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(HANSARD)

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)
[English]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 94(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, I have the honour to table this morning, in both official languages, the annual report on immigration, 2015.

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PUBLIC SERVICE STAFFING TRIBUNAL

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Canadian Heritage and pursuant to the repealed section 110 of the Public Service Employment Act, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the 2014-15 Public Service Staffing Tribunal annual report.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Canadian Heritage and pursuant to the repealed section 251 of the Public Service Labour Relations Act, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the 2014-15 Public Service Labour Relations Board Annual Report.

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[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing or Special Order, at the conclusion of the debate on today's opposition motion, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion

be deemed put, a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, March 9, 2016, at the conclusion of oral questions.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions today.

The first petition deals with the issue of sex selection and pregnancy termination. The petitioners are calling on members of Parliament to condemn discrimination against girls, which is occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the other petition has to do with palliative care. The petitioners are pointing out that it is impossible for a person to give informed consent to assisted suicide or euthanasia if appropriate palliative care options are not available to them. Therefore, our petitioners are calling on Parliament to establish a national strategy on palliative care.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to bring a petition from my riding of Sarnia—Lambton regarding fair electoral representation. The petitioners are looking for an equal and effective vote to be presented fairly in Parliament and to have proportional representation.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

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

The first is from Families for Justice, a group of Canadians who have lost a loved one by an impaired driver. The petitioners believe that Canada's impaired driving laws are much too lenient. They want the crime to be called what it truly is, vehicular homicide. It is the number one cause of criminal death in Canada. Over 1,200 Canadians are killed every year by a drunk driver. Canadians are calling for mandatory sentencing for vehicular homicide, and for this Parliament to support Bill C-226, Kassandra's law, and Bill C-247.

Business of Supply

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am also honoured to present a petition regarding palliative care. The petition requests that the House unanimously pass the motion from the last Parliament to create a national strategy on palliative care. It also highlighted that in *Carter v. Canada*, the Supreme Court ruled that a competent consenting adult who has a grievous and irremediable medical condition that causes enduring and intolerable suffering should be allowed access to physician-assisted suicide, but also that the individual be required to have quality palliative care, so that the person can make informed consent. The petitioners are therefore calling on Parliament to establish a national strategy on palliative care.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

•(1010)

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC) moved:

That the House: (a) acknowledge the contribution Bombardier makes to the Canadian economy and the aerospace industry; (b) recognize that there is a market solution already available that could support Bombardier; (c) acknowledge that Bombardier has designed the quietest and best aircraft in its class that is well suited to urban airports like the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport; (d) recognize that the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is a major economic driver for the Greater Toronto Area that supports both business and leisure travel; (e) recognize that the expansion of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport would allow airlines to purchase Bombardier aircraft; and (f) call on the government to reverse its decision on restricting the expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise this morning and speak to this motion.

Last November, just days after being appointed to his new role, the Minister of Transport took to Twitter to announce that he would block any future expansion of the Billy Bishop airport. In fewer than 140 characters, the Minister of Transport unilaterally blocked the right of the City of Toronto to hold consultations and decide whether to allow their local airport to expand and grow along with the city.

In April 2014, Toronto City Council voted unanimously to adopt a city staff report that allowed the city, the Toronto port authority, and the federal government to negotiate conditions before proceeding with a proposal to add jet service and extend the runway at Billy Bishop airport.

Consequently, the City of Toronto ordered a full environmental assessment, an airport master plan, and a runway design plan, at an

estimated cost of \$4 million. All three studies were reportedly 90% complete and due for release shortly after the minister sent out his tweet, effectively removing them from the decision-making process on this issue. Even the *Toronto Star* called the minister's politically motivated decision to shut down discussion on the expansion of the airport before all the facts were in as ill-advised.

For a government that obsesses about endless consultation on everything, the deliberate lack of consultation in this case is telling. When asked why the government acted with such haste to halt the proposed Billy Bishop airport expansion, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport noted that all three parties of a tripartite agreement must concur with any amendments for the agreement to be ratified. Having a veto over any amendment to an agreement does not mean that the government should use it without consulting with those most affected, in this case the City of Toronto.

To date, I have not heard the minister state a single reason that falls under federal jurisdiction to oppose this project, whether it be safety for passengers or concerns about aircraft congestion in the GTA. I hope that over the course of this debate today, we will hear a sound rationale as to why this project should not go ahead.

My concern is that the minister acted so quickly to oppose this development because he feared he would be hard pressed to explain why he opposed a position taken by the City of Toronto or the port authority once they had held their extensive consultations. We are having this debate today because I believe that the Minister of Transport clearly failed in his responsibilities when he neglected to consider the full range of the implications of his actions.

When it comes to economic growth and job creation, the federal government should act as an enabler, rather than an impediment, as it has done in this case. As a result, the federal government must now contemplate ways to support Bombardier that will cost taxpayers in the billions of dollars, while ignoring the private sector solution that will not cost the taxpayers anything.

Here are the facts. A Canadian company has signed a letter of intent to purchase up to 30 C Series aircraft from Bombardier, contingent on the airport expanding its facilities to accommodate it. The C Series aircraft has been described by the minister himself as best in class. I should note that the C Series is the best in its class because it is quieter than the Q400 turboprop aircraft, uses less fuel than any compatible aircraft, and has the lowest break-even load factor.

People travelling to and from Toronto from underserved destinations, like Timmins, Thunder Bay, and Moncton, will benefit from flying in a state-of-the-art aircraft that burns less fuel and is therefore more environmentally sound and cost-effective to operate than those of its competitors. In addition, Bombardier gains a major client.

Business of Supply

This is a win-win for Canada. Yet, by blocking the potential expansion of the Toronto city airport, the minister is allowing Bombardier and its employees to be disappointed. They have designed a best-in-class aircraft that is ideally suited for operating out of this airport. Furthermore, he has reduced access to the thousands of businesses and business travellers who rely on the airport as a convenient, time-saving alternative to Pearson airport.

• (1015)

In 2015, the Toronto island airport served 2.5 million passengers, making it the ninth-busiest airport in Canada and the sixth busiest Canadian airport serving the United States. This airport is responsible for 6,500 jobs, \$385 million in wages, and over \$2 billion in economic output. It is also a major contributor of taxes to the City of Toronto and the federal government.

Just last week, the Billy Bishop airport was named the third-best airport in North America by the Airports Council International, considered to be the world's benchmark measure of airport excellence. This makes the minister's unilateral rejection of an expansion all the more stunning. If the minister had stated any evidence-based reason for his denial of a potential airport expansion, then the proponents of the airport expansion would have been in a position to address those concerns and perhaps alter their plans. His sudden refutation of this airport expansion leads me to wonder when the minister would ever consider reopening the tripartite agreement.

For example, what if his own department recommended to the Toronto port authority, the owner and operator of the airport, that the main runway be extended for the installation of a runway safety area. As the minister knows, the Transportation Safety Board includes the issue of landing accidents and runway overruns to its watch list of the transportation safety issues posing the greatest threat to Canadians, with the runway safety area identified as a key mitigating measure.

Alternatively, would the minister consider reopening the tripartite agreement if his own department recommended, based on scientific evidence, that aircraft of any type would be able to take off and land more quietly if they could use a longer runway and therefore not have to accelerate as quickly?

The tripartite agreement has been reopened twice before. In 1985, the agreement was opened to allow the de Havilland Dash 8 onto the list of aircraft allowed to use the airport. In 2003, the agreement was once again opened to expand the hours of operation of the airport and allow for the construction of a tunnel linking the airport to the city. Just yesterday, I had the opportunity to use that tunnel, and it was quite convenient to get to the airport.

These were both reasonable amendments that gave travellers greater access to a convenient travel option in Toronto. Innovation and the adoption of new technologies and practices drive Canada's economy, and government regulations should change to adapt along with new technologies.

When the tripartite agreement was first signed in 1983, the only aircraft allowed to land at Billy Bishop was the Dash 7 aircraft. This was a four-turboprop engine plane with a maximum speed of 450 kilometres per hour. The first Dash 8 added to the list of aircraft that could land at Billy Bishop, after the 1985 tripartite amendment, was

designed for 38 passengers, was 73 feet long, and had a cruising speed of 500 kilometres per hour.

The Q400 variant of the Dash 8 aircraft, which is commonly used at Billy Bishop today, seats 68. It is 107 feet long and has a cruising speed of 667 kilometres per hour. Amazingly, the sound profile of the Q400 aircraft is actually quieter than the Dash 8-100. Today, I believe we have reached a similar point where technological innovation in the aerospace sector is forcing a change in our laws, and government should be flexible enough to adapt.

A decade ago, none of us could have imagined that a Canadian company would build a 100- to 150-seat aircraft that would be quieter than a Q400 turboprop, which was also an incredible achievement in its time. Two decades ago, none of us would have imagined that a turboprop would be able to carry nearly 70 passengers from Toronto to Winnipeg.

• (1020)

I believe Canadians should be embracing the opportunity to utilize this new aircraft across Canada. Instead, with his purely political decision to overrule a process of study and consultation that the City of Toronto was on the verge of completing and to block the development of the Billy Bishop airport, the minister is hurting jobs and Canada's leadership in the aerospace sector.

Today's motion calls upon the House to acknowledge the contribution Bombardier makes to the Canadian economy and the aerospace industry. It calls upon the House to recognize that there is a market solution already available that could support Bombardier and would not cost taxpayers any money. It calls upon the House to recognize that the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is a major economic driver for the greater Toronto area, which supports both business and leisure travel. It calls upon the House to recognize that the expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport would allow airlines to purchase Bombardier aircraft. Finally, it calls upon the government to reverse its decision on restricting the expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

Support for the motion would send a clear signal that Canadians support entrepreneurialism and taking advantage of a made-in-Canada aircraft that will be able to better serve underserved communities.

The Billy Bishop airport is an asset that few major cities in the world can boast. It creates jobs and has become an important transportation asset for the GTA.

Bombardier has designed an aircraft that is both best in its class and ideally suited for use in airports like Billy Bishop.

It is my hope that all members will see that there is the potential for an incredible synergy here that would help create jobs in Toronto, at Bombardier in Montreal, and at every destination that is served from this airport.

All of us were elected to look at issues through a national lens. The future of Bombardier and the Billy Bishop airport will have national repercussions, and members of Parliament should consider this a national issue.

Business of Supply

I also hope all members in this place believe that, when the private sector is ready and willing to step up and support Canada's aerospace champion, this is a preferable solution to one that has the Canadian taxpayers, who are already seeing over \$30 billion in new deficit spending this year, having to do so.

The Prime Minister has called the C Series a superlative product and an extraordinary plane, and just last week he asked the \$1.3-billion question, "...how do we make sure that airplane is a success and how are we making sure it is a Canadian success story?"

One way to ensure that the C Series is a Canadian success story is by staying out of the way of Canadian firms wanting to purchase the aircraft. By voting in favour of today's motion, the Prime Minister can restart the process of supporting the City of Toronto, the Toronto island airport, Bombardier, and the C Series aircraft program, without asking Canadian taxpayers to foot the bill.

In closing, I will end where I started. I recognize that there are those who will ask why a member from Saskatchewan cares about the Toronto island airport and Bombardier, a company based in Montreal. My answer is quite simple. As the critic appointed to hold the Minister of Transport to account for decisions that just do not make sense—the decision to exercise a veto to block this expansion at the eleventh hour of the process undertaken by the City of Toronto—deserves to be challenged.

The debate today will scrutinize the decision on a number of fronts. First and foremost, we need to ensure that decisions are evidence-based and that jurisdictions are respected.

On that note, I ask all members in this House to support the motion.

● (1025)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am curious as to whether the member opposite has read any of the 25 reports that have been tabled with the City of Toronto, which include reports from the Board of Health, the executive committee of the planning department, as well as the economic development committee. I am curious whether the member opposite has talked to any of the residents, businesses, or stakeholders on the waterfront, including whether or not she has met with Mr. Deluce or Porter Airlines.

I am curious whether or not she is aware that the cost of doing this project has been estimated at close to \$1.6 billion, of which there is no source of funding. This would include the cost of filling half a kilometre of Lake Ontario and paving it over for the extension of the runway; the cost of a 20-foot wall that would run the entire length of the runway from Bay Street to Dufferin Street, which is almost a mile in length across the waterfront; the fact that the reconfiguration of this airport would require fitting an airport the size of the Ottawa international airport into one-seventh of its mass, again with no funding source at all to pay for the land site improvements that would be required to move 4.3 million passengers; and it would also require additional dollars to be paid through an airport levy tax to do the lakefront.

I wonder if the member has read any of those 25 reports and whether she has consulted with any of the stakeholders on the waterfront besides Mr. Deluce.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the member has been a vocal opponent of the airport expansion for any purpose. Since Porter began growing its operations out of the airport, the member has been the main anti-airport development force in the Liberal caucus.

What I do have in front of me is a letter that was written by the City of Toronto stating:

It is the City's expectation that the studies being undertaken by PortsToronto will address the conditions adopted by City Council, including the caps and phasing framework.

Therefore, we absolutely know that the City of Toronto was in support of studying the expansion of the Toronto island airport. That is why I am speaking today. That process needs to be respected and supported, and it is up to the City of Toronto to decide whether the expansion should go ahead.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her speech. I always enjoy hearing her speak in the House of Commons.

I find it passing strange that the Conservatives would put forward a motion without having consulted the residents of Toronto in any way. When we compare it to the performance of the Liberal government taking decisions around the Toronto harbour out of the hands of the residents of Toronto and putting them with the Toronto port authority, we have seen in both of the old parties a lack of respect for the residents of Toronto that is quite palpable.

I want to come to the issue of the aerospace industry because in my area, the lower mainland of British Columbia, we hemorrhaged out hundreds of aerospace jobs because the former Conservative government was simply not willing to do anything to protect the jobs that should have been protected under the Air Canada act. At the same time, as the Speaker would know, we have lost half a million manufacturing jobs under the Conservatives, not just in aerospace but in every single manufacturing sector and right across the country from British Columbia right through to Atlantic Canada.

My question for the member is quite simple. What lessons have the Conservatives learned from their appalling performance on manufacturing and the aerospace industries when they were in power in Canada?

Business of Supply

•(1030)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, obviously today's motion is about the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport and supporting the City of Toronto when it unanimously voted to adopt a city staff report that would allow the city, the Toronto port authority, and the federal government to negotiate conditions for proceeding with Porter's proposal to add jet service and extend the runway of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. Consequently, it ordered a full environmental assessment, an airport master plan, and a runway design plan at an estimated cost of \$4 million. It had made a list of 25 issues that it feels must be addressed prior to giving its approval for an airport extension and has had ongoing discussions with the Toronto port authority about these concerns.

Again, this is about allowing a process to continue and allowing the City of Toronto to decide.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for a wonderful and fact-based speech.

I have heard that the current government is considering giving multibillion-dollar bailouts to Bombardier to keep it from filing for bankruptcy and from losing 2,600 jobs in Quebec.

Could the member reiterate the economic benefits with respect to jobs and GDP that would result from the Billy Bishop expansion?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question and for the very important work that she does as a member of Parliament representing a riding in Ontario.

We know that this motion is about the economy and jobs. We know that there are jobs to be created at Bombardier if it can sell the aircraft that it has produced. We know that there are jobs to be created at airports if they can expand and continue serving Canadians. This is a win-win scenario for Canada. It is a win for the aerospace industry and it is a win for the city of Toronto and the Toronto island airport.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thought the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs raised a valid point when he talked about the numerous reports related to the potential expansion. It seems to me that the Conservative Party has not done its homework. That is really apparent.

My question is to follow up on what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs asked. Can the member assure the House that she has actually worked with the different stakeholders surrounding the airport in question? If so, could she share with us some of their thoughts on the issue? In listening to her speech, it seems to me that the Conservatives might have been premature at the very least, and unfortunately it sounds as though they just have not done their homework on that project.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I will say what is premature. Premature is blocking the process that was already under way to determine whether this expansion was feasible. This is a local issue. The City of Toronto should be responsible to decide whether to allow the airport to expand, given these considerations.

The City of Toronto has made its concerns known about the possible expansion, and the project proponent will have to demonstrate that it can and will satisfy those concerns. However, that process was not allowed to be completed. Those studies were under way and we were waiting to hear the results of the studies. That is when the minister tweeted that this expansion would not be going forward.

He blocked the process. That is what I call premature.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to let the member off the hook.

The Lower Mainland of British Columbia lost 400 aerospace jobs. The member has been speaking about jobs, saying this is about the aerospace industry, jobs, and employment, yet my area, the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, saw a hemorrhaging of good aerospace jobs. Machinists were tossed aside because the Conservative government would not enforce what was already in law.

I would like to simply ask the member what she has to say to those hundreds of aerospace workers, those machinists, who lost their jobs because of the lack of action of the Conservative government. Will she apologize to those workers who lost their jobs because of the actions of Conservatives?

•(1035)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to let that member off the hook for making white noise and trying to make this motion about something that it is not. It is about a process and it is about the minister blocking a process that was under way. This is about economic growth for the city of Toronto, and for all of Canada, when we consider the impact it will have on Bombardier and the jobs at Bombardier.

That airport is responsible for 6,500 jobs, \$385 million in wages, and over \$2 billion in economic output. That is what today's motion is about, and I am not going to let the member off the hook.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak today on this motion, because I have been asked on many occasions to comment on it in question period. In fact, a couple of weeks ago when I was asked about it and while I was answering the question from my hon. colleague, I overheard the hon. member for Beauce say quite clearly that nobody wants to buy the C Series.

What I am suggesting today is that perhaps this motion from the opposition does not necessarily have a consensus in that party. I would be interested in knowing why the member for Beauce, who, after hearing my colleague quote me in saying that this is the finest airplane in its class in the world—and I agree with that comment—does not agree with that assessment and is not wholeheartedly supporting sales of the CS100. I would be interested in that answer.

[*Translation*]

Today I will speak to the opposition motion on Bombardier and Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

Canada is the second-largest country in the world. We depend on our strong transportation and communication networks to connect us to each other and to the rest of the world.

Business of Supply

I would like to begin by stating that the Government of Canada fully recognizes Bombardier's contribution to Canadian industry and the international market.

Our aerospace sector has given Canada a strong reputation internationally. Its contributions to aeronautics and satellite technology benefit our country as a whole as well as the international community.

The sector has been and will continue to be one of the strongest drivers of investment and international trade. It is also a key player in Canada's social, green, and economic infrastructure. It connects people to jobs and helps deliver essential goods and services.

[*English*]

Canada's air sector is a global leader, and Transport Canada is recognized around the world as a certifier and regulator. I would like to highlight that the recently tabled review of the Canada Transportation Act reported that "Canadian-certified aircraft, equipment, and skilled personnel are in high demand around the world."

Aerospace is an important element of Canada's manufacturing sector, and Bombardier is a strong player in the field. Last year the aerospace sector generated more than 180,000 jobs and added \$29 billion to our country's economy. It is a significant contributor to economic growth. Aerospace companies such as Bombardier export some 80% of the products that they make.

Consequently, the Government of Canada was pleased by Air Canada's announcement on February 17, 2016, of its intention to purchase Bombardier C Series aircraft. This is clearly good news for the Canadian aerospace industry. It will result in well-paying jobs for highly skilled workers in this sector. I am encouraged by the benefits that will result from this important transaction between these two iconic Canadian companies. The C Series aircraft is a major advancement in aviation, and I am sure that this addition to Air Canada's fleet will be a major benefit both to that company and to Canada's aerospace sector.

