made.

On November 19, at a national opioid summit co-hosted by the Minister of Health and the hon. Dr. Eric Hoskins, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, 42 partner organizations committed to taking concrete actions by signing a joint statement of action to address the opioid crisis. This government is taking action.

Following the opioid summit, I engaged with my colleagues at Public Safety Canada and Foreign Affairs Canada to address the issue of fentanyl from China. The RCMP now have an agreement with China to cut the flow of opioids from China. Our government will also look at options for expanding the tools available to our border authorities to further address the fentanyl issue.

Our government also recognizes that measures must be taken to address the availability of and serious harms associated with street drugs.

Fentanyl misuse first became prominent with the diversion of pharmaceutical forms of the drug, usually fentanyl patches. However, over the past year the RCMP has reported an increase in domestic production of illicit fentanyl.

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This is why our government is moving forward with regulations to control six chemicals that can be used as precursors in the production of fentanyl. By scheduling these precursors, any unauthorized importation and exportation of these chemicals will be illegal. Our government has also indicated that it will look at legislative options for regulating pill presses, which are being used in Canada for illicit drug production.

To help address the devastating impacts the opioid crisis is having in our communities, our government has also moved quickly to improve access to naloxone, a drug that can save lives by temporarily reversing a potentially fatal opioid overdose. Health Canada has made naloxone available without a prescription. Further, after an expedited review, the department has approved an easier to use nasal spray version of the drug. The interim order, signed by the Minister of Health this past summer, to allow emergency import of the nasal spray from the United States will remain in effect while the manufacturer takes the necessary steps to bring the product to the Canadian market. This will ensure that there is no interruption in supply.

In addition, our government is supporting the good Samaritan drug overdose act, a private member's bill that would help encourage individuals who witness an overdose to call for emergency help without having to fear that drug charges would be laid against them.

We have also demonstrated strong support for properly established and managed supervised consumption sites. For example, based on a thorough and evidence-based review of their applications, Health Canada issued a two-year exemption to the Dr. Peter Centre in Vancouver, and an unprecedented four-year exemption for Insite to continue its important work in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. In addition—

• (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Calgary Confederation.

Mr. Len Webber: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the information from the parliamentary secretary on what he and his government are doing in this country.

The problem is that 98% of illicit fentanyl is coming from China. Why are we not shutting off the tap from China, where this drug is coming from and killing many Canadians?

I appreciate the fact that the government is working on supervised injection and consumption sites and that an antidote, naloxone, is being distributed throughout Canada to help individuals who are overdosing on these particular drugs.

But again, why are we not focusing on China? Why is the Liberal government not talking to the Chinese government? Our Prime Minister should address this and talk to the Chinese officials. He is over there. He is talking with them. Let us deal with the issue.

• (1845)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, very quickly, I will conclude what I was about to finish off with.

We have also demonstrated strong support for properly established and managed supervised consumption sites. For example, based on a thorough and evidence-based review of their applications, Health Canada issued a two-year exemption for Dr. Peter Centre in Vancouver, and an unprecedented four-year exemption for Insite to continue its important work in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

In addition, Health Canada will continue to work with new applicants from Montreal and Vancouver to support them through the completion of their applications.

Suffice it to say, directly to the question the member has put across, I would not make the assumption, because it would not be true, that the government does not take serious consideration of that comprehensive overlook as to how and what role, whether it is the RCMP or China, we can take to best deal with this problem. As I say, we need to take all the stakeholders into consideration to try to improve upon a system which is horrifying many of our communities.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): 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 6:46 p.m.)

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