•(1040)

[*Translation*]

The Government of Canada has confidence in Bombardier and in its C Series aircraft, which are becoming more advanced. As I have said in the past, the C Series aircraft is the best in its class in the world.

Despite what the member for Beauce said last month, there is demand for the C Series aircraft. The first C Series plane will be delivered to Swiss International Air Lines in the spring. Once this Swiss C Series aircraft enters into commercial use, Bombardier will have the opportunity to show the world, especially potential buyers, what this aircraft is capable of and what it has to offer airlines.

Our government is confident that the C Series aircraft will prove to be the outstanding aircraft that early reports predict it will be.

Last December I took part in the certification of Bombardier's C Series aircraft, which was a historic occasion for the Canadian aerospace industry, and I am proud that Transport Canada was part of the process.

Type certification of any aircraft involves a careful examination of the design to verify that it complies with our airworthiness standards and environmental regulations. This design certification is required before the aircraft can enter into commercial use.

[*English*]

This initial approval is a significant step toward Bombardier obtaining full certification in Canada as well as in Europe, the United States, and abroad. It is a significant step toward delivering aircraft to customers worldwide. This approval also allows Bombardier to build investor and customer confidence.

I thank my colleague across the way for her motion and her interest in this file.

With reference to the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, it would be misleading to suggest that the only issue to be considered when examining the proposal to amend the tripartite agreement and allow the expansion of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport to permit the use of commercial jet aircraft and to extend the runway is whether or not Bombardier could sell more aircraft.

Our nation's economy relies on connecting to the world, and the greater Toronto area and southern Ontario as a whole are being well served by a network of airports working together to form an international gateway. This gateway helps Canada stay competitive and attracts air travellers and traffic from around the world.

Toronto Pearson is by far Canada's busiest airport, and I was there myself in December, celebrating the 40 millionth passenger for 2015. It has more international passengers than any North American airport after New York's John F. Kennedy International, and Billy Bishop airport helps to connect Toronto's business heart to other major centres in Canada and the United States.

In addition, many airports look to expand their business footprint. We can see specialty niches form, such as the courier activities at the Hamilton airport. Together, southern Ontario's airports provide economic stimulus to the region by offering services to general and commercial aviation, passengers, shippers, and businesses. These airports bring passengers from around the world, all contributing to the local and national economies.

All of this movement of people and goods attracts business and drives trade and foreign investment in our great country.

[*Translation*]

I would like to share with hon. members some important information from the Canada Transportation Act review that I had the pleasure of tabling in the House on February 25, 2016:

In 2012, air transportation directly employed 141,000 Canadians and contributed \$34.9 billion in GDP and more than \$7 billion in taxes to federal and provincial treasuries. In 2014, the industry served nearly 125 million passengers, up 45 percent over the decade since 2004, and transported \$116 billion in international cargo.

Business of Supply

The Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is a very good example of this thriving network. It is located just a few minutes away from downtown Toronto, on Toronto island, and ranks ninth in Canada in terms of traffic, welcoming more than 2.4 million business or leisure travellers every year. The Billy Bishop airport now offers services to 24 Canadian and American cities, with connections to more than 80 cities around the world. This airport is a major economic driver of Toronto's economy. It is also a base for air ambulance services with nearly 4,600 such flights in 2014, and is home to a sizable personal aviation community that includes a flight school.

• (1045)

[English]

Billy Bishop is also a historic airport. Members may not know that it was opened in 1939. When the Second World War began, it served as a training base for the Royal Norwegian Air Force, as part of what would earn Canada the title of “aerodrome of democracy” from U.S. president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This history was enhanced even more a few years ago when it was renamed in honour of legendary Canadian aviator and war hero, Billy Bishop.

The fact is that the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is already providing a valuable service without expansion. Last month, it was named one of the top airports in North America in the Airports Council International's airport service quality awards. It tied for third in the best airport North America region category, one of only two Canadian airports to make the list, along with Ottawa international airport.

Such accolades demonstrate that the investment that has been made in the airport, from developing its infrastructure to its working with stakeholders to provide better amenities and improved access to the airport, is providing passengers with an exceptional travel experience.

The government recognizes that the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is a major economic driver for the greater Toronto area and that it supports business and leisure travel.

On November 12, 2015, I announced that the Government of Canada would not reopen the tripartite agreement between this government, the city of Toronto, and PortsToronto that would allow Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport to pursue an expansion. The government stands by this decision and feels that the current tripartite agreement strikes the right balance between commercial interests and the interests of local communities, and the environmental and cultural challenges, including the evolution of the waterfront. Also, with other jet capable airports very close by, the government believed there was no compelling case to change the current approach.

The government is not alone in this position. Several citizens groups in the GTA have opposed any proposed expansion of Billy Bishop airport. Accordingly, they support our position against reopening the agreement.

[Translation]

As I mentioned earlier, this is about more than just the airport. It is about Torontonians wanting a greater say in the development of their waterfront, which will be significantly affected by the expansion of the airport.

When the proposal to amend the tripartite agreement between the federal government, the City of Toronto, and PortsToronto was examined, as indicated in the member's motion, a number of issues had to be considered, not just whether jets should be allowed or whether the runway should be expanded.

Every situation is unique and complex. The Government of Canada examines each situation carefully in order to provide Canadians with safe, secure, efficient and environmentally responsible air travel and cargo services.

The government continually assesses the air services policy framework to ensure that Canada's air transportation system can respond to this evolving environment and is properly equipped to facilitate future growth.

I would like to assure members that the decision was made in the best interests of Torontonians and Canadians. The Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport has been a model of effective management for many years. It is up to PortsToronto and the airlines that operate out of the airport to continue to make their business model work.

• (1050)

[English]

In April 2014, Toronto city council debated the issue and actively sought the views of the then-federal government. The city asked that the federal government of the day take a public position on proposed changes to the tripartite agreement that would permit the expansion of the airport and to allow jet aircraft, such as the Bombardier C Series to operate from the airport. That was three years ago. All of this could be seen on the city's website, as well as in media reports. It was very public.

From April 2013 to the fall of 2015, about two and a half years, there were multiple public meetings, conferences, and other events at which the proposed expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport was discussed. There were web forums, opportunities for public comment, and many other open venues where anybody could express their opinions and views on the issue.

The proponents and opponents of the proposed expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport were very active and very engaged. The possibilities, concerns, and opinions related to the proposal were discussed and debated, and the potential economic benefits of the proposal, those for the region and for the country were certainly well aired.

The member opposite should not suggest that the expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport will determine the success of Bombardier's C Series. It is simplistic and it ignores a much larger picture. Bombardier products have always, and will always, succeed based on their quality and competitiveness in global markets. One cannot imply that the success of Bombardier only depends on the expansion of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

I would like to reiterate that the Government of Canada feels that the current tripartite agreement strikes the right balance between commercial interests and the interests of local communities, which are important, as well as between the environmental and cultural challenges, including the evolution of the waterfront. The Government of Canada made the right decision when it refused to authorize the expansion of the airport in November 2015, and it stands by that decision, as it has mentioned a number of times.

The government will therefore not support this motion. Canada's airline sector is robust, competitive, safe, secure and efficient. Our government will continue to maintain Canada's reputation as a global leader and strengthen the sector's competitiveness.

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the clarity he has provided in some of his position today.

He has mentioned that he has been asked questions a number of times in the House, questions which he has refused to answer. I would point out that five hours before his tweet, the minister said in an interview that this was a complex issue and he was studying it. Yet he tweeted that he would block this decision.

Perhaps we could find more clarity in his answer before the Senate on February 17 when he was asked why he would cut Porter and Toronto off at the knees like this. His response was:

The answer is simple. We had made an undertaking to the people of Toronto during the election that if we were elected we would not open the tripartite agreement, and we kept that promise.

Could the minister expand on that?

• (1055)

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Speaker, why we took that position is exactly the reason we took that position.

I expanded in my presentation to point out that this decision was based on achieving a proper balance between commercial interests and the interests of the community. That counts for something, and that is fundamentally what the opposition fails to understand in this debate about Billy Bishop airport.

The concerns of the community are important. We have achieved the right balance with Billy Bishop airport. It is a thriving airport. It continues to provide excellent service, 2.4 million passengers per year. Bombardier is a first-class aerospace company. I am sure Bombardier will not rise or fall on the decision related to Billy Bishop airport.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the hon. minister. It is encouraging that he has said, at least in this circumstance, that he will stand by a legally binding tripartite agreement, unlike the arrangements undermining the agreement with Aveos.

I am appreciative that the minister has mentioned the waterfront because we are talking about two tripartite agreements: a tripartite agreement with the Billy Bishop airport and a tripartite agreement on the waterfront.

A number of noted architects, a former mayor of Toronto, and chief planners have reiterated the importance of the Toronto waterfront for parks and trails, linked neighbourhoods, and places to live and work. There has been a lot of comment about the economic advantages of preserving and developing the waterfront. As I understand it, by and large, it is not so much the residents of Toronto island, who historically have opposed some development. It is the people living on and recreating on the waterfront who have been opposing the expansion.

Could the minister speak to whether he thinks it is important to perhaps revisit the mandate for the port authority that was established, and we have a potential conflict of interest here, that gains most of the revenue from the airport?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Speaker, I echo what the member has said. There is a significant number of people living on the waterfront in Toronto. They care deeply about the development of their waterfront. They want that waterfront to a good place to live. That is why they have exerted pressure. By the way, the development of that waterfront would lead to significant economic opportunities.

The reality is that there is an airport, the Billy Bishop airport, that comes under PortsToronto. It is an airport that provides good service at the moment to 2.4 million passengers. It is well viewed by the public. It came in third, as I mentioned, in a contest. However, it provides a service that is just perfect at the moment in terms of balancing between commercial interests and the important priorities of the community that lives along the waterfront and wants to see that waterfront developed, not because of commercial pressures but because of the way the people want to see it developed.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the city of Toronto has debated this issue for three years and the city council of Toronto has had five opportunities in those three years to make a formal request to open the tripartite agreement: in April 2013, July 2013, November 2013, February 2014, and March 2014. At no time in any of those public meetings, at which I was a voting member at some, did we ever request the opening of the tripartite agreement.

As well, the port authority, or PortsToronto as it is now known, has been meeting for three years and at no time in its three years of existence, while this debate has gone on, has it ever asked for the tripartite agreement to be opened to consider jets. In fact, the only person who wants this is the owner of a single operator at the island airport. That individual, in a letter to Rob Ford, then mayor of Toronto, pursued this with great vim and vigour.

Why have the signatories to the tripartite agreement, the Government of Canada, the port authority, and the city of Toronto, never formally requested that this issue be opened?

Business of Supply

•(1100)

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Speaker, it is a very good question, and my colleague is intimately familiar with this file. It underlines the fact that there is a lot of misconceptions and that this issue is being driven by factors that are not really true factors at play in this debate. It is important. I would go back to my colleague who raised this motion today, and ask her whether she has read any of the 25 reports that were alluded to and whether she really understands the complete picture in this file, instead of playing politics on the basis of Bombardier.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member has said that we are currently well served in the air market. After travelling globally and within Canada for over 30 years, I beg to differ on that. We have a near monopoly with Air Canada and we could use a bit of growth.

The member said nice things about Bombardier and he said nice things about the revenue generated by the Billy Bishop airport. However, in his whole speech, I did not hear a single reason why he would short-circuit a process to consult broadly and work to address concerns in order to have even more nice things to say about Toronto.

Could the member say why he shut down the process while it was still in consultation and had not come to final report?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Speaker, at the risk of repeating myself, we were clear on the fact that we made a decision that was based on balancing commercial interests with the interests of the community, and I am talking specifically of the people who share that waterfront.

On the larger question about whether Air Canada has a virtual monopoly, that is a bigger debate. I would be interested in hearing from the member for Sarnia—Lambton why she made the comment about Air Canada not necessarily serving Canadian interests, and I assume other airlines as well, and why she thinks it is a near monopoly situation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's speech, as always.

However, we lost aerospace jobs under the Conservatives, and now that the Liberals are in power, they are saying that they will not enforce the law to maintain aerospace jobs in the Montreal region. That is what I do not understand about the agreement that my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona just mentioned. The agreement with Aveos is more than an agreement. It is a law that requires Air Canada to keep aerospace maintenance jobs in the Montreal region.

Why does the Liberal government refuse to enforce a law that would keep these jobs in Montreal?

Hon. Marc Garneau: Mr. Speaker, I admire the way that my NDP colleague tried to completely change the topic of today's debate. This is a completely different topic. It had nothing to do with the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport or the tripartite agreement.

However, in the coming days, or perhaps even today, during question period, we will no doubt have an opportunity to answer his

question. In the meantime, I would rather stick to the topic of today's debate.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that I will be sharing my time with my wonderful colleague, the member of Parliament for Windsor West.

I am rising today to speak to the motion tabled by the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek. While I very much enjoy working with that member in committee and in my previous committee, frankly, I do not share her enthusiasm for her motion.

Certainly, my colleagues and I acknowledge the contribution by Bombardier to the Canadian economy, not just for aerospace but also for the manufacture of rail and light rail. That is the motor transport of the future—something that the official opposition fails to recognize.

I do wish to recognize in this place that much to my pleasure and to many of the cities in this country, and certainly the big city mayors, the government of the day, in its wisdom, is deciding to put a good portion, at least one-third of its infrastructure dollars, into transit. I hope that some of those dollars may well go to one of the shiny examples of corporate success in Canada, Bombardier, which seeks many contracts in the areas of light rail and rail.

I also note that the Emerson report, the mandatory report that was prepared, is recommending that due consideration be paid by the Government of Canada to investing in the expansion of commuter rail so that we can reduce greenhouse gases and pollution from car traffic.

So, yes, indeed, my colleagues and I fully appreciate the contribution of Bombardier to our country, but it is not simply through the aerospace aspect of its efforts.

What is also troubling about this motion is the faulty logic of trying to tie the economics of a specific Canadian corporation—in other words, Bombardier—with what is essentially a land-use decision, which should be left with the locale, the City of Toronto.

My understanding, and as has been mentioned in the House already, is that Torontonians have clearly said that they want to have their waterfront protected. When they were in power, the official opposition also had trouble allowing those who were impacted by government decisions to have a voice in what would happen to their lands and communities.

As mentioned by other speakers, the agreement on this airport goes back to 1937. It was a tripartite agreement between Toronto, what is now known as the Toronto port authority, and with the Minister of Transport, on behalf of the Government of Canada. The federal government put up money, and Toronto made the lands available, and successive amendments to the agreement have been made.

The one thing that has not changed in this agreement is a number of conditions that were imposed. If I may, would like to reiterate those conditions.

Business of Supply

Clause 11 prohibits nuisances to adjacent occupiers of land, and it is significant that we hear about a parallel tripartite agreement for the Toronto waterfront. I would like to share with members the words, thoughts, and concerns expressed by Paul Bedford, once the chief planner of Toronto; David Crombie, former mayor of Toronto; and Jack Diamond, a renowned and internationally recognized architect. They published the following:

From south Etobicoke to the Scarborough Bluffs and beyond, what is emerging all along the Toronto waterfront is one of the most remarkable transformations of its kind anywhere providing new and improved places for the public to enjoy: parks and trails, a linked series of neighbourhoods, places to live and work, and places of recreation, repose and natural beauty. With literally billions of dollars in private... investment in progress it is one of the largest such revitalization efforts in the world....

Clearly, those on the waterfront, whether they are sailing, walking along the beaches, buying condominiums, or going to the many restaurants, have spoken very loudly against the introduction of jets. They do not want to open this tripartite agreement to remove that clause as there is strong opposition to that.

Second, clause 14 prohibits any new runways or airport extensions and prohibits the construction of vehicular bridges or tunnels.

There has been flexibility in improving access to the Billy Bishop airport. As we speak, they are completing a pedestrian tunnel that would make it easier for people to go from the airport to Toronto.

To their credit, to this point in time, all federal governments have stood by this tripartite agreement prohibiting any extensions of the airport. Delivering on what the opposition members are calling for would require the reopening of the tripartite agreement that has essentially been with us since 1937.

• (1105)

I note that in 1985, there was an amendment made to allow for Bombardier Q-400s, then known as the de Havilland Dash 8, and so there has been flexibility to accommodate and enable the sale of Bombardier airplanes. In 2003, it allowed, as I mentioned, the underwater pedestrian tunnel.

The motion to allow the Bombardier CS100 jets would require all three parties to agree. That would require an amendment to the tripartite agreement. It would clearly offend the conditions that the people of Toronto want maintained. Porter has requested a 336-metre extension of the runway. That is clearly prohibited under the tripartite agreement. Transport Canada, as I understand, has not cleared the project for aeronautical safety reasons, or for the zoning of jets.

If I could reiterate, a second fundamental problem with this proposal is that Transport Canada, the federal agency responsible for airport operations and safety, has yet to rule on technical aeronautical safety and zoning issues. My understanding is that the minister has been very clear in the House today: they will not make accommodations for the expansion of this airport, and many potential impacts have been identified, detrimental environmental and safety impacts, in the "environmental assessment".

I would like to move on and talk about this so-called environmental assessment. The official opposition did great damage

to the previous federal environmental assessment process and undermined particularly the right of communities to have a say.

One of the greatest criticisms of the process on deciding whether or not to allow the extension of Billy Bishop airport has been this facade of a proper environmental assessment, which as I understand has been led by the port authority. As I mentioned, I am informed that the vast majority of the revenue for the port authority come from the airport. Therefore, is this a proper authority to be leading and making determinations on whether or not this development would or would not have environmental impacts? People in the Toronto area are saying no.

There has also been no comprehensive plan to assess southern Ontario transportation needs or how Toronto island may contribute. I understand that there has been some assessment of the need for an expansion of the Pearson airport, and of the potential strategic use of the Hamilton airport, and possibly Waterloo airport. Toronto island airport or Billy Bishop has never been mentioned in any of the reviews by Transport Canada on addressing southern Ontario's needs for air traffic.

The Island airport is already physically constrained. A litany of issues has been raised about why this airport could not be expanded despite the fact the official opposition is proposing this. Public parking is undersized in capacity. The terminal building is too small. There is no opportunity to put in de-icing facilities. The airport has likely already reached its capacity limit. Moreover, drop-off and pick-up space is undersized and the taxi queuing space is already at capacity.

Surely we cannot address or propose in this place to give support to some of our leading corporations such as Bombardier by slipping in a decision where we are undermining a local decision on land use. As has been suggested by one of the councillors in Toronto, Mike Layton, if we are to support Bombardier, why not have the federal government give dollars to build more streetcars and trolleys, including support for the Union Pearson Express that will deliver air passengers from Toronto Pearson airport to the city of Toronto? That is the method of transport for the future.

I would encourage the Liberal government to give consideration to providing more dollars, and am pleased that one-third of infrastructure dollars will be going to transit.

Without further ado, I stand in opposition to the motion.

• (1110)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raised the issue of land-use planning, which is at the heart of this controversy. It is as if the industrial strategy to help the auto industry ought to be to build more parking lots. It is a ridiculous proposition to reconfigure an entire city and an entire neighbourhood for one business at the expense of all the others.

Business of Supply

Is the member opposite aware that within 500 metres of the end of the runway, the most significant impact is being felt by a low-income community, largely Toronto Community Housing co-ops, but in particular a group of housing units, not people in condos sipping lattes as the member opposite suggested yesterday, but senior citizens and people with severe disabilities?

This airport has now been identified in a public health report on the record at city council as the single largest source of air pollution in the entire GTA. The report notes that the asthma rates are starting to spike among school children who live in this neighbourhood, and that the most vulnerable population is bearing the brunt of the existing operation, let alone a doubling of the size of this airport.

Is the member aware of the extraordinary health impact this will have on a low-income and vulnerable community?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that there are a good number of concerns felt both by the residents of Toronto island and by the residents across the channel, including those in the newly developing areas.

I am glad the member has raised this issue, and it is one that I actually raised in committee yesterday. The issue is that 25% of the emissions of greenhouse gases worldwide are caused by transport, including the aeronautics industry.

It is important that the federal government step up to the plate and start looking into this matter. There have been no commitments on taking action to reduce the emissions from the transport sector, and I welcome the member raising that matter in the House.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was very happy to hear the speech by my hon. colleague, who does an excellent job as transport critic. She has also worked very hard on the environment file. Just yesterday we had an all-party committee meeting on climate change.

She talked about the importance of having a long-term plan to combat climate change, which could help Bombardier. It is very important to the future of our society in general, and even to the future of our existence on this planet.

Could my colleague tell us a bit about what the Liberals could do not just to combat climate change, but also to support our manufacturing companies, such as Bombardier or rail companies?

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is very dedicated to improving environmental protection and action on climate impacts in this country. It is very much appreciated.

It is important that the government, as I understand, is opposing this project for a number of reasons, including the potential environmental impact, but we would like to see a much bigger strategy. We are still waiting for action on climate change. One of the areas where the federal government clearly has an area of responsibility is in transport. That is certainly the case in the aeronautics industry and it is certainly the case in the rail industry. As I mentioned, reducing greenhouse gases from the transportation industry is one area that was not addressed at Paris.

However, it is also very important that we recognize the half billion dollars already invested by the Government of Ontario to take the metro lines from Toronto to the Pearson airport. That would take cars off the road, and it would also mean that we would be moving more passengers expeditiously.

I am wondering if the government could come forward with a strategy to address the need to reduce air emissions and greenhouse gases from the transport sector in Canada.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today on this opposition day motion and to follow my colleague, who has not only been in politics but who did extensive work on the environment prior to that and has been a leader in that field for many years. I appreciate her intervention.

When I look at the motion being proposed, I see in it a circumvention of a real strategy for the airline industry. It is using this as a one-off in terms of the Toronto island airport to try to introduce a new strategy. What we have been lacking in this country, whether it be in the automotive, shipbuilding, or aerospace sectors, is a national strategy to build these industries that actually result in jobs for Canadians and applying that application in a measurable fashion.

I find section (b) rather interesting. It says, “recognize that there is a market solution already available that could support Bombardier”. That is based upon tearing up a tripartite agreement that took place to actually create this opportunity to begin with, whereby there was compromise on all sides to create the current conditions, yet the suggestion is that this is a market solution.

It definitely is not finite. There is a limit to the purchasing that is going to be considered, even if all carriers took up the challenge and actually did this. In addition, with this motion in place, I have fears that it would make travel, whether for business or leisure purposes, much more complicated and most likely less efficient, given the limited space not only for individuals leaving Toronto but individuals coming from the United States and other jurisdictions across Ontario and Canada, depending upon where their flights originate.

As well, it is an area where there are sensitive issues related to weather conditions that could affect other airports, depending upon where the planes can land and the types of aircraft that use the island facility. It goes against what has been agreed to, and there seems to be at least a general truce in the sense of how things will play out. I believe the agreement goes to 2033. There are people who believe that the current agreement has gone further than they wanted, and it is affecting them, as we know from evidence with regard to Toronto City Council and others.

Business of Supply

I am a little partial to the area. I lived at Dufferin and Queen back in the early 1990s when I worked for Community Living Mississauga. I would travel out of Toronto, back when people could actually do that and there would not be traffic—it is not like that any more—and then go back to Toronto when traffic was leaving. I was often in that area on the weekends and I know how important it is for the entire Toronto region to have a waterfront as a destination that is accessible and successful and that integrates the population, whether they are going to Toronto island to use the lakes for fishing, boating, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, or other things that are available in the area, such as the trail system that people use to exercise.

I say that because I am a former city councillor in Windsor, and it took years and years, probably seven decades in total, for the six kilometres of waterfront to become a green trail that is very important for a number of different initiatives for the environment. There is a new fish habitat. Windsor helped Detroit move its waterfront along, which is now as extensive as Windsor's and is becoming a cross-border tourist initiative on both sides. The work on the Windsor side actually, ironically, came from Chicago. The late Mr. Battagello, a city councillor at that time, was key and instrumental in that. Later a number of different people were involved, including Mayor Mike Hurst, to create the waterfront that we now call the crown jewel. People outside of that area enjoy going there.

I feel much reservation and will not support this motion, because as a former city councillor I believe that we have drifted away from supporting our municipalities with waterfronts. If we look at the urban planning that has been done in many different areas, adding roadways and infrastructure has created barriers to pedestrians, cycling, public parks, and other activities.

● (1120)

Isolating parts of that element would create a lower standard of living because it would create problems in enjoying some of the natural features that we often take for granted. The Great Lakes are one of the most important bodies of fresh water in the world and are arguably part of our most treasured resources. We should be reducing the impact on them rather than enhancing the impact, as would happen with this activity, which would further isolate people from their natural surroundings. Toronto has worked on a number of different initiatives to integrate the waterfront, but it has a long way to go.

I was here when the government decided to expand the mandate of Canada's ports, especially the smaller ones, and give them more freedom from municipalities with respect to planning. That has been at the expense of municipalities, the general public, and so forth, because developers will no longer have to go through some of the planning processes that they often had to carry out in the past.

I see this as a stretch. It is almost like a Hail Mary pass thrown at the end of a football game. Every once in a while it will work, but not often. It is not a play that a team expects to make. I see this Bombardier production as that type of attempt. It is a desperate measure to think that we could have a strategy for aerospace based upon increasing the landing strip of one runway, whether in Toronto or somewhere else. That is not a strategy in the true sense. Not

having goals or standards will not lead to more Canadians jobs. We need to set goals and we need to achieve those goals. We need to have measurable standards that will allow us to see the progress of the public money that goes into our projects.

The federal government shows a great deal of disrespect toward provinces and municipalities by tearing up agreements, not just in this situation but with other agreements as well. What is next? Can government, on a whim, actually tear up agreements that are already in place? That sets a bad precedent for urban planning.

This agreement goes until 2033. A lot of money has been spent on the planning process, and to take that process away from the public at this time would do a disservice to taxpayers. Some provincial and federal contributions have gone into the process, but with a different vision for that area. Adding elements such as traffic management, more pedestrians, and travellers coming and going complicates things. The location of facilities, whether for de-icing or for other weather challenges, is highly problematic for this site and could backfire and become less efficient. There is a higher potential for doing this than there is for getting the jets from the company. That is not an aerospace strategy by any means.

It is important to note that there needs to be respect for the municipal planning that takes place. I cannot understand why that is not included in the motion. The motion has several elements to it, and one would think that this aspect would have been identified at the very least. The motion talks about other important factors, but there is nothing that recognizes Toronto City Council and asks for its input.

The motion does talk about things that we understand, such as the movement of passengers for both pleasure and business, and that is important. We agree with that. It has been noted as both business and leisure travel, but I do not understand why comment or support from those at the municipal level who are either for or against this measure has not been included.

New Democrats really believe in the planning process. Many people on this side of the House are used to working with municipal governments on a regular basis. Reaching an agreement allows stakeholders to build upon a model that they have set in place. If we are going to deviate from that process, what are we going to do to ameliorate those problems or at least bring them to the table? We have not seen this evolve under this process.

I will be standing against the motion with regard to the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport.

● (1125)

Canada's auto manufacturing and assembly industry has gone from number two in the world to number ten in the world. I have seen the industry left behind in trade agreements, as most recently with the TPP. For example, Canada will have a five-year phase-out; the United States gets 25 years. Malaysia gets 10 years. We were out-negotiated by Malaysia.

I will conclude by saying that proper planning does not take place just in the halls of the House of Commons; it takes place with our citizens on the street.

Business of Supply

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is clear and what we need to go back to is the fact that the Toronto City Council voted unanimously to adopt a city staff report that would allow the three signatories of the tripartite agreement to pursue the possibility of opening it up. They undertook a full environmental assessment, the development of an airport master plan, and a runway design plan. Even before these studies were completed, before any recommendations could be made, the minister decided to block the expansion.

For someone who supports public consultation and understands the importance of evidence-based decision-making, I am wondering how the member squares the minister's action with supporting public consultation and evidence-based decision-making.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for the minister, but I can speak for myself. These planning processes actually just study something. That is at one level. However, there needs to be further public engagement along the entire process.

We have done this with the international border crossing in Windsor. There have been a series of environmental, structural, and community-based groups, on both sides of the river, that have been actively working together as units of advice and input as the process has evolved. It has gone from basically not having a location to now having a location and a roadway built. They have been involved from the very beginning, from the concept to working towards a solution. I would see that as a more appropriate model than that of reacting as part of the process.

• (1130)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, putting aside the fact that the conditions for an environmental assessment, to start, were never met, and putting aside that the City of Toronto protested strenuously at the beginning of the environmental assessment and that the terms of reference were never completed and never consulted on, the issue that the member opposite raised was the need to respect municipal planning.

My question is about the federal planning around this issue. When a report was tabled on November 2013 at the City of Toronto, it showed that the land-side cost to configure the airport, to even begin to think about expanding it at its current configuration, would cost close to \$600 million. The proponent of this project, the airline, not the port authority and not the City of Toronto, said that the city could use the money from the new building Canada fund, \$600 million from the federal government, to pay for all the changes that were required on the city's property.

The federal government at the time was given the choice. It could fund the port authority and the airline's request, but it chose a different course. It actually funded transit in Scarborough with that money instead of acquiescing to Mr. Deluce's request. In light of the fact that the previous federal government did not support this project when given the opportunity, does the member think that the current opposition should support its previous position on the file?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, if it wants to be consistent, the quick answer is yes.

However, we need to look at the \$600 million. It sounds like a lot of money, and it is, but when we look at the infrastructure deficit and the challenges that Toronto has, like many municipalities, it puts the stress on getting some projects prioritized and done.

I can speak from experience, from having safe water supplies into homes by getting rid of cast-iron piping and lead that might be in the soldering process. Some sewers, as in my municipality, were built in 1910. There are a lot of different priorities considered with regard to planning. Therefore, \$600 million in one project, to basically tear up an agreement that is already in place, is a tall order for any council, let alone one that has the natural challenges of redoing infrastructure.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House and support the motion that was put forward by my colleague from Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek. I will be sharing my time today with the member for Chilliwack—Hope.

Everyone recognizes that the Billy Bishop city airport is a major economic driver for the greater Toronto area. There are significant opportunities that can still be realized, and we should not lose this opportunity.

There are three pieces to this equation. The first piece is with respect to economics. The Billy Bishop airport's economic contribution to the Toronto area is significant. The airport is currently responsible for 6,500 jobs, over \$2 billion in economic output, and it also contributes \$71 million each year to taxes. If we look at how many jobs could be created and how much additional revenue could be realized for both the Canadian companies and Canadian taxpayers, that in itself is something to be looked at.

The Billy Bishop airport expansion opportunities would allow entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and provide a greater service to the customers who use the airport. It would also allow airline companies, such as Air Canada, Porter, or WestJet, to purchase additional aircraft and grow their businesses and their networks. This will support both Canadian manufacturers like Bombardier, and Canadian airline companies like the ones I just mentioned.

The second piece is around aircraft design and supply. The supplier of the aircraft would be the Bombardier C Series. The C Series aircraft is the quietest one in its class. It is exactly the kind of aircraft that a city centre airport like Billy Bishop needs.

If the motion passes—and I have heard that the motion will not pass—and the airport is allowed to expand, the C Series aircraft would be added to one of the airline fleets. It would not only add significant economic benefits to the region, but would also assist in solving a significant problem that Bombardier faces with the recent announcement of the loss of 7,000 jobs.

Business of Supply

Bombardier is currently looking for a bailout of approximately \$1 billion from the federal government. I am curious to hear if the government will support that. Also, the company presently has approximately \$9 billion of debt. Quebec has purchased a 49% interest share in the C Series program, and both Quebec and Ontario have asked the federal government to step in financially. They have asked the Liberal government to support Bombardier, to support the struggling aerospace sector, and to support the workers who will lose their jobs. The expansion of the Billy Bishop airport and the procurement of aircraft will go a long way in assisting Bombardier to deal with its current financial issues. This is not just a one-off, but part of a larger picture to assist Bombardier.

The third and last component that I want to speak to is with respect to process. An open and transparent process is what is required here. At a cost of \$4 million, the City of Toronto had ordered a full environmental assessment, an airport master plan, and a runway design plan. All three were 90% complete. They were under way, and the plans were ready for release.

The City of Toronto also had a list of 25 conditions to be addressed prior to any approval being given. These issues ranged from noise restrictions and mitigation, landing and take-off curfews, proper environmental assessments, and wildlife management plans. These are all important issues that need to be addressed for the community. However, the Liberal government has arbitrarily made a decision to restrict the expansion of the airport. This is most definitely a lost opportunity for economic development, job creation, and market support, for Bombardier and for the aerospace sector.

• (1135)

Bombardier has designed aircraft for all types of applications and is well suited for urban airports. The proposed expansion should go through an open and transparent process and should engage all stakeholders. This initiative should move forward and be given the time that it deserves.

I want to remind my fellow members that the Liberal government often talks about being a partner for municipalities and fighting for Canadian jobs. Well, here is a great opportunity for the government to step in to help a struggling Canadian company, and to listen, hear, and understand the needs of a municipality.

Both the Toronto City Council and the Toronto ports authority have a process in place for the potential approval of the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport, but the Liberal government has stepped in and decided to block the expansion and the process.

It is our duty as members of Parliament to support Canadians, job creation, and to try to meet the needs of communities. Therefore, I call upon my fellow members to support this motion, to support Bombardier, and to support the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport. I ask the government to reverse its decision and allow the process to continue.

• (1140)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, putting aside the fact that the City of Toronto never ordered an environmental assessment, nor would it ever pay for one; putting aside the fact that the port authority said it would not and could not

meet most of the 25 stipulations put in place to even consider this issue; putting aside the fact that the City of Toronto had five opportunities to approve this application, including a deadline that it had to be done by July 3, 2013 or else the deal was off; putting aside all of those factual realities not present in the speech that was just made, the member opposite raised the issue of Air Canada and WestJet having open access to this airport.

Have you ever met with Air Canada and WestJet to discuss the fact that they have completely limited access, that there is a near monopoly that has been granted to the operator of Porter Airlines? Have you discussed that WestJet and Air Canada have grave reservations about how Conservative appointees to the port authority configured this airport in a near monopoly setting, which is so restrictive that they are not allowed to compete with Porter Airlines with flights? In fact, the U.S. airline industry has refused to fly in and out of this airport because of the restrictive conditions put in place to benefit one airline over all others.

Are you aware of the fact that WestJet and Air Canada are silent on this issue and want nothing to do with this process?

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind hon. members to direct their questions through the chair.

The hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, the member raises an important question, because the other airlines have requested to have access as well.

I think it is important to look at an open process with open access, to ensure that the economic opportunities are realized. Through an open and transparent process, that would be a discussion that should be fully undertaken.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleague about her reference to economic opportunities. Can she speak to the importance of the discussion around jobs, particularly in the aerospace industry, which we are talking about today? While I have heard from others that this is not on topic, I do not know what is more fundamental than the need to protect good jobs in our communities and to make sure that government policy is protecting those jobs.

Unfortunately, under the previous Conservative government, we saw thousands of manufacturing jobs, including in aerospace, bleed away across our country. Now we have a new Liberal government that is failing to do anything when it comes to living up to its obligations to Aveos workers, including in my home province of Manitoba, who have been negatively affected.

I think it is critical that we make a connection to the need for federal government leadership to support manufacturing jobs in our communities, in all sectors, and realize that government needs to be supportive of these industries as well.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, I would agree with my colleague that it is important to work with different sectors and make sure that we are growing those sectors.

Business of Supply

As a former mayor, I know it is very important to come together, especially in the aerospace industry, with the Cascadia Corridor, the expansion of aerospace supply chain jobs at the Abbotsford airport, in Richmond, in making sure that we work with all levels of government.

I think it is absolutely key and crucial, without a doubt, that we support our partners, ensure that there are good jobs, and grow the sector.

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to set the record right, the Vancouver airport is not in New Westminster—Burnaby. It is in the city of Richmond. We see a lot of economic activity because of the former Conservative government's development in that airport.

Has my colleague learned or experienced growth in her communities because of the success of the Vancouver airport?

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, it is very important to really understand the growth of the sector, and I know that through the work south of the Fraser has done in my area with the Cascadia corridor that runs all the way through British Columbia and the United States. We have done significant work around growing that sector. The Vancouver airport has had significant expansions. Also, BCIT is there, the start-ups, the technology, all of that has expanded significantly.

For both my colleagues who have just asked questions, it is important that we support these industries and support the sectors in every way we can to ensure job growth.

• (1145)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it once again is great to stand on behalf of the people of Chilliwack—Hope to speak to an important issue about the Canadian economy and aerospace industry.

I want to take a brief moment today, on International Women's Day, to salute the strong Conservative women who have been leading the debate for our side today: the members for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek and South Surrey—White Rock. As well, I will take a brief moment to salute my wife, my mom, and my three sisters, who have played such an important role in my life as well.

I want to talk about a few things during my time here. I want to talk about the importance of the aerospace industry to Canada.

We know that this is often thought of as the major employers, whether it be Bombardier, WestJet, Air Canada, or Porter employing people in this sector. However, over my time as a member of Parliament, I have come to learn of the number of jobs and the economic impact the aerospace industry has right across the country. I think of companies like Avcorp in B.C. and Cascade Aerospace. They are major aerospace players in British Columbia that service not only domestically, for instance the military, but they also have contracts all around the world, providing services and high-paying jobs for workers in our communities. We should not lose sight of that when we talk about the industry. This affects not just Montreal and Toronto, but cities like Chilliwack and Abbotsford in my region.

I also want to talk about the importance of secondary airports. It was a little disconcerting to hear the Minister of Transport ask why we needed to expand Billy Bishop airport, that people could just go

to Pearson, that Pearson was a good airport. I think of the effect that would have on the region I represent.

We have a great international airport near Chilliwack, the Abbotsford International Airport. This airport hosts the world-famous Abbotsford Airshow. Approximately 500,000 passengers per year use that secondary airport on many daily WestJet flights and some seasonal Air Canada service as well. It is an important regional hub of economic activity. When we promote those secondary airports, we promote the economy, better options for travellers, and more opportunity for the airlines that service those smaller and often more responsive secondary airports.

I know the Abbotsford International Airport takes pride in providing low landing fees, cheaper parking, and better customer service to attract airline investment and customers. We want to encourage not just the major airports in the country, not just Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto, but also the secondary airports that people travel into or could make a choice to travel into if there were more options available. That is important.

I want to talk about the importance of our domestic airline industry, whether it is WestJet, Air Canada, or Porter.

WestJet just celebrated its 20th anniversary. In my region, it is the primary carrier that people rely on to get to work and to see their families. It started small and expanded into a great airline employing tens of thousands of Canadians.

Looking at what those airlines have done for consumers, we see that when there is more choice, the prices go down. We have seen them buying different types of planes. They have already been buying the Q400. They have expanded service. It is good for the whole aerospace industry when there is an expansion of service and greater opportunities.

I am from Chilliwack, B.C. and I am talking about a downtown Toronto island airport, the Billy Bishop airport, as the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek said, because this affects all Canadians and it sends a message.

• (1150)

What message does this send when the Liberal government has been seen already, in its short time in office, to be manipulating the process to get the results it wants.

We heard grandiose promises that there would be evidence-based decision-making, that there would be broad consultation, that we should just sit back and watch the consultations take place. However, the Liberals have short-circuited that approach when it comes to the Billy Bishop airport.

Business of Supply

Instead of allowing the environmental assessment that was under way to take place, which was 90% completed, the minister unilaterally decided he would cut that off. If he truly believes in the process, if he truly believes in evidence-based decision-making, why not allow that process to be completed? Why not allow the reports to be made public? Why not then respond as the federal government to the work that was done by PortsToronto and the city? Instead, to short-circuit that process, to take the political decision to circumvent it is a mistake.

We heard that in the debate on energy east. When government members think the result will go against their preconceived notion, they change the consultation process. In this case, they are cutting it short and layering on more red tape.

Yesterday in British Columbia, we saw reports of a major LNG proponent. There is some question as to whether this is the company's position, but there are real concerns in the industry that when we do not have an open and transparent consultation process in which the public can have faith, we lose investor confidence. We lose the confidence of Canadians when it is seen that the process is being manipulated. We have seen it on pipeline reviews where there has been an added layering on of the consultation process, which is in stark contrast to cutting it short in this case.

There is a problem with the process, and it gives us some concern as members of the official opposition and the Canadians we represent. What does this mean for the future consultations the government has promised to undertake with Canadians?

We talked about things like democratic reform. Broad consultations are promised. What we have seen with consultations is that when the Liberals are not sure of the outcome or they want to ensure an outcome that has been predetermined, they will cut that process short. That is not how we should be doing consultations. It does not bring confidence to Canadians that it actually will be an evidence-based decision-making process.

We are seeing a difference between the official opposition and the government when it comes to problems that present themselves in our economy. In our opposition day motions, whether it is on energy east or Toronto island airport, we are promoting market-based solutions. We are asking why we are not looking at the private sector to help Bombardier or to help get our resources to market in the case of energy east pipeline.

The government instead looks to intervene, either to shut down opportunity or to delay processes that have been in place. That does not bring confidence to Canadians and it certainly does not present the opportunity for the market to do the job it can do. Why not allow the Billy Bishop process to go forward, and then, if the government at that point wants to intervene, at least all of the information is on the table? Instead the Liberals have cut that short.

The minister has wavered around his letter of intent from Air Canada. When he was asked about why he cut this process short, he told us not to look at the jobs that had been lost at Bombardier. Rather we should look at the letter of intent he had. He has the same sort of letter of intent from a different airline, but he does not want to talk about it. That is what we are talking about today.

Therefore, why not allow the process to go forward? The motion is about that. It is about letting the free market play its role in boosting private companies like Bombardier. Both of those things should go ahead, and that is why I will support the motion.

• (1155)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on my colleague's take on secondary airports. He mentioned the Abbotsford international airport, which I am quite familiar with. I would suggest to him that Billy Bishop airport in the heart of Toronto is in a very different situation than Abbotsford out in the cornfields of the Fraser Valley. Abbotsford airport covers the outer suburbs of Vancouver. Billy Bishop is servicing downtown Toronto. He will not find low-cost parking there, for instance, I am sure.

While I am sure that the Abbotsford airport does contribute greatly to the economic diversity of the Fraser Valley, I would like the member to comment on how this might affect the economic situation in Toronto.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, obviously I was not comparing the two airports in that way. I was simply saying that when there is a major international airport, which we have at Pearson near Billy Bishop and from which it would be drawing its customer base, there is still opportunity and there should still be encouragement given to those secondary airports like Abbotsford in relation to Vancouver to grow and thrive.

Any time we are expanding an airport, any time we are expanding service at an airport, providing opportunities for economic activity, it creates more jobs, and more revenue for governments. That is what this should be about. This is about a process. This is about continuing a process that was under way that was short-circuited at the eleventh hour by the Minister of Transport for political reasons.

I am sure we will hear again from the member who has this area in his backyard. It obviously pleased that member. It pleased members of the Liberal caucus, but they should have allowed this process to continue so that Canadians could be confident that the work was done and that a decision would be taken only after that work has been completed.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about a market-based solution. Is he aware that it will require about \$1.6 billion in federal funding to reconfigure the land mass to accommodate this project, if it is even conceivably possible?

Putting that aside, we have consulted in the city of Toronto for three years on this issue. There have been more than 25 reports put on the table at city council. City council has had five opportunities to approve this and not once has it ever done so. There was an election held in which a promise was made to protect the tripartite agreement. There was one party in that election that promised to open the tripartite agreement and expand the airport regardless of cost, and that was the party opposite. That party received zero seats in the election and less than 10% of the vote in the precinct surrounding this airport. There was no public support for the position advocated by that party.

Business of Supply

We talk about the need to support Bombardier. When the city of Toronto came forward, with the support of the Province of Ontario, to purchase Bombardier streetcars in Thunder Bay and to facilitate the expansion of the transit system in this city, the member, Mr. Baird at the time, told the city in rude and juvenile language that I cannot recite because it barred to do so in Parliament, to get lost, that there was no basis to support Bombardier and build a transit system in Toronto.

If economic development and the health of Bombardier are central to this argument, why did the party opposite refuse to support the city of Toronto's request to buy Bombardier streetcars for the city of Toronto?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, certainly the previous Conservative government was a strong partner of the city of Toronto in investing billions of dollars in public transit, GO Transit, in the waterfront itself, and in the Pan Am Games. We were there as a partner with the city of Toronto working with it on its priorities.

I have a letter that says it is the city's expectation that the studies being undertaken by PortsToronto will address the conditions adopted by city council, including the caps and phasing framework. There was a process under way. The Minister of Transport short-circuited it. That was a mistake and we hope that members will vote in favour of this motion so that the mistake can be rectified.

• (1200)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the party opposite for the opportunity to address the House on this issue, which defines some of the challenges facing the riding I represent.

The riding I represent is the Toronto waterfront and the inner harbour that stretches from the CNE grounds right across to the Don River, encompassing the Toronto island and the island airport, as well as the communities that are impacted by it.

One of the great things about this part of the city is the fact that there has been an extraordinary transformation over the last 25 years of the waterfront, led in large part by another tripartite agreement that was referenced earlier, the waterfront tripartite agreement signed by Prime Minister Chrétien, Premier Mike Harris, as well as the mayor of the day, Mel Lastman, which set in motion close to \$3.5 billion in investments to transform the waterfront from an industrial port that had gone by the wayside into a new community that embraced all of the elements that make a city successful.

As for industry, we have Lafarge still shipping there, and Red Path Sugar using the port actively. We also have an airport defined by a separate agreement, called the Billy Bishop airport but known in the city as the island airport.

This investment also triggered huge private investment, much more private investment than any benefit calculated to have flowed from the island airport. We have new post-secondary institutions on the waterfront. Harbourfront Centre has more than tripled in size and is now one of the cultural centres for the city and the country.

In addition to that, we have new transit lines, new hotels, new condominiums and residences, and we also have the largest

concentration of public housing in my riding 500 metres from the end of the airport.

This is the context in which the island airport is situated. I urge members to look at even one of the 25 reports that have been tabled on this file, and to look at the proposition and the configuration of the land being asked to accommodate this particular facility. The proposition is absurd, once we look at the maps and look at the falsehoods being propagated.

This idea comes from Mr. Deluce and Porter Airlines in a private communication to Mayor Ford, and was given six weeks for approval. The city has six weeks to approve this or else the deal will fall through. When it came to council, the questions that sprung from that ridiculous proposition were so serious and of such magnitude that the city has struggled through five public meetings of council, numerous consultation meetings, as well as 25 reports tabled by economic consultants, planning consultants, aeronautic consultants, and everyone else trying to figure out why this idea would even get to see the light of day, let alone be put on the order paper at city council.

We would have to ask Mayor Ford—and maybe the former Prime Minister could have done that when he had him on stage during the campaign. However, we have no idea why this idea ever came forward. PortsToronto did not promote the idea. The City of Toronto did not promote the idea. The Government of Canada did not promote the idea. None of the signatories to the tripartite agreement have ever agreed to this proposition. We are studying it to try to figure out if it makes sense.

All that the studies have done is to result in more questions. What happens to the marine exclusion zone? Does it get extended and block off the port to commercial traffic? We cannot get an answer. The airport was originally only going to have to lengthen its runway into the lake by 80 metres. That later turned out to be closer to 300 metres on each end, which means paving over and filling a half-kilometre of the lake, cutting off access to the islands and of the island ferry to Hanlan's Point, as well as potentially choking the airport at the pinch point near Ontario Place, shutting down one of the main channels to get in and out of the harbour for commercial ships.

We could not get an answer as to whether that was the right configuration of the airport, the wrong configuration of the airport, how wide it would be, and whether taxiways would be involved. There was no design. In fact, there was no business case ever advanced by anyone around this entire process.

The city has tried to study it. It put some very serious conditions in place before it would ever even consider approving this project. Those conditions have never been met. In fact, the port authority said it could not meet them, which meant that when this eventually did get to the floor of council, it was dead in the water.

Business of Supply

The reality is that the proposition requires a half a kilometre of lakefill on either end of the runway. It cannot be moved one way or the other, because it would choke off development of the port lands or it would run into Ontario Place. It requires the marine exclusion zones to be expanded, and we cannot figure out by how much because Transport Canada will not tell us because there is no plan or design or project in front of it.

The other thing that became quite obvious is that the blast from the jets turning at the end of the runway would be so powerful that it would knock over small craft and destroy boating and recreational yachting in the Toronto harbour.

The port authority then proposed building a six-metre wall the entire length of the runway, from Bay Street to Dufferin, for blast control. An entire blast wall would have to be built to protect boating in the area, but even then there was no business case to pay for it.

● (1205)

As a result, we end up with a situation where the project just keeps expanding in scope and cost and undermines the very good work that has been done to revitalize the waterfront, the amazing investment, which is about to be doubled again and has had far greater economic impact, far greater public support, and far greater study and collection of data to prove its value. Instead, what we have is this crazy idea from one individual who wants to further the airline.

Has WestJet or Air Canada come in support of this? No.

Has the port authority ever signed off on it? No.

Has the City of Toronto, in five public council meetings, ever said yes? No. It has had five chances to sign off on it and has always said no, unless the following conditions could be met. Those conditions, as he just outlined, have never been met.

However, the real mystery behind this proposition is the notion that it is market-based.

One of the proposals to make this idea work involved building a cloverleaf out over Lake Ontario to circle traffic in the inner harbour, around the silos, and back into the airport terminal. The cost of that alone was \$600 million, which Mr. Deluce said the federal government would pay for. The federal government had an opportunity last term to pay for that, and it chose to spend the money on transit in Scarborough. It was a wise decision.

The port authority then said that it would raise all the fees to passenger fees. Except there is a problem. The letters patent of the port authority does not allow it to spend dollars that it raises on property that it does not own or are not contained in the letters patent. Therefore, it cannot reconfigure the south end of the city to its liking because it is not allowed to spend money on property it does not own, and it agreed and said yes, the city should ask the federal government for the money.

The federal government could have put that money on the table in its last three budgets. It chose not to do so. In fact, what it chose to do was to redouble its efforts and go back into the waterfront Toronto plan, the appropriate plan, supported by the City of Toronto, the people of Toronto, the business community of Toronto, and the planners of Toronto.

What we have end up here today debating is this crazy notion that has been put forth by a single business proponent to reconfigure the entire city of Toronto to his liking, to abandon the plans of a \$3.2-billion federal investment on the waterfront, to turn our backs on Harbourfront Centre, turn our backs on the residents who live there—not the residents of the condominium, but residents of public housing. The public housing residents are the closest people to the end of this runway. They live 500 metres from it. The communities around there have said, “No, we were given a promise, a promise that there would be no jets and no runway expansion, signed by the City of Toronto, the port authority, and the federal government. We want you to honour that promise.”

Therefore, during the campaign, we said that we would honour that promise, and we have delivered on that promise as we committed to do in the election campaign.

However, the real concern I have about this is that when we ask the party opposite whom it has spoken to, the only people it has admitted to speaking to is the airline operator. They have met with Mr. Deluce. Mr. Deluce and his lobby organization, the Sussex Strategy Group, have been lobbying on Parliament Hill for well over a month. If we were to check the lobbyists' register, we would find that they have not registered.

The party opposite is acting on behalf of lobbyists who have not obeyed the rules and have brought to the House a motion to further the private interests of a single airline at the expense of all the other public investments.

At the very least, we would expect this operator to follow the rules for once, to follow the rules and register as a lobbyist before talking to parliamentarians about these business interests, but that has not happened. That is shocking. It is not surprising from the party opposite, but still shocking.

What we have seen time and again with the Conservative Party and the port authority of Toronto is a relationship that is profoundly secretive. It appointed people to that port authority who were the college roommates and fundraisers of some former cabinet ministers.

There has been an astonishing—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order, please.

If I could just interrupt the hon. member for a moment, I am sure the hon. member appreciates the prompting from the other side, but if they do not mind, I would appreciate it if they kept their comments to themselves. It is not good to yell across the floor.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, there is an astonishing record of poor public administration at the port authority. It does not follow the rules. The proponents of this project are not following the lobbyist registration rules. They have not registered yet. A complaint has been filed and received.

Business of Supply

It is shocking that, in the midst of all of this poor governance, one individual has convinced the party opposite to come forward with a motion from which he alone would profit. It is just an abysmal process. To suggest that we are going to sit here today and overrule a decision we made, a promise we committed to and kept, which is to protect the waterfront, the balance, and the airport as it is currently configured, and move forward in a coordinated and consensual way, to say that we are going to throw all of that aside for the rights of one individual who will not play by the rules is just not the way good governance is conducted. It is not the way good public policy is pursued.

In terms of consultation, I would suggest the party opposite consult more widely. Perhaps if it did, it would not be shut out in the city of Toronto every time there is a federal election.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech on this matter. Obviously, he knows this file well, as he had a role in Toronto before coming to the Hill.

I am pleased to hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister stand and defend the rights of community members to have a say in decision-making about land uses in their municipality.

I too have fought long and hard in my own city to protect our river valley, which is treasured by many in our community. That runs against a lot of private proposals to develop it. There are lots of issues about building on top of a bank and what to build in the river valley, but the community is always saying it wants to preserve it, that it is a treasure of the community.

My brother used to live in Toronto and I often went along that waterfront. Every time I go to Toronto I try to find an opportunity to go down there.

As was mentioned previously in the House, we have two tripartite agreements somewhat at odds with each other. I appreciate that the member said it is the low-income housing that would be most impacted. It has been brought to my attention, and the hon. member also mentioned this in the House, that there was actually a report done by the medical officer of health in Toronto expressing concern about potential health impacts not only of the expansion of the airport but of the already continuing operation. I wonder if the member could speak to that issue and what role that should probably play or might have played in the final decision by the federal government to not allow this expansion.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, the report from the Board of Health identifies the island airport as the single largest source of pollution in the entire GTA. That has very serious implications for the low-income community that surrounds the airport, in particular the building that is closest to the end of the runway, which is a supportive environment home to people with significant disabilities.

We are also seeing a spike in childhood asthma at the local school. The local school sits on one side of the street, a two-lane road to a park in this community, and the entire access to the airport runs between a school in the community and the community centre. There are no plans and no capacity to expand that roadway, even though they want to jam an airport the size of the Ottawa international airport into one-seventh the land mass.

There are other issues as well. The issue we have to turn our attention to is what is the right balance. The member opposite referred to two different tripartite agreements that govern the city's waterfront. Those tripartite agreements strike a balance and allow a small airport to operate. It has operated successfully and has allowed the waterfront investment to proceed in a way that has generated more jobs, has more economic impact, and has more work to be done. Those two tripartite agreements work in concert with each other. They were developed and are governed in concert with one another.

The agency that has governance over this issue is focused on building a great waterfront, not just a road and an airport for a single operator. We have complexities to deal with here, and the movers of the motion opposite have not even begun to do the research, let alone read the reports or talk to the stakeholders. The only person they have spoken to is the operator at the airport. Even then, it is not the operator at the airport but the main airline at the airport. That is the only stakeholder they have spoken to.

• (1215)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think as the day unfolds, you will find out that there have been lots of conversations with respect to the matter.

My point with respect to this motion is pretty simple. It has to do with the natural progression of justice when it comes to considering matters at the Toronto city centre airport, now known as Billy Bishop airport. We have heard in his speech and we have known for many years that the member opposite will say and do anything to try to shut down the facility. This is well known and is on the record.

One thing I want to bring to the attention of the member to illustrate that and get his comments on is an incident that happened in 2007, when the member went so far as to make an allegation about a Bombardier plane, a Q400, not being a safe plane. Obviously, it has been in operation since 2007 and has been very safe, but the president of the CAW local at the time very clearly rebuked the member for the allegation that was made. He said, "I am appalled at the despicable display of political opportunism by Councillor Adam Vaughan...in calling for the grounding of Porter Airlines Q400s".

The issue is this. He has said and done many things in the past. This is in very much the same vein as being politically opportunistic. He is trying to push an agenda of closing this airport via his last election campaign, whereas Jim Karygiannis, a former member of the House, said that he cannot remember Liberals having taken a firm policy decision on this issue.

I would enjoy hearing the comments of the member opposite on those quotes.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before the hon. member answers, I want to remind members that, even if it is in a quote, we cannot say the name of a member of Parliament in the House.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Inter-governmental Affairs).

Business of Supply

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite referred to an incident when an early flight of a Q400, just coming out of development, had a problem with the rubber ring around the nose cone landing configuration that caused several of them to fail and crash, particularly when they flew over water and landed at maritime airports. It was subsequently fixed. There was a recall on that part and it was reconfigured to be more safe. In fact, it flies safely now; and I have no problem with the Q400 as it is currently configured, because it was fixed.

She raised the issue about due process. One of the conditions of the tripartite agreement requires the port authority to build a sewer system to distribute the de-icing fluids back to the city's sewage system so that they are not dumped directly into the lake. The member opposite, who used to run the port authority, knows that sewer system was never built in compliance with the port authority's regulations or the tripartite agreements.

If due process, proper environmental stewardship, and living up to the letter of the law in the agreement were so important, why did the member opposite, when she had control of the authority, not build the appropriate sewer system to protect the lake and the drinking water of millions of Torontonians from known carcinogens that were being shovelled into Lake Ontario? If the party opposite wants to lecture this side of the House on due process and natural justice, it ought to take a good look at its own behaviour over the last 20 years in relation to this issue.

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we heard about the so-called environmental assessment and what it did or did not bring out. I would ask that the hon. member talk about the environmental assessment that the opposition mentioned and what the status of that is.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, the City of Toronto requested an environmental assessment be done, but only after the port authority agreed to put a cap on the current operation of the airport, because the current operation of the airport is overwhelming the transportation infrastructure in the community, including transit, the intersection of Bathurst and Lake Shore, and that of Eireann Quay and Bathurst.

With the current configuration, the airport is already too big for the land mass it currently occupies, and the ground transportation infrastructure is inadequate for an airport of the current configuration of 2.4 million passengers per year. The port authority refused to put the cap in place and proceeded with an environmental assessment that it configured, to which it set the terms of reference, and for which it would have the sole decision as to whether it would be approved or not. Therefore, the City of Toronto was at the point of walking away from this process because of the lack of co-operation from PortsToronto.

• (1220)

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

The first comment I will make is that I would have liked to have heard the member from Toronto speak as passionately about his government allowing the City of Montreal to dump eight billion

litres of sewage into the St. Lawrence as he has with respect to a holding tank in an airport. I did not hear him talk about that at that time. It would have been nice to hear the same passion about raw sewage going into a freshwater supply.

I said this in my last speech in the House. We have to decide what we are doing in this country. Will we continue to say no to growth in jobs when the science is there to prove it is okay to go ahead or at least allow the process to work so we can come to a decision?

These are a few notes I made this morning.

The energy east pipeline would bring \$16 billion plus in economic activity. The current government has reset the terms of the environmental assessments, so it is unlikely that it would even be approved at the end of its mandate.

In addition, there is a project in my riding in which the environmental assessment began in 2008. The project itself began in 2002 or 2003. The science was there and is sound. The current government has said it wants to kick the ball down the field a little longer and wait and see what else it can dig up. However, the science was there to go ahead. As a conservative estimate, it would cost nearly \$1 billion for the work to begin and to provide many jobs in my area.

As well, the decision to cancel the expansion has potentially caused the loss of another \$2 billion worth of economic activity in the central region of Montreal and surrounding area. If we add those up, we are almost at \$20 billion worth of lost economic activity and jobs. Most economic development agencies say that there is a multiplier effect of at least four and probably six on all of those. Therefore, if we take the \$20 billion and multiply it by four or six, we are talking about \$80 billion to \$100 billion in lost economic activity for really not a lot of scientific fact or reason.

I use that to preface my comments today because we have to make the decisions.

In my area, there are a lot of Amish and Mennonite people. They are great and wonderful people. I have known them since I was a kid. However, the reality of the situation is that we cannot go back and live like them. We have to be forward-thinking. We have to use technology. We have to use innovation to our benefit to grow and better the world.

I also worked in the technology industry. We cannot have every single person in this country developing software and IT solutions for us. It perhaps is a nice goal to have but one that will not happen in my lifetime.

Another comment I heard was with respect to the people of the city. I admit that I do not live nor have I ever lived in Toronto. If I had lived in Toronto or in that area, I perhaps might feel a little stronger about what I am about to say.

Ten years ago the number of passengers was 23,000. It is well over 2 million people today. Therefore, the people have spoken: it is a well-utilized airport, it is popular, and it makes sense.

I saw the report for January, and out of over 200 flights out of that area, which is 200 potential movements in a month, there were only 14 noise complaints. That is a pretty good number. We also heard in some other comments today about the potential of some of the CS100 versus the Q400 and any others of the Dash 8 series: 100, 200, or 300.

There was a report by Tetra Tech, a worldwide engineering firm that specializes in aviation, which stated that the noise level from the CS100 is 17% less than a 100, it is over 20% less than a 200, and over a 300 there is 57% less noise.

• (1225)

The numbers will continue to flesh themselves out, but the numbers that I was able to get today show that basically the cumulative measure of the three units of measurement they use will be roughly the same as a Q400, and the average will be very close. These are important facts.

Looking at the actual expansion and improvement of the airport, there is, in the terminology of Transport Canada, the runway end safety zone. There is work there that should probably be done. Then there is the expansion proposed by the airport that would help the CS100s in landing.

I can understand the concern about infilling in fresh water. Obviously there are always going to be concerns about infilling in fresh water. In my area, the Goderich Port Authority, which is one of the most profitable ports in the country, had a project that proposed to infill 14 acres of fresh water in Lake Huron, and they were working through the environmental assessment process.

I understand the environmental assessment that was ongoing or that was proposed here is different from the federal environmental assessment that was proposed in the Port of Goderich. However, I am saying that if the Liberals are saying no to any infill in fresh water, or other waters for that matter, they had better start adding up the number of harbours and marinas in this country that provide economic activity to Canadians each and every day.

There is a process. No one should be afraid of the environmental assessment recommendations that came out of the Jacobs report that would mitigate sound levels. All these are what people who are in business and people who are concerned about the environment and people who live in the city or the country are doing. This is why there are rules. That is why they do what they need to do.

I also understand the argument that increased traffic would reduce residential growth and reduce valuations of property. Has anybody read anything in *The Globe and Mail* recently, or in any other newspaper, about the increased prices of real estate in Toronto? We went from 23,000 passengers in 2006 to over two million passengers today. Take a look at the growth in Toronto in that area in the last 10 years. Take a look at the increase in real estate values in the last 10 years. Look at the increase in improvements in the waterfront area.

I have been down on Queen's Quay. I have stayed there many times. It is a beautiful area. It is really one of the cherished spots in Ontario, and it has been able to grow in harmony. That is how it works. When business is responsible, government is responsible, and citizens' voices are heard, that is when everything in our economy

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works, and that is when we can grow this country and grow this province, the province of Ontario that I represent.

I just want to summarize by saying that all Canadians have a choice. We can choose to grow our economy, respect our environment, and respect the people who live in our areas. It is not just airports; it is railways, highways, and roads. It is everything. We have sewage issues in different communities. My area obviously has a couple that could be fixed. There are sewage issues all around. There are environmental issues all around that we can all work to improve. However, this airport should have the ability to at least proceed and ascertain all the facts and collect all the data in conjunction with what the company wants to do.

There are opportunities for other companies. I should also mention that Air Canada had the run of the place for years and really did not do much with it. It was Porter that had the vision. I love Air Canada, but it is a little rich for people at Air Canada to come back and say they would like to have some of this now.

I would be happy to take any questions. I am sure I will get at least one from the member from Toronto, because I think he is the only one asking questions for the Liberals today.

• (1230)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I am the only one asking questions because I am the only one who has actually read the reports.

There have been ample reports tabled on this issue over three years, and they are definitive. One of my favourites was a report that was the groundwork for the formal request to get someone to do a full environmental assessment, not by the port authority but under the provincial laws, because the lake is actually a provincial park. The bed of the lake where the airport wants to expand is actually owned by the Province of Ontario as a provincial park, yet the provincial environmental assessment process is forbidden from kicking in. The federal one trumps it.

The foundation report made a very interesting finding. One of the proponents said that we could extend the runways by half a kilometre into the lake and we could build new fish habitats at the end of each runway. We would do this because we found that when we studied the existing airport, there was no fish habitat in the Toronto harbour next to the airport. When we asked why there was no fish habitat there, the report said it was because the island airport dumps all of the runway snow into the lake and has killed the fish habitat, so what the proposal actually said we were going to do was to extend the runway and kill more fish habitat as we create it.

The environmental assessment, though, did not take into account the impact on the natural environment, because the scope of the environmental assessment did not do that.

Would the member opposite agree that an environmental assessment that was not authorized and did not meet the threshold of consultation that is defined by the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto, an environmental assessment that does not take into consideration the existing law, is in fact not really an environmental assessment at all?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, those are all pretty weak points.

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There are 180 Liberal members of Parliament, and I think they pretty well have all of Toronto as members of Parliament, yet he is the only one to ask questions. I am sorry, but if you are the only one in your caucus who has read the report, you had better start—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): You understand what the problem is. Go through the Speaker.

Mr. Ben Lobb: I got it, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to that, the argument about the environmental assessment is very weak. I am sure that if there is a business case for the airport expansion, the proponents would be happy to do the environmental assessment at the same level that a federal environmental assessment would require. It is a no-brainer. If there is a business case to be made and it makes sense, do the environmental assessment to the same standard. As they said, there are harbours around this country that are doing them all the time. This is not new.

The marine exclusion zone is not affected. Fish habitat will not be affected. The environmental assessment will show that. If the environmental assessment shows that there are effects, then remediation will be put in place.

Anything that member is saying to the point, and I have been in the House for 30 minutes, does not pass anything with me.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard speech after speech from Conservative members saying that we should let the market prevail, so I am left very confused about exactly what the point of the motion is.

Who exactly is putting up the money to expand this airport? Who is putting up the money to buy these airplanes? What do they mean by saying it is “market driven”? Surely this is really all about a land use decision, and when one makes a proper land use decision, one confers broadly and does a proper environmental impact assessment that is supervised by a neutral independent body, which in this case would be the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

I am left totally confused about what the market-driven aspect is. Surely Bombardier, an internationally recognized company, can put together a pretty good market plan for selling not only its airplanes but also its trains, trolleys, and so forth.

What is this market argument? It seems to be simply cutting through and saying essentially that the federal government should give the money so that Bombardier can buy these planes and the airport can be expanded and everybody will be happy.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, I love getting market questions from the socialists down the way from the Bernie Sanders socialist party.

It is called the free market, and if there is a business case for an expansion of an airport, it is called a business case. One makes that business case, and if it will actually fund itself and pay for that investment, that is called the free market. It is a little different from what the Bernie Sanders socialists have down there.

What happens when we expand the runway is an airline says, “Gee, now we can fly in there, so now we need airplanes to fly in there that will meet that need.” Then they get the financing. Then they go to Bombardier and say, “Oh, by the way, Porter is an all-

Bombardier company. We'd love to buy 30 of your jets.” Those jets cost \$2 billion.

That is the way economy works. That is the way free market capitalism works. We know the Bernie Sanders socialists down there *no comprenden*, but that is okay.

• (1235)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to discuss this important issue.

We are talking about the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport in Toronto and the benefits that such an expansion would have for Toronto. We are talking today about Bombardier and the benefits that the airport expansion would have for Bombardier and more broadly the province of Quebec, but we are also talking about a fundamental principle, and that is the importance of stimulating the economy and how we do so.

I think there is broad agreement in this House not only about the importance of having a strong economy but also about the role for government in looking for ways to strengthen our economy, in looking for policies or structures that can be put in place to facilitate stimulation of the economy.

We have a different approach on this side of the House. Our view is that as much as possible, the first action is to seek to work with and leverage opportunities for investment for stimulus from within the private sector. If there are opportunities to encourage private sector investments that lead to economic stimulus and economic growth, that is a very good thing. We should prioritize these types of initiatives as much as possible. We should look first to stimulating private sector investment before looking for big injections of public dollars.

That approach is different from the government's approach. The Liberals jump automatically from wishing to have a strong, stimulated economy to saying that means the government has to put in a whole bunch of new spending.

Again, we know of the government's plan to run very large deficits, but I think what is behind that is a fundamental misunderstanding of the way we stimulate the economy. We want to see strong private sector-driven economic growth, and this motion is an example of how we go about doing that. We want private sector-driven economic stimulus. We want policies that make it easier for the private sector to make investments, and that is exactly what the motion is all about.

Our strategy prioritizes private sector investment, and that is where we start. We did a number of things that encouraged that kind of investment. One of the ways to encourage private sector-oriented stimulus is to have open trade and efforts to attract international investments, and of course we did that over the last 10 years. A strong transportation network, frankly, is part of that. It is part of facilitating international trade and the people-to-people interactions that make trade possible.

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Of course, a stable but relatively limited regulatory environment is important as well. This encourages new investment. A regulatory environment that is predictable and limited but that is always oriented to encouraging new investment is important. This is what we need to stimulate our economy. This is what we need to encourage private sector-driven stimulus.

The third thing, and the focus of our discussion today, is how important transportation and infrastructure links are for having private sector-driven economic stimulus. In the history of our country, which is such a large country, transportation and infrastructure links have always been very important. There is a role for the government to be involved in those things, but whenever there is an opportunity to encourage private sector investment in transportation and infrastructure links, I would argue that we need to work as hard as possible to make that happen.

One of the things we have talked about in this House is the importance of pipelines. Pipelines are the nation-building infrastructure of the 21st century, and another part of that is strengthening our airports and the airport connections in the country. This is what this is all about: having pipelines, having airports. These things interconnect our country economically to facilitate trade and help to create jobs.

I am sure other members have talked specifically about the economic benefits of the Billy Bishop airport, but let me just go over this again. Annual direct impacts are close to 2,000 jobs, \$100 million in wages, \$220 million in GDP, and \$980 million in economic output. A study found that the impact of non-local visitors' spending on air services at the airport amounted to approximately \$150 million a year, so we know that significant economic benefits are facilitated by having that transportation infrastructure in place.

We need to do this. We need to see the value of this. We need to get this done. It is just unfortunate that we are dealing with a government right now in this country that really only sees one tool in the tool box when it comes to stimulating the economy. When the Liberals want to have a strong economy, they think the solution is always more government spending. During good times, bad times, and in-between times, all they want is more government spending. The reality is that when they have a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.

• (1240)

As a result, instead of stimulating the economy by identifying opportunities in the private sector by working with the private sector to facilitate investment from other places, they just want the government to spend more money.

Our approach on this side of the House is different. Recognizing a multiplicity of tools in the toolbox for stimulating and strengthening the economy is necessary, but generally speaking, public expenditure should be a last resort. If we can stimulate the economy without having significant injections of taxpayer dollars, that is obviously preferable, because any major government spending does cost taxpayers.

I want to talk a bit about the issue in the context of local control and who is involved in making decisions with respect to the airport. There is a tripartite agreement in place that gives the federal

government theoretical authority to make decisions about this airport, but because this is a development decision, a decision about what happens inside Toronto, we see it as something that the people of Toronto should ultimately make the fundamental decision about. Even though we encourage development, we want to see local control in this context.

Proceeding with development projects can always be difficult, whether we are talking about building a building, expanding an airport, or doing natural resource development. It can be difficult enough without having the involvement of many different levels of government where everyone feels like they have to be onside before something can move forward. Let us let the people most directly involved and most directly impacted have the biggest role in this. The City of Toronto has put a lot of money into studying this. It has effectively been limited now in its ability to proceed because of the Liberal government's desire to interfere, which it technically and legally does have the authority to do, but which most properly should be decided by the people of Toronto.

These are really the central points here that the government is missing. When the government is stimulating the economy, it is not all about putting a whole bunch of money into the economy if there are opportunities instead to leverage private sector investment. This is something that has huge economic benefits for Ontario and Quebec. There is an opportunity to leverage the involvement of the private sector, and that is a better way to go, a better way to stimulate the economy, than the alternative, which is simply the government putting a bunch of money into things.

Then there is also the issue of local control. The challenges with development are enough that we do not need everyone trying to control the process. We should leave the process as much as possible to the people of Toronto, to the people directly affected, and to their representatives in the City of Toronto.

I think that on that basis, understanding the proper place of economic stimulus and the need for local control, this is an important motion. I look forward to voting in favour of it.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Province of Quebec will be interested in the member's arguments about local control of all decisions by the federal government. I hesitate to wonder what that means for pipelines and the position of the member's party on that issue.

The member said that the people of Toronto should be allowed to make the decision. City council has had this issue in front of it five times since the initial request was made by the one airline, and five times it has layered on more conditions and gone further away from making decisions on it. In those five opportunities to approve this project, each time it has declined to do so. That is the voting record of the City of Toronto.

As for the notion that private sector stimulus is better than public sector stimulus, is the member opposite aware that this project would require close to \$1.6 billion of public money to reconfigure the airport to accommodate the proposal and that the money has to come, according to Mr. Deluce, the proponent, from the federal government if this project is going to fly?

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With his perspective that no money should come from the federal government or that federal money is bad for economic stimulus, is the member aware that this project cannot fly without \$1.6 billion in new taxes and infrastructure investment, a decision that your previous government had the opportunity to make and declined?

• (1245)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to remind hon. members to speak through the Chair and not directly across the floor to each other.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the hon. member clearly did not listen to the point I was making. With respect to his point about local control, it is very clear that there are certain responsibilities that are more effectively handled at some levels of government than others. Of course, I am not saying that absolutely everything should be done by the municipality.

Something like interprovincial transportation is constitutionally a federal government power, and it makes sense that it is because it involves and goes across the whole country. But specifically, this is a decision about an airport inside the city of Toronto and something that the people of Toronto have the primary stake in, and it is quite sensible to have their involvement in the decision.

The principle of local control is that as much as possible, decisions should be made at the level that is closest to the people. That is the principle behind our convictions of local control, which might be called subsidiarity, which we value.

In terms of past decisions at Toronto city council, again, that is exactly the point. It should be to the greatest possible extent their decision to make. If the people of Toronto decide they do not want this, so be it, but what has happened is that the federal government has sought to put the kibosh on this.

In terms of the cost of federal spending, again I want to be very clear about what I said. It is not that all federal spending is bad. The member is completely misconstruing what I said, intentionally or not. My point is that we should seek to leverage investment by the private sector for the benefit of the economy as much as possible. We should not ignore the possibility of private sector investment. We should use that to our advantage. There is a role for the public sector as well, but we should seek to leverage the private sector involvement as much as possible.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could possibly reflect upon the 10 years of our Conservative government and the jurisdictional respect that we showed for provinces, cities, and municipalities alike, something that the Liberals may want to also consider.

Would he also care to speculate about when another member of the Toronto Liberal caucus will ask a question today, besides the member for Spadina—Fort York, who has asked many if not all the questions today? I am wondering when he will remove the muzzle from his Toronto colleagues and let them ask a question. It is 12:50 p.m. and there have been zero by them so far. Let us hear some questions from other Liberal members from Toronto.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the member makes a great point that our party helps to strengthen our federation by respecting

jurisdictions. We did not push agendas that were outside of federal jurisdiction. We sought to listen to and collaborate with people at other levels of government and respect their decision-making authority.

In the case of the city of Toronto, we are listening to what is coming out of Toronto and not trying to have members from Toronto micromanage what happens in Toronto. This is about land use. This is about development and the future of the city. Obviously, many Torontonians see great opportunities in the expansion of the airport. Certainly the federal government should not get in the way, but we need to work with other levels of government. The most important way of doing that is to respect their jurisdiction and respect the ability of the private sector to be involved in investments that benefit our whole economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.) Mr. Speaker, I would like to share my time with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to debate this Conservative motion. The aerospace sector is an economic growth hub that focuses on innovation, economic activity, and highly skilled jobs, and makes a significant contribution to Canada's social and economic well-being.

In 2014, Canada's aerospace industry contributed \$29 billion to the GDP and generated more than 180,000 jobs, including 76,000 direct jobs. The remaining jobs create economic activity in various regions of the country.

Canada is one of the most important countries in the international aerospace sector. The OECD ranks Canada fifth after the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Furthermore, Canada is ranked third in the world in aeronautical manufacturing. Canada is also a world leader in the manufacture of flight simulators and aircraft engines.

Canada's aerospace industry is world-class, and it exports almost 80% of its production to various trade partners. The United States, Europe, and Asia-Pacific are the three top export destinations and account for 57%, 21% and 14% respectively of Canada's aerospace industry exports. Almost 60% of Canada's aerospace exports are supply chain related.

Anyone familiar with the aerospace industry knows that innovation is crucial. The aerospace industry is one of the biggest contributors to research and development, with \$1.8 billion in annual spending accounting for close to 20% of the industry's activity. It is impossible to talk about Canada's aerospace industry and its contributions to the economy without talking about the contributions of its flagship companies. Yes, I am talking about Bombardier.

Bombardier directly employs over 23,000 people in Canada. Bombardier's activities and those of its immediate suppliers represent one-third of the aerospace industry's contribution to Canada's gross national product. Since 2012, it has led research and development spending in Canada.

In recognition of the importance of innovation, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development is developing a new program for innovation. The program will focus on ways that the government can enable aerospace companies, including small and medium-sized ones, to innovate, grow, and, ultimately, contribute to the sustainable growth of the aerospace industry.

I would also note that the Government of Canada's support for the industry goes beyond innovation. The government supports the industry through its world-class certification program, its export development funding, and its industrial and technological benefits policy.

I could go on for some time, but I should take questions from my colleagues. However, I just want to add one last point: any discussion of Bombardier must include the fact that, as the third-largest civil aviation company in the world, it is a magnet for direct and foreign investors.

• (1250)

Many companies that want to supply services and parts to Bombardier come to Canada and create good, innovative jobs. Canada's aerospace workers benefit.

I could take questions from other members, but I could also continue, because I have an opportunity to talk more about how important Bombardier is to the aerospace industry.

When a company like Bombardier accounts for nearly one-third of the activity in the aerospace industry, it is very important that it get support. Such a valuable industry helps create high-quality jobs and helps grow the Canadian economy.

That is why the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development reiterated that it was important to consider the status of the aerospace industry. It is important to look at the facts and to come up with a solid plan to help this company. As soon as this study is complete, we can move forward and make a decision in the coming weeks or months.

As many of my colleagues and I have already said in the House, the aerospace industry is extremely important to Canada. Not only does Bombardier employ 23,000 people, but another 180,000 jobs are directly or indirectly related to the aerospace industry, and not all of those jobs are in Montreal. They are all across Canada, including Toronto, western Canada, and eastern Canada. The entire supply chain is important, and it is connected to the aerospace industry.

I know that all members of the House take their jobs seriously. We all want to represent our constituents properly, but the best thing we can offer them is the opportunity to have a good job, a worthwhile job that allows them to earn a decent living.

People who work in the aerospace industry have that opportunity. Having studied science or engineering at CEGEP, college or more

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often at university, they often work in jobs that pay very well in the aerospace industry, and this is important.

I know that all my colleagues in the House, regardless of their party affiliation, will join me in showing our support and ensuring that Canadians continue to fill those jobs. The economy of the future depends on it. Canada needs to take its place on the world stage to ensure that we create good, important jobs that also contribute to the Canadian economy.

That is why I am proud to rise here today to share my thoughts with all members of the House and express support for Canada's aerospace industry.

• (1255)

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member's party campaigned on transparency, but there seems to be a lot of secrecy and a lack of action regarding Bombardier's situation. Is his government planning to match the \$1 billion lifeline for Bombardier?

• (1300)

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member has a long history in the House, certainly longer than mine, and I appreciate having the opportunity to address his question.

As I said during my comments, this is a very complex situation and a very important one. We certainly want to ensure, as the minister has made clear to the House on several occasions, that we take the time to make the right business case for supporting Bombardier. It is a huge company. There are many ways that the federal government could play a role, or perhaps not play a role, but we want to ensure that whatever decision we come to, it is the one that makes the best business case for Canadians. That is the reason why the government is taking its time.

Let me assure the member that departmental officials are meeting with Bombardier and the Government of Quebec, and are taking a look at options. The minister has made it very clear to the House that when a decision is finally made on this issue, it will be in the best interests of Canadians. We will certainly let the hon. member and the entire House know what that decision will be.

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member a question about innovation in the aerospace industry. Today's opposition motion makes it appear as if the government is not supportive of the aerospace industry. Could the hon. member talk about the ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and whether the ministry is committed to expansion of the aerospace industry?

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, let me reassure my hon. colleague and the entire House that the government and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development are working very hard on developing the innovation plan.

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We have many elements at stake, and the aerospace industry is a key element of that. The reason is that the aerospace industry requires so much of an innovative economy. It requires us to be competitive. If Canada classes itself as third among countries in the aerospace industry, it is because we have made those investments in the universities and colleges to ensure we get the graduates who can compete in that. It takes a high degree of numeracy, of engineering for people to be part of the aerospace industry. It is the reason why being involved in the design and manufacturing of that industry is so economically remunerative.

[*Translation*]

Workers can make a lot of money in this industry. That is why these jobs are highly sought after by students in engineering, mechanical engineering, and many other fields. The average salary in this industry is quite high. As a government, our plan for innovation is to focus on jobs and promising industries.

I am not just talking about the aerospace industry. Last week, I spent a day in Sudbury, in northern Ontario, where I saw the extraordinary work of mining sector workers. That is where there is innovation. There is innovation everywhere and soon our government will be announcing policies to support it.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Milton.

I want to begin by acknowledging the voters in my riding. Even though it has been nearly five months since we were elected, I think it is important to take the opportunity to thank them for placing their confidence in me on October 19. I promise to work extremely hard to represent them well over the next four years.

My riding has great strengths and we must work very hard to continue to develop our economy and create stable, well-paying jobs. That is the key to helping families, workers, and seniors improve their quality of life. It is an extremely simple process: creating good jobs results in a better quality of life.

That is precisely the purpose of this motion. It seeks to improve the quality of life of a large number of people, including travellers who fly to the wonderful big city of Toronto. The decision to expand the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport has unforeseen direct and indirect positive effects.

Let us begin by talking about how Torontonians and Canadians will have access to an up-to-date airport without having to pay more taxes. Quieter planes will be landing right in their backyard, in downtown Toronto. Because of the quality of these aircraft, airport workers will be exposed to less environmental noise, which will improve their working conditions. What is more, travellers will be closer to their final destination, which, surprisingly, will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Regardless, the aircraft that Bombardier and its workers designed and produced is extremely sophisticated. It will allow for economies of scale, not only because of its weight, but also because it is more environmentally friendly. The Minister of Transport has been boasting that this aircraft is the best in the world. We are very pleased to know that Bombardier makes the best aircraft in the world, and we agree with that.

We must not forget that Bombardier is a company that, with its Canadian presence, promotes the quality of Canadian jobs and the goods manufactured here in Canada. Canada and the provinces, especially Quebec and Ontario, have invested billions of dollars in the aerospace industry in the last 20 years. This sector of the Canadian economy is extremely important. The Canadian aerospace network is very important. The quality of the goods manufactured here in Canada is recognized around the world.

Bombardier is renowned not just for the quality of its aerospace products, but also for its excellent train cars, subway cars and streetcars. These cars are manufactured in a few locations in Canada, including a plant in La Pocatière, where I was born and continue to live. This plant currently provides 400 jobs. As we speak, it is completing the contract for the Montreal subway. This is an extremely sophisticated and well-developed train. With a suite of innovations, it is one of the best trains in the world, just as the Bombardier plane is one of the best in the world.

Therefore, I am well positioned to speak about the importance of Bombardier, because this company was in a sense born in La Pocatière with the manufacture of Ski-Doo snowmobiles. After that there was the first contract with Montreal and New York, which led to the expansion of the La Pocatière plant.

● (1305)

At one time, 1,200 people were working at the La Pocatière plant on the New York City contract. There is no doubt that a plant like that is important to our community.

Bombardier forms a whole; it is a company that operates in various sectors. If something goes wrong in one sector, things could go wrong everywhere. Right now, Bombardier has invested a significant amount of money in developing this airplane, which would be very welcome in Toronto. As a result, there is now a weak link at Bombardier, which is the aerospace sector.

Bombardier needs all kinds of help. One way to help this company is to allow these airplanes, which are the best and most economical in the world, and also the quietest, to land in Toronto. This is consistent with an overall transportation vision that takes into account the environment, productivity, and the quality of life of people in the surrounding area, since some people say that Toronto residents could be affected. That seems to be one argument against expanding the airport.

This is also about the country's economic growth. The government says that it has an economic development plan. Here is an absolutely incredible opportunity to inject some vitality into the aerospace industry and innovation. It is passing up an absolutely incredible opportunity.

We need to realize that a company like Bombardier does not operate in isolation. We are talking about a major industrial cluster. The Bombardier subcontractors are important players too. A Canada-wide network supplies goods and services to Bombardier and creates jobs.

Business of Supply

I think that the government's decision is completely irrational. It does not support the sustainable development that the government prides itself on championing. The government must take another look at its decision and give Bombardier the opportunity to sell airplanes to Canadian airlines. We have to sell Canadian airplanes in Canada, create jobs here in this great country, and help companies like Bombardier. The company is going through a very difficult time because it invested heavily in this project, which is absolutely critical to its future.

The company must gain the country's trust by getting Canadian companies to buy its airplanes, which Air Canada did recently. Other Canadian airlines can do the same to help the company grow. That would send a strong, clear, unmistakable signal to international airlines that we are supporting our own local industry and that we are proud to do so. I believe that we absolutely must continue to support Bombardier.

• (1310)

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest and appreciated the comments about how important Bombardier is, not just to the Quebec economy, but right across the country, from coast to coast to coast. That includes, of course, Ontario, in Toronto at Downsview, as well as in Thunder Bay, where trains are built.

I am sure the hon. member opposite is aware that the future of Bombardier rests on more than one plane and one airport; it rests across its entire platform. I wonder if he could perhaps help to explain this. The previous government, when presented with an opportunity to purchase LRT streetcars for Toronto and source them specifically from Bombardier, specifically from workers in Thunder Bay, chose not to. His party told the City of Toronto, and I cannot use the words—they are words more properly spoken by Donald Trump than by me—to basically get lost and for that contract not to be pursued; it would not be funded by the previous government.

If Bombardier is such an important component of the Canadian economy and the future of Bombardier is so critically important to workers right across the country, why did the previous government not support the purchase agreement for the City of Toronto's streetcars?

• (1315)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Mr. Speaker, in response to the specific question posed by my colleague opposite, I have to be honest and say that I do not know exactly why our government did what it did with regard to the plant in Thunder Bay. That being said, I can say one thing, and that is that the Government of Quebec made the right decision by awarding Bombardier the contract to build subway cars for Montreal. I think that we are building the best train in the world.

Whether we are talking about the company's production site in Thunder Bay or La Pocatière, Bombardier is important for Canada. It is important to understand that. We need to grow that business. Bombardier was just awarded a contract by the City of Edmonton, and the company is now considering whether it will build the light rail components in La Pocatière or Thunder Bay. It is not a matter of

competition. Jobs are being created in Canada. That is what is important.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my many years here, I have seen some incredible displays of ridiculous behaviour in terms of pretending that we have a party that understands the economy and then it comes in with a solution that is ridiculous. Then, it huffs and puffs that nobody is taking them seriously.

We are talking about 6,000 to 7,000 job losses at Bombardier. Its solution is that the little island airport in Toronto is going to somehow fix that and that we are wasting our time in Parliament talking about that notion of a solution.

I remember the last government and how much it ridiculed the notion of public transit when we were trying to get subway cars down from Thunder Bay, from the Bombardier plant, where we have hundreds of jobs. Public transit across the country is seen as a great wish, but, of course, it goes against the fundamental ideology of the privatized oil lobby that is known as the Conservative Party and we are wasting time in this House talking about the little island airport as somehow being an economic solution.

Thank God, the Conservatives do not control the economy anymore. For all the folks back home, I want to say that they pay these people a lot of money, and their solutions are always about wedges; their solutions are always about trying to find some ridiculous point that we waste time on in this House.

If that party were serious about supporting Bombardier, it would have come with something that was a little more coherent, and perhaps something that supported public transit. I know it is very hard for them to say those words, but it is something that would cause most Canadians to say, "Well, that was not a bad discussion. That was not a bad way to spend an afternoon in Parliament." That is as opposed to this ridiculous motion, which is another of many ridiculous motions that we have been subjected to by that party.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Mr. Speaker, if my colleague thinks he is wasting his time here, he can stay home. That is not a problem. The reality is that over the past few years, our government created 1.3 million net new jobs in Canada. If my colleague thinks that our party does not understand the economy, I do not know which party he thinks does. We created 1.3 million net new jobs following the worst economic crisis. He has the nerve to say that we are wasting our time here today talking about this motion. All government and opposition motions and bills are important here in the House. Those sorts of comments show that the member is not thinking about workers and everything that makes up our country's economy, including the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. There is nothing ridiculous about what we are doing here today.

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk to the House about what I think is a very important topic, despite the comments by the previous speaker.

Business of Supply

The motion before us today is simple. We are asking for an acknowledgement by the House of the contribution that Bombardier makes to our country. We are asking for recognition that there is a market solution, one of many that could be made available to support Bombardier. I will talk a bit more about that. We would like the House to acknowledge that the planes are well suited to urban airports, and that helps Bombardier to sell planes around the world.

It also asks us to recognize that Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is a major economic driver for the GTA, which it is; we can provide the statistics on that. We are asking the House to recognize that the expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport would allow airlines to purchase the Bombardier C Series jet. That is what we are talking about today.

Finally, we ask the House to call upon the government to reverse a very specific decision that it made on November 12, in 88 letters. It was a decision to prohibit any discussion on whether an operating agreement could be changed to allow for jets to fly into an airport or allow the runway to be expanded by a certain amount. It does not get into how long. That is the operating agreement that has been in place for many years. It expires in 2033. It is there to ensure that the airport operates in the context of a larger urban city.

The waterfront was a very different place back in the 1980s, and great advancements have been made since then. A tripartite agreement was made many years ago between the federal government, the City of Toronto, and the then Toronto harbour commission, and all signed off on it. It was with respect to not allowing jets on the island airport and not allowing further expansion of its existing runways. It was an agreement that was made over 30 years ago. Eight days after the current Minister of Transport was sworn in, those 88 letters stated that there would not be any consideration of the matter.

The member previous asked why we are wasting the time of the House. The plan being put forward by us to use a market solution has worked in the past. Members in the House may not know this, but in the beginning the Q400 turboprop, which is another Bombardier product, did not have a lot of buyers. It was the purchase by Porter of a Toronto-made plane for a Toronto-based airline that got the attention of other buyers in the world. That is when the Q400, to make a bad pun, took off in sales. When a business operates in a country that backs its product to the point where it will be utilized in a showcase facility specifically suited to that plane, other countries and other airlines of the world take note.

When Porter announced its purchase of the Q400, it was a very important time for Bombardier, and for CAW Downsview, because it was on its last legs with respect to jobs. That is what prompted everyone to rally behind it. CAW, management, and everyone, came together on this issue because it was the right thing to do to save the facility, and it did.

The interesting part is that, of course, airlines do not want competition. No one wanted to see Porter come on the scene, least of all Air Canada and WestJet. The then president of WestJet asked why passengers would want to fly in a Q400 and have a propeller whirling next to their head as they sat in their seat. Times have changed, and WestJet now has a smaller part of its airline using the Q400, which has a turboprop spinning next to the heads of the

passengers. That is because a showcase was provided for the ability of this plane to save on fuel and to be environmentally friendly.

The City of Toronto and PortsToronto embarked on a series of studies, at the request of the City of Toronto, to determine whether there was a case to be made for the two parties to lift the jet ban and give the Bombardier C Series jet the opportunity to come into the Billy Bishop airport, as we call it.

• (1320)

That progress was on its way, but it takes a lot of time. As members have pointed out, it took a lot of consultation along the way. Unfortunately, that process was stopped in its tracks with that one tweet. This is the way it works. It is three parties to an agreement, and all the parties have to agree.

In full disclosure, I was a CEO the last time we amended the tripartite agreement. It took a long time. I had two children during that time. That is how long it takes to amend a tripartite agreement. However, the way it always worked with respect to the federal establishment versus local interests, either expressed through the city of Toronto or the Toronto port authority, harbour commission, PortsToronto, however one calls it, was that local interests determined local matters.

Minister Collenette, of Minister Valeri, and of the last minister who was involved in it, all of those ministers consistently said the same thing, that if the city of Toronto and PortsToronto could agree, then the federal government would come in at that point, study it, and make a decision.

In this case, it is completely the opposite situation. We highlight it today because it is a problem in the way in which the federal government will be interacting with communities around the country. This will not be the last time a local community will appeal to the MP to intervene on a local matter and make it go its way, just because it wants a number of seats in the area.

It is a dangerous precedent, not only because all those studies that were under way, if not completed in a lot of cases, will not be seen by the public, and the public had real questions associated with the provision of this service at the Toronto city centre airport.

It is true that the studies had not been completed, but is that not an even greater reason why the federal government should not take a decision? Is that not the crux of the issue here today, that without a single study, without a proposal, it has come in over the top and has made a determination that really starts with the local councillors at the city of Toronto?

Had the Conservative government come in and taken a decision that stripped the city of Toronto on final decision-making abilities on an issue that was important to it, any councillor, including the former councillor, who now sits as a parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, would have had a fit. They would have called for the resignation of the government.

Business of Supply

That is the issue we have today. What is good for the goose is not good for the gander in terms of interference with local matters. We consult, we listen, we let sophisticated parties that have their processes in place to get through their processes. Then the decision comes to the level of government, or the order the government in the federal sphere, so it can make the decision.

The market solution is real. It is an opportunity to showcase a Canadian-designed, implemented, conceived, manufactured airplane that can rival any other airline and airplane in the world and has the possibility of moving sales as a result of purchases done by Porter, or perhaps by an upstart new carrier that wants to come in. Perhaps it could be interested in the C Series because of its fuel efficiencies. Maybe that will be of interest to those new upstart carriers. However, they all want to see that first step, and the first step in the case of the Q400 was Porter.

As I have already mentioned, the process was being followed. It is incredibly important that the process continue. That is why the last part of the motion is the crux of the matter. It asks the government to reverse the decision and let the process flow, let the reports come out, let them be published. If at that point in time the city of Toronto and PortsToronto decide they do not want to proceed, that is the appropriate level of lobbying and discussion. Then it comes to the federal government.

In 2002, when Porter was attempting to come in to fly Q400s, an organization that the parliamentary secretary was very much involved in, called CommunityAIR, predicted that the arrival of Porter would plummet property values by 25% and jeopardize \$20 billion in waterfront development. That simply did not happen. If we take a look at the riding of the member, we will see very clearly that waterfront property values have increased by 70% with a functioning island airport in its midst.

• (1325)

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the Bombardier C Series is a great plane. The government is very pleased that Air Canada has announced that it will be purchasing a number of these aircraft.

Let us discuss for a moment the Bombardier C Series jet. From the member's point of view, is there anything stopping Porter Airlines from purchasing the Bombardier C Series jet and flying it out of Toronto Pearson International Airport?

• (1330)

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member because it is the one myth that is put out there all the time. The reality is that this can work one way. Air Canada can buy these planes and have them fly out of the island airport, because it actually has access to the island airport.

Pearson airport, as members may know, is a slot-constrained airport, with the inability for a new entrant to come in without any significant movement on slots. As a result, Porter is actually prohibited, in its business plan and in application, from purchasing a C Series jet and finding accommodation for a schedule that works at Pearson airport, unless we want to build another airport in Pickering.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the work she did

when she was the CEO at the port authority, and for the work she did as minister of transport. She brings a level of knowledge to this debate for which I am very thankful.

No one on this side of the House is arguing that the concerns and issues identified by those who live, work, and play in that area need to be addressed. As a former mayor, I understand the responsibilities the council has to weigh and measure all of those concerns. However, I also understand the need to respect the jurisdiction of a municipality when there is a process put in place to determine what the needs of a community are and how to best address the concerns that are raised by that community.

Therefore, would the member speak a little more on the need to respect the jurisdiction of a municipality to complete its studies on the expansion proposal, as that city council needs to do?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing the motion today. It is a very timely subject and an important one on which to have a discussion.

In terms of what we know about how Torontonians feel about jets at the island airport, we have one data point. It is a 2013 Ipsos Reid poll, not an election, which was on a number of major issues and not one specific issue. When Torontonians were asked very specifically and very succinctly whether they supported the use of jets at the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, 60% were in favour and 37% were opposed. That is more than just first past the post. That is a very solid majority for what people want.

That is still not enough. We still need to have the studies that feed into the questions individual council members had on Toronto city council. We are not afraid of process. Why are the Liberals afraid of process?

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Toronto—Danforth today.

The government has noted the importance of Canada's aviation and aerospace sectors, and has noted Bombardier's contribution to these sectors. Allow me to reiterate our view that the Canadian aerospace has one of the strongest mechanisms for both investment and international trade, and serves both Canada and the world.

As the minister said at the start of the debate, our aviation and aerospace sectors connect people to jobs and help deliver essential goods and services. Their products, people and skills are in demand around the world, as are Canada's abilities as a certifier and regulator in these sectors.

Last year, our aerospace sector generated more than 180,000 jobs and added \$29 billion to our country's economy. Companies such as Bombardier export approximately 80% of the products they make.

As we have noted, the Government of Canada was pleased by Air Canada's announcement about its intention to purchase Bombardier's C Series aircraft. The C Series aircraft is a major advancement in aviation as I have mentioned, and we are confident that its addition to Air Canada's fleet will benefit both the company and Canada's aerospace sector.

Business of Supply

However, interest in the C Series has not been limited to Air Canada. The first C Series aircraft will be delivered to Swiss International Air Lines in the spring. The entry of the Swiss C Series aircraft into commercial service will give Bombardier a chance to show the world that the C Series is truly a quality aircraft for the world.

The government is proud that Transport Canada has been a part of the process to certify that the aircraft meets Canada's standards for airworthiness and environmental regulations. This initial approval is a significant step toward Bombardier obtaining full certification in Canada, Europe, the United States, and abroad. Such approval will also help Bombardier to build investor and customer confidence.

Moving on to the question of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, I would like to restate our position that the question of whether to amend the tripartite agreement and allow the expansion of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, address the use of commercial jet aircraft and extend that airport's runway was not based on whether Bombardier could sell more aircraft.

The greater Toronto area and southern Ontario as a whole are well served by their airports, and I will include the London International Airport in that mix. Let me reiterate what the minister has said.

Toronto Pearson is by far Canada's busiest airport and has more international passengers than any North American airport, after New York's John F. Kennedy International. Billy Bishop helps to connect Toronto's business heart to other major centres in Canada and the United States. Other airports like the London International Airport and Hamilton's airport are expanding and providing specialty services, for instance, Hamilton courier traffic. Together these airports serve general and commercial aviation, passengers, shippers, and businesses contributing to both local and national economies.

Billy Bishop airport now offers service to 24 cities in Canada and the U.S., with connections to more than 80 cities across the globe. It is also a base for an air ambulance service, which flew approximately 4,600 flights in 2014, and is home to a sizeable personal aviation community that includes a flight school. Billy Bishop airport is already an important contributor to Toronto's economy and is already providing a valuable service without expansion.

Last month, it was named one of the top airports in North America and the Airports Council International, ACI, 2015 airport service quality award. It tied for third in the best airports North American region category, one of only two Canadian airports to make the list along with the Ottawa international airport. This recognition demonstrates that the investments that have been made in the airport are already providing its users with better amenities, improved access, and an exceptional travel experience.

On November 12, 2015, the Minister of Transport announced that the Government of Canada would not reopen the tripartite agreement among this government, the city of Toronto, and PortsToronto to allow expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

•(1335)

As the minister has noted in the debate, the government stands by this decision. The current tripartite agreement strikes the right balance between commercial interests and the interests of local

communities, environmental and cultural challenges, including the evolution of the waterfront. This issue is larger than just the airport. With other jet-capable airports close by, we believe there has been no reason to change the current approach.

The government is not alone in this position. Several citizens groups in GTA have opposed any proposed expansion of Billy Bishop airport. Accordingly, they support our position against reopening the agreement.

As the minister pointed out, this issue goes beyond just the airport, and involves the fact that Torontonians desire a greater say in the development of their waterfront, a waterfront that could be affected by expansion of the Billy Bishop airport.

To entertain a proposal to amend the tripartite agreement between the federal government, the city of Toronto, and PortsToronto, we would have to consider more than just whether to allow jet aircraft or a runway extension. We would have to assess many factors related to safe, secure, efficient, and environmentally responsible air travel and cargo services.

This has already been done. The government continually assesses the air policy framework to ensure that Canada's air transportation system can respond to this evolving environment and is properly equipped to facilitate future growth. This decision considers the best interests of Torontonians and Canadians.

In April 2014, Toronto City Council debated the issue and actively sought the views of the then federal government. The city asked the federal government of the day to take a public position on proposed changes to the tripartite agreement that would permit the expansion of the airport and to allow jet aircraft, such as the Bombardier C Series, to operate from the airport.

Let me remind members that from April 2013 to the fall of 2015, there were multiple public meetings, conferences, and other events at which the proposed expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport was discussed. There were web forums, opportunities for public comment, and many other open avenues where anyone could express their views on the issue. Many factors related to the proposal were discussed and debated, as were its potential economic benefits, but to link the expansion of Billy Bishop with the success of the Bombardier C Series is simplistic and ignores the larger picture.

Bombardier products have always and will always succeed based on their quality and competitiveness in global markets. Opposition members cannot imply that the success of Bombardier only depends on the expansion of Billy Bishop.

Let me reiterate that the government is confident that the existing tripartite agreement strikes the right balance between commercial interests and the interests of local communities, environmental and cultural challenges, including the evolution of the waterfront.

Business of Supply

We made the right decision in not permitting the expansion, and we stand by this balanced decision. The government will therefore not support the motion.

● (1340)

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, airports do evolve. The London airport in 2008 was recognized and allowed by then Minister John Baird to have an international air cargo transport program. The government subsequently vested \$8 million in an agreement to put a terminal there. Airports can change and evolve. They fit the needs of those today, and those in the future.

If all the requirements were met, the environmental assessments were met, all the requirements of Transport Canada were met, the needs of the community were met, and the fisheries and oceans requirements were met, would she be open to allowing an expansion of Billy Bishop airport? Would she allow that to happen if all the requirements were met?

Ms. Kate Young: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for asking that question because it is true that at the right time, expansion is good, as it was when the London airport became an international airport. However, there is no compelling case to say that this Billy Bishop airport should be expanded, and the city of Toronto had a number of opportunities to open the tripartite agreement, but it never did.

Billy Bishop airport is already providing valuable airport services without an expansion, so it is important for the Toronto economy and it will remain important to the Toronto economy.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in three years at five public meetings, at each juncture the City of Toronto could have approved this project and refused to do so, in large part because its conditions were not met. The port authority has said that it cannot meet the conditions imposed by the City of Toronto and expand this airport. It has said that explicitly, as has the operator of Porter Airlines. In light of the fact that it cannot meet local conditions, would you not agree that expansion is impossible?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to remind the hon. members to speak through the Speaker, not to the members.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

Ms. Kate Young: Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that the decision was in the best interests of the people of Toronto and the people of Canada, and the environment along the waterfront is so important, as well as commercial interests in Toronto. Under the circumstances, there was no reason to open that tripartite agreement, and we have decided that we will not be reopening it.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary referenced the fact that the City of Toronto wrote to the then Minister of Transport, which was me by the way, and asked for the opinion of the government of the day. Can the parliamentary secretary tell the House the opinion that was given by the government of the day regarding the Billy Bishop airport and City of Toronto discussions on the jet expansion?

Ms. Kate Young: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that a number of times governments at all levels had an opportunity to react to this. We have decided not to reopen the current tripartite agreement after

the City of Toronto and the federal government were asked years ago to do the same.

● (1345)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the opposition's motion. However, I would like to begin by wishing everyone a happy International Women's Day. I would like to recognize all of the women in the House, all of the women members of Parliament from all parties, the women who work in our offices, the women who support the House, and the women who work in security. They all are empowerment.

This motion mixes and confuses two important issues: support for our aerospace industry, in this motion specifically Bombardier; and city building, in this motion the impact of the proposed expansion of the Billy Bishop island airport on the waterfront and the City of Toronto. The motion confuses the two issues by linking them, and this lessens the debate. We can debate how best to support the aerospace industry. That is a worthwhile endeavour. However, why tie it to the island airport? It oversimplifies the problem and it does not offer long-term solutions. Let us be clear: expanding one airport would not guarantee a future for our aerospace industry or for Bombardier.

The form of this motion is divisive. It creates a notion that supporting aerospace must be done at the cost of city building. It does not. People in the aerospace industry can be city builders. City builders can champion the aerospace industry. We will all be stronger if we work together. I cannot support this motion because of the way it is set up. It is divisive and it would not get us closer to solutions. It would be detrimental to the city building happening in Toronto and at our waterfront in the city. We can work together to find solutions.

It is simplistic to say that the answer to the problems facing our aerospace industry in general, or Bombardier specifically, is to be found by building larger, more-extensive airports long into the future, even if the expansion proposed is contrary to the community's interests. We can and should do better at addressing this issue. This motion, though, would fail to provide any solutions.

My riding of Toronto—Danforth contains both large residential areas and nearly 300 acres of industrial and commercial lands that make up the port lands. We overlook the island airport and sit adjacent to it, and in some cases under the flight path for the Billy Bishop island airport. Although I am proud that Bombardier is a strong Canadian company and am a supporter of the current configuration of the island airport, I am opposed to this motion today.

I support Bombardier.

[*Translation*]

Bombardier is a Canadian icon. From the 1930s until the late 1960s, it was a pioneer of the modern snowmobile.

Business of Supply

This Canadian giant and its many divisions produce a remarkable range of products. Bombardier's rail and aerospace divisions and their respective administrative offices employ tens of thousands of people from Burnaby, British Columbia, to Saint-Bruno, Quebec.

Bombardier manufactures snowmobiles, monorail systems, amphibious firefighting aircraft, and rolling stock. The work done by Bombardier employees can be seen all over the world and in our own subway tunnels and garages. Bombardier is important to Canada.

Over the last decade, one of Bombardier's crucial breakthroughs in terms of products has been the C Series aircraft. This category of aircraft is an absolutely marvellous piece of technology. Everyone agrees that it is one of the quietest planes in the world. What is more, it is in demand: just last month, Air Canada signed a letter of intent to purchase 45 of these jets, with an option for 30 more.

There is a market solution available that could help Bombardier with its financial troubles, and we know that the government is looking at the company's request for financial assistance, so that its C Series production can proceed.

• (1350)

[English]

The issue is not the quality of Bombardier's jets, nor even the noise from these planes. It is the disruption from the air traffic, the impact on wildlife, the impact on small watercraft on the lake, and the impact on the people of Toronto.

Furthermore, I agree that the island airport in its existing configuration should remain. It brings travellers, tourists, and business people to the centre of the city that I call home. It is an important part of our city.

I would like to underline that the City of Toronto is not just an economic engine. It is home to millions of people. The expansion of the island airport would harm a recently revitalized waterfront. It is a place where there has been significant investment over the past years, and one in which we are continuing to invest. Therefore, I do not support expanding the island airport.

My riding would be directly impacted by an expanded island airport. The southernmost portion of my riding is a park called Tommy Thompson Park. It is in fact one of the environmental consequences of Toronto's expansion over the last 50 years.

The park is a long spit of land that juts into Lake Ontario. It was originally designed as a breakwall to protect the inner harbour from erosion. This five-kilometre long, 1,200-acre structure is physical proof of the changes Toronto has gone through. It is built from the soil that was removed to build subway lines and office towers over the last five decades. Nature has reclaimed it, and we have turned it into a park.

It is not just the people from across the GTA who appreciate this strip of land. This park is one of the few places on the Toronto waterfront where natural habitats exist for birds and other species. It is home to some 316 species of birds and a wide variety of mammals. Beavers, mink, and muskrat call this part of Toronto home. The area has been designated an important bird area by

BirdLife International, and it is an important breeding area and migratory stopover for many of these birds.

Running an expanded airport's flight path adjacent to this area of national significance would be significant for the bird life and would be incompatible with the use these animals are making of the land. An expanded flight schedule that includes jets would also be incompatible with the uses residents in my riding and the GTA are finding for this park.

The impact on the residents of the GTA, were the island airport to be expanded, would also be significant. The motion before us speaks only to the purported economic benefits that the member opposite imagines would flow from adding football fields of tarmac into the Toronto waterfront. There is no mention of the millions of people who visit the Toronto Islands each year to picnic, swim, and skate on the frozen ponds.

We are a city built on a lake. Our waterfront and islands are vital parts of our identity and our communal space. Tourists visit our waterfront, and we have invested in its revitalization. After all of this effort, all of this city building, why would we damage it by increasing the length of runways and landing jets over our heads?

The motion fails to realize what the waterfront means to my riding and the greater Toronto area as a whole. The motion envisages the harbour as a place where only work is accomplished, and where dollars and cents flow into Toronto. It fails to see the harbour and the waterfront more broadly as crucial public space. The waterfront is a place where people live, work, and relax. The island airport exists and is an important part of the downtown core of Toronto, but it does not need to define that space.

I am opposed to the motion, because it does not accord with the vision my community has for Toronto's future. The expansion of the island airport is not compatible with a waterfront that is a livable and accessible place. It detracts from what we have worked to build, for people to study, work, and visit. An expanded island airport does not include space for sailboats, dragon boats, and canoes. This is Toronto's space to relax. It does not allow for migratory bird colonies on a spit of land that was once just construction material. It does not allow for quiet secluded beaches with endless lake views, and it is a version of Toronto that is fundamentally contrary to the type of development the city needs and wants in spaces surrounding its harbour.

Our efforts should be directed toward expanding cultural spaces, building green infrastructure, and investing in housing in the spaces left in the downtown core. Smart and careful investment in the urban environment that enhances people's quality of life will bring benefits to Canada and the GTA.

The economic benefits of a livable waterfront are just as important and would bring greater benefit than a bigger airport. We should support city building and not assume that a few hundred metres of asphalt would somehow cure the problems of the world's leading aerospace and train manufacturer.

Statements by Members

●(1355)

To conclude, I am happy to take the hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek on a tour of my riding, so that she can see first-hand what I am talking about. It is, after all, almost migratory bird season for Tommy Thompson Park.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Toronto—Danforth for that wonderful speech. I am a bird biologist myself. I never thought it would come so soon in my rookie term as an MP to hear the words “important bird area”. I was going to bring up this fact myself in my question for the member, but then she brought it up herself. Therefore, I will switch the question and perhaps ask the member to speak about the environmental assessment process for this situation and the fact that it seems to be governed by the port authority, which gets most of its funding from the airport itself.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, what is important to take into account when we are looking at this is that there is an important natural habitat for wildlife in the vicinity of this airport, and that is part of what we include as a city. A city is not just buildings. Therefore, it is very important that we consider the impacts to the natural habitats, as we consider our future plans for development in the city and when we consider ideas such as what has been proposed in this opposition motion of expanding the island airport. As I have mentioned, 316 migratory bird species are in Tommy Thompson Park. We need to protect them.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today we are celebrating International Women's Day. I want to take this opportunity to remind hon. members that voters elected a record 88 women to the House.

Unfortunately, there is little hiccup. This is only a quarter of the members of the House, and that proportion has remained unchanged. We have yet to achieve equality here and elsewhere. Feminism has been a hot topic in Quebec recently. Many people claim to be feminists, while others choose to avoid the word, thinking it has a negative connotation. In fact, the definition of feminism is quite simple: it is the belief that women should have the same rights as men. The quest for equality among humans is not about being against anyone, it is about being against ignorance.

Whether we are staunch feminists or not-so-staunch feminists, if this day makes us wonder how far we have come in achieving gender equality, then we can all roll up our sleeves and get to work.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on International Women's Day we pay tribute to women around the world.

Women are our mothers, our sisters, and our daughters. They formed the foundation of our society in the darkest periods of history. Today, we celebrate all their past and ongoing contributions.

[*English*]

On this day I would like to highlight my own mother not for one special accomplishment but for a lifetime of compassion, hard work, and perseverance. She was solely responsible for raising a family during troubling times and imbued her children with the values that would guide them through their ambitions. She exemplified the unshakable characteristics that strong women can have, characteristics that woman in Vimy and all of Canada exhibit daily as they help empower our children and all women.

* * *

2015 NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSICS

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Queen's University professor Arthur McDonald, who now shares the Nobel Prize in Physics with Takaaki Kajita from Japan, for their discovery of neutrino oscillations, which changes our understanding of the innermost workings of matter. The discovery concluded that neutrinos, which for a long time were considered massless, must have some mass, however small.

Experiments continue worldwide to capture neutrinos and examine their properties. These new discoveries are expected to change our understanding of the history, the structure, and the future of the universe.

Dr. McDonald's research yielded a historic discovery in particle physics at the Sudbury Neutrino Observatory. His innovative vision has made Canada a world leader in the field of particle astrophysics and has paved the way for international collaborations.

I congratulate Dr. McDonald.

* * *

●(1400)

[*Translation*]**GRANBY INTERNATIONAL SONG FESTIVAL**

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Granby international song festival is held in my riding and is in its 48th year. This festival can be proud of the fact that it is the largest French-language song competition in Canada, if not the world. Today, it is a non-profit organization that attracts 45,000 spectators every year.

In light of the fact that every dollar invested in culture returns seven dollars in economic spinoffs, I am proud that the Government of Canada has supported this festival for many years. The Granby song festival is directed by Pierre Fortier, a man who has spent many years promoting French-language songs.

Statements by Members

He received a wonderful tribute for his work and dedication last fall, when he was decorated with the Ordre des francophones d'Amérique. He joined a very select group of people, including Luc Plamondon and Gilles Vigneault, who have made major contributions to our culture and heritage. We congratulate him and hope that he has a super festival.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate International Women's Day, a global day recognizing the economic, political, and social achievements of all women.

Since the first International Women's Day in 1911, women have fought to achieve greater equality. However, there is still much work to be done as Canada has fallen to number 30 in the global gender parity rankings.

Women are still not paid equally compared to their male counterparts and are still under-represented in business and politics. Globally, women's education, health, and the violence women face is still worse than that of men.

I am humbled to stand in this place following in the footsteps of all the women parliamentarians who have served our country. They have fought to ensure that the 88 women who serve in this Parliament can accurately reflect women's diverse interests, voices, and experiences.

Women and girls are deeply impacted by poverty, climate change, food insecurity, economic crises, and the lack of affordable child care.

The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities.

* * *

JOHN MUNN

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 15, Newfoundlander John Munn was named as one of 38 Canadians to receive the national historic designation.

In 1825, Mr. Munn arrived in Newfoundland at the age of 18. He lived in Harbour Grace, where he established one of the largest and most important businesses in Newfoundland at the time. Munn was an outport merchant and the face of John Munn and Co., a firm that gave great opportunity for growth to the seal, commercial, and inshore fishermen. He was truly a pioneer in the expansion of the Newfoundland fisheries of the 19th century.

He grew his business and became one of the most prominent political and social figures in Newfoundland. John Munn was a leader in the Confederation movement, and one of only nine elected representatives to the legislature in 1869 to support the union of Newfoundland and the Dominion of Canada.

John Munn made his mark on Newfoundland two centuries ago, and I am honoured to see his legacy live on in Canada today. I rise to thank Parks Canada for this recognition.

SWIMMING CANADA CHAMPION

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is International Women's Day. Each and every day, women in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex establish new standards of excellence, in business, at home, in sports, and in many other fields.

Today I want to recognize the outstanding achievements of 15-year-old Madison Broad from Wallaceburg, Ontario. When I first met Maddy in 2014, she had won two gold and two silver medals at the Swimming Canada Canadian Age Group Championships. Since then, she has won many more gold and various medals in various competitions. Just last week, Madison finished first in the Orlando grand prix 100-metre backstroke.

Maddy is now focused on the Olympic trials, and they happen in April of this year. Let us join my constituents of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and give her the support she deserves to reach Olympic gold.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

● (1405)

GRAND RIVER HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to wish a very happy birthday to Ms. Elizabeth South.

Betty, as she is known to friends and family, will be turning 90 years young on March 14. If this were not impressive enough on its own, I also want to highlight Betty's nearly 40 years of volunteerism at the Grand River Hospital, Freeport Campus, where you can still find her every Monday helping to make the community a better place.

Betty is a role model for us all, and we should all strive to be the example that she sets. I hope that I am able to do even half of what she does, if I am lucky enough to get to her age.

I would ask members from all sides of the House to join me in wishing Betty a very happy 90th birthday.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this International Women's Day, I want to pay tribute to all of those courageous women around the world and in Canada who have inspired me: the women I knew in Congo, who were beaten by police and undressed in the street for peacefully demonstrating for their right to fair elections; Flora Terah, in Kenya, whose only son was murdered because she had the audacity to run for parliament; the indigenous women in Mexico, who fought successfully for the right to stand for municipal council; Saadia, in my riding, who worked for 17 years in a family shelter, giving hope to victims of domestic violence; and the families of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

On International Women's Day, we in the House stand with them for a life free of violence and a world where our daughters and sons can grow up with full gender parity.

* * *

CANADIAN CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Chiropractic Association are on Parliament Hill today to raise awareness of the impact of back pain and musculoskeletal, or MSK, conditions on our workforce and Canada's overall competitiveness.

More than 11 million Canadians are affected by MSK conditions every year. These conditions rival cardiovascular disease as an overall health burden and are the second leading cause of reasons for doctors visits. These conditions impact Canada's productivity, as up to 85% of workers will suffer from back pain at least once in their lifetimes. MSK conditions make it more difficult to stay physically active, which can help to prevent and manage many chronic conditions.

I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in welcoming CCA members who have come from across the country to meet with government decision-makers.

Canadian chiropractors, as spine, muscle, and nervous system experts, help relieve MSK conditions by providing evidence-informed, conservative care options, and play an essential role in the continued health of Canadians every year.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

2015 NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSICS

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute the fantastic achievements of Dr. Arthur McDonald, the co-winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physics. Dr. McDonald, a professor at Queen's University, led a global team of over 270 researchers from 13 international institutions to the discovery that neutrinos can change identities, thereby confirming that particles have mass. This discovery upset the standard model of physics and changed our understanding of how the universe works.

The team conducted these experiments at the Sudbury Neutrino Observatory, or SNOLAB, in the Creighton mine, located two kilometres underground in my riding of Sudbury. The lab is the

Statements by Members

deepest clean room facility in the world, allowing scientists to study the particles free from cosmic radiation constantly bombarding the earth's surface.

[Translation]

Residents of Sudbury and all Canadians have reason to be proud of Dr. McDonald's scientific achievements.

[English]

I invite all members to join me in conveying our deepest congratulations to the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physics winner, Dr. McDonald, and his team of collaborators.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

FORMER MAYOR OF MISSISSAUGA

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is International Women's Day, I have the privilege to stand today in the House to recognize an extraordinary woman and civic leader, Hazel McCallion, who is in Ottawa today. As an outstanding advocate for her community and her constituents, a public servant, and my friend, Ms. McCallion has been a driving force for real change in my riding. As the longest-serving mayor of Mississauga, her determination, vision, and spirit helped guide the city of Mississauga on its path toward becoming the sixth-largest city in Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Mr. Speaker, despite an early prediction that she would only see one term, she successfully won 11 straight re-election bids, proof not only of her tenacity but her many talents. Hurricane Hazel is revered locally, and highly respected both nationally and abroad. A passionate ambassador for her city, her wealth of experience—

● (1410)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beauport—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beauport—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this International Women's Day, I would like to celebrate the social, political, and economic advances made by women here and elsewhere that have made a difference in our everyday lives and in our society.

Whether they be daughters, mothers, career women, or informal caregivers, these women share with us their experiences and a small part of their lives and, through their actions, create unique opportunities to build a better future.

International Women's Day gives us the opportunity to recognize the achievements of women and think about the work that still needs to be done, particularly when it comes to combatting violence against women.

Oral Questions

The first time I attended a meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians, I realized how important it is to raise awareness among men and to get them involved in putting an end to such violence.

It is essential to work together and continue to support these exceptional women who work day in and day out—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

* * *

[English]

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I participated in three events welcoming Syrian refugees to Canada.

The first was to recognize the efforts of the residents of Markham-Lawrence community to raise funds for two families and their accommodations. The second was to participate in a fundraiser for the Guildwood Refugee Action Committee, where we heard the harrowing tale of Siham Abu Sitta and her two children fleeing from Syria. The third was at the home of my daughter Sarah, who along with her husband Phil, and their team, welcomed a Syrian family with a tasty Middle Eastern Halal meal.

As we stood around the kitchen eating and conversing through Google translate, I was reminded of that great Biblical passage:

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me...

Is it not wonderful how our nation can be a light in this world of darkness?

* * *

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, International Women's Day can celebrate women's achievements and highlight what holds us back, but words ring hollow if there is no follow-through, no action.

Our collective work over this next year must be based on action. What can we in this chamber do to end epidemic violence against women? What can we do to get women elected to help our communities make good decisions? What can we do to lock in equal pay for work of equal value?

Taking immediate action will make this a better place, not just for women, but for our economy, our society, our soul as a nation.

I look forward to rising with members in one year's time to celebrate what we in this House have achieved, with and for Canadian women.

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that today is International Women's Day.

This day is recognized by Canadians, as well as by the United Nations, as a day to celebrate women and their place in the world. This year's UN theme is “pledge for parity”, which aligns well to our Canadian theme “empowerment leads to equality”.

As your first female engineer member of Parliament, I applaud the efforts of the members of the status of women committee and the work planned by the Special Committee on Pay Equity to advance the cause of gender parity.

Consider how each of us can pledge to help empower women: by encouraging women and girls in their ambitions; by creating an inclusive and flexible work environment where everyone's contributions are valued; and by supporting the recommendations from our committees.

Celebrate International Women's Day, and all mothers, daughters, sisters, and fellow leaders, who make this world a better place.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

• (1415)

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark International Women's Day, as some of my colleagues have already done.

One minute is not much time to talk about gender equality. Everyone knows that our government holds this value, as did my parents, who taught me that success, growth, and prosperity know no gender.

When I got into politics, I always had one objective in mind, which I cherish as a mother of four children. I want my two daughters to be able to dream and have the same opportunities as my two sons. When women and girls have the opportunity to succeed, the whole country is enriched.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on International Women's Day, my thoughts are with the Yazidi girls in Iraq who are being captured, tortured, raped, and forced to be sex slaves by ISIS. Those who can actually flee with their lives are now languishing in IDP camps, but we can help them. We can bring them to Canada.

With private sponsors who are willing to help, will the Prime Minister commit today to placing these Yazidi girls in the joint sponsorship program so they can come to Canada and find safe haven?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last election, the Liberal Party committed to bringing in 25,000 refugees from Syria and that is exactly what we did.

Oral Questions

As we look to how we can continue to demonstrate that Canada is an open and welcoming country, we are of course open to all sorts of different suggestions and ways we can continue to demonstrate that Canada is a place that will accept people, not just because they are fleeing tremendous hardships, but because they will contribute to the economic growth and success of this country in the years to come. I look forward to doing more of that in the months and years to come.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister is in Washington this week, he will be hanging out with his friends from the Center for American Progress. These are the same anti-Canadian American lobbyists who called our energy sector a “dirty business”. Meanwhile, Petronas is threatening to cancel its \$36 billion investment in British Columbia LNG because of Liberal policies.

Instead of toasting champagne with anti-Canadian American lobbyists who want to kill Canadian jobs, will the Prime Minister finally stand up for Canada's energy sector?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few years ago I went down to Washington and indeed spoke at an event hosted by the Center for American Progress who addressed us all together. What I told the Center for American Progress was that this Canadian Liberal supports the Keystone XL pipeline. I talked about the issues that we need to put forward to promote the fact that we can export our resources sustainably and responsibly.

Unfortunately, for 10 years, Canada had a black mark when we had a prime minister who refused to put together the environment and economy. That is what we are going to do and that is the message I am going to give to our friends down south.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps when the Prime Minister is in Washington then, he can ask President Obama to reverse his decision on Keystone and make—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal members will have an opportunity to vote on the Conservative motion and help Bombardier sell more planes, but the Liberals keep getting in the way, especially the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Why would the Prime Minister rather reward his friend than help Bombardier create good jobs?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even after their defeat in the last election, the Conservatives are still trying to pit one part of the country against another. We respect local desires, concerns, and interests. That is how you build a strong country, rather than exploiting the differences between provinces for ideological, strategic, and political purposes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Toronto island airport is a driver of jobs and economic growth. Allowing it to expand would create a multi-billion customer for the new Bombardier C Series and create thousands of jobs in Toronto and Montreal. The Liberals just do not understand that jobs do not come out of thin air.

Will the minister get out of the way, approve the expansion, and help get the C Series program off the ground?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were delighted to hear recently that Air Canada intends to buy 45 airplanes from the C Series because it believes in this aircraft, which, by the way, is the best in its class in the world. We can also be proud of the fact that the Quebec government is intending to drop its litigation against Air Canada.

We are making progress in creating jobs in the aerospace industry in this country. I would like to know why the member for Beauce thinks that the C Series is not an airplane that anyone wants to buy.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bombardier's new plane is quieter than those that were allowed to land at the Toronto island airport when the tripartite agreement was signed in 1983. Rather than block the creation of good jobs, the minister should follow his own advice and use evidence-based decision-making to modernize the regulations governing the use of this airport. Will the minister accept the evidence, consider the thousands of jobs created, and allow the Toronto island airport to expand?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will say it again. I had the opportunity this morning to make a 20-minute speech, but the official opposition members have obviously had difficulty understanding the basis of our decision with respect to the tripartite agreement. We made it very clear that we were achieving the right balance between commercial interests and the interests of the community. We do care about local issues. Unfortunately, the current opposition does not seem to share the same approach.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new report released yesterday proves that the pay gap for women in Canada is actually getting worse. Meanwhile, the costs of child care are astronomical and rising, putting enormous strain on households that include young families and making it more difficult for women to participate in paid work. It is almost always women who wind up making sacrifices in their career when affordable child care is not there.

The Liberals promised Canadians that they would take action on a national child care program within the first 100 days. Where is it?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party was elected on a platform of investing \$20 billion over the next 10 years in social infrastructure, which includes social housing, seniors housing, and affordable child care. That approach is exactly what we are going to put forward in the budget.

However, it is interesting to me that the member opposite would be talking about that, because if he were in government right now, he would be busy trying to figure out how to cut \$18 billion of spending from government so he could balance the books at every cost, which was the commitment the NDP made in the election.

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EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the commitment of the Liberals was for a national child care program within the first 100 days, and as we have just seen, that is another broken promise.

[Translation]

Only 33% of unemployed women have access to employment insurance compared to 43% of men. Women are still more likely than men to work in precarious jobs.

Can the Prime Minister, who claims to be a feminist, tell us why the Liberals voted yesterday against a motion that would have given tens of thousands of women access to employment insurance?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the people of Canada know very well that we are committed to reforming the EI system to help all Canadians who need it.

That is exactly what we are doing. We are working very hard on this and we will have more to say in the weeks to come, especially when we table our budget.

* * *

• (1425)

[English]

TAXATION

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, another broken promise, and yesterday's motion contained three Liberal promises, yet they voted against it.

Internal documents reveal that the government gave a secret sweetheart deal to multi-millionaire tax cheats, with no penalties, and even a discount on the interest. Once again, we see there are two sets of rules—one for the wealthy and another one for everyone else. How many other times has this happened, and is the Prime Minister going to call an investigation into this tax scam for the rich?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are of course engaged with CRA on the issues brought forward. It is a concern to us that all Canadians pay their fair share of taxes, and we will ensure that continues to be the case in the future. As for decisions made under a previous government, if they are erroneous we will look into them for sure.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as this case illustrates, the problem is that the rich are not paying their fair share and are let off the hook by the Canada Revenue Agency.

The question was this. Is the Prime Minister going to order an investigation to figure out how this happened? He cannot hide behind the fact that it was a previous administration. Canadians have a right to know that the tax system is equal for all Canadians. This case proves just the opposite. There is one set of rules for the rich and another for everyone else. What is the Prime Minister going to do about investigating this case so that Canadians know there is tax fairness in this country? Stop protecting the rich. Start protecting a tax system that is fair for all.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things at the heart of the campaign that led to our forming government was the idea that the previous government had successively given advantages and tax breaks to the wealthiest Canadians, and not to the middle class and those folks working hard to join the middle class. That is why we stood against the child benefit scheme the previous government had put forward. It was benefiting the wealthiest and not those who needed it the most. That is what we are looking forward to turning around.

It was disappointing for us to see that the NDP sided with the previous government in giving child benefits to millionaire families when it was other folks who needed these more. That is what we are going to do. That is what we were elected to do.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, mining is of vital importance to the Canadian economy. It provides hundreds of thousands of jobs, particularly in remote areas and for aboriginal people.

Yesterday, the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada had its annual convention in Toronto. It is one of the world's largest gatherings on mining and mineral exploration.

The Prime Minister was also in Toronto yesterday. Why was he unable to stop by the convention to show his support and his interest in Canadian mining?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to spend two days at the Prospectors & Developers Association. The message I heard from the prospectors and developers was that they are leading the world in sustainable practices. We told them they had the full support of our government. They are committed to innovation. They are committed to green technologies. It is a partnership that is in the interests of the sector, in the interests of the government, and even in the interests of the opposition.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was busy in Toronto yesterday, not with PDAC, but with pandas.

While he did not have time for PDAC, he does have time in Washington for his friends, the Center for American Progress, his pals that he is going to be hanging out with, a blatantly anti-Canadian organization that calls Canadian oil dirty and destructive. They have worked overtime to kill keystone XL.

Does the Prime Minister agree with this group? Why is he spending so much time in Washington with anti-Canadian groups and no time with job creators here in Canada?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it may be unusual for the opposition, but this government actually talks to people who disagree with it. The reason we do that is we believe that the force of argument might even prevail.

The Prime Minister has already said that he spoke with the group in support of the pipeline. We are talking to people right across the country, some of whom have a different view. When one has open ears, one might even be able to learn.

• (1430)

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Petronas, the company supporting LNG in British Columbia, has invested over \$12 billion going through and receiving environmental approval, both nationally and provincially. This \$36-billion project would create thousands of jobs. However, the Liberals have added more red tape, additional barriers, and significant costs.

Will the Liberals commit today to supporting the B.C. LNG industry and Canadian job creation, yes or no?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is reviewing a number of major LNG projects, including Pacific NorthWest.

Yesterday, Pacific NorthWest submitted substantial new information. This information will be assessed by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. We will be evaluating new information submitted by the proponent in an efficient way that meets our obligations to Canadians, as we do for every major project.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have blocked the expansion of the Toronto island airport, the creation of jobs in the aerospace industry, opposed energy east, added more red tape to the B.C. LNG industry, and is increasing taxes in the technology sector and on small business, but we have two pandas named Hope and Joy.

Is it the Liberals' intention to shut the entire country down?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we ran on a campaign of hope and hard work. That is what Canadians supported.

If we take the logic of the member opposite, they would be making massive cuts of billions of dollars. They promote austerity. We promote growth and job creation. We have a plan that is going to invest billions of dollars in infrastructure; we have a plan that is going to reduce the tax burden on middle-class Canadians; we have a plan that is going to advance the innovation agenda. We are going to grow the economy and create jobs.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government turned on the taps and is promising outrageous deficits. Canadian families know how tough it is to make ends meet, and they know that racking up credit card debt to put food on the table is not the right way to handle things.

Will the government cut up its credit card and stop mortgaging our children's future?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question.

The Conservatives left us a dismal economic legacy. On October 19, Canadians made a different choice. They chose economic growth and investment in families. We began in December by cutting taxes for the middle class. We will go forward with our game-changing plan for families by deploying the Canada child benefit, which will help hundreds of millions of children in Canada and nine out of 10 families.

We will also go forward with our game-changing plan to invest in infrastructure. That is what it means to work for Canadians.

[English]

The Speaker: Order, please. We all know the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin and others can count very well, and we appreciate that, but let us not hear it when someone else is speaking. Let us show respect for one another.

The hon member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government recently crowed about fighting for the middle class. I have my doubts about that when I see the debt spiralling out of control. This spending is motivated by Liberal ideology and it is going to hurt our economy.

Can the Minister of Finance explain to Canadians how debt is going to make us better off?

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

Our vision is completely different than that of the Conservatives. We are going to invest in growth. We have lowered taxes for nine million Canadians and will continue to have measures for the middle class. We will do this in a responsible manner and we will continue to work to achieve our objective of reducing the debt to GDP ratio during our term.

Oral Questions

It has always been our goal to balance the books in a more difficult economic context. However, our priority is to work for this country's middle class.

* * *

• (1435)

[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, access to safe abortion services is fundamental to a woman's right to choose. It must be equally available to all Canadian women. However, women in places like PEI do not have access to abortion services and they should.

A commitment to women's rights must be more than talk and promises; it must mean concrete action. Therefore, will the minister commit today to guaranteeing that every woman in every region of the country has access to abortion services?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will remind the hon. member that our government fully supports a woman's right to choose. Our government also recognizes that there are inequities in access to a number of health services across the country, including abortion.

I have been discussing with my provincial and territorial colleagues the fundamentals of the Canada Health Act and the fact that there should be access to all medically necessary services on the basis of need and not on the basis of ability to pay. I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure access is available to all Canadians.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unsafe abortions account for 13% of maternal mortality in the world. If we really want to save lives then we must do something about this.

Why is the Minister of International Development upholding the Conservative policy and refusing to fund abortion services abroad where it is permitted? It is legal in several countries.

Why is she refusing to defend the rights of women around the world?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe that my hon. colleague misunderstood my speech yesterday. We are very proud to support a wide range of reproductive health services.

Yesterday, I was joined by Dr. Babatunde, from the United Nations population fund. The plans we announced did not directly target abortion, but that does not mean we are against it. We were responding to a demand specifically focused on family planning, sex education, safe abortions, and the fight against sexually transmitted diseases.

[English]

FINANCE

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2003, the Ontario Liberal Party came to power, assuring Canadians and Ontarians that they would reduce debt “as conditions allow”.

Since then, we have \$300 billion in debt, which has doubled; \$22,000 per person is owed, which has doubled. It has increased faster than any other province.

Yesterday, the parliamentary secretary said that he would take no lessons from our successes, so I am wondering this. Is it because the Minister of Finance would rather be taking lessons from the disastrous legacies of Kathleen Wynne and Dalton McGuinty in racking up debt?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to deficits. Our focus is on investing in the middle class and growing the economy. That is what Canadians expect of us.

After 10 years of weak economic growth, the worst possible reaction to an economic downturn would be to balance the budget at any cost. This is the kind of blind fixation Canadians rejected on October 19.

Canadians expect us to deliver on growth and the economy, and that is exactly what we will do.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for weeks the Liberals have been giving mixed signals and dodging questions about small businesses and the new job-killing start-up tax. Some days they want to increase taxes for everybody, and some days they only want to raise taxes on small business owners.

When will the Liberals abandon their job-killing start-up tax?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): It is the opposite, Mr. Speaker. This government supports small and medium-sized businesses. We are committed to helping them grow. We are committed to helping them innovate, to become more productive and to become expert oriented. We have launched the Canexport program, which has received a wonderful response.

This morning, for International Women's Day, I was with Startup Canada for its women's day breakfast, and I met a young entrepreneur, a girl in grade 5, by the name of Frankie. She and her friend started up a business.

The spirit of entrepreneurship is here. This government recognizes that small businesses are job creators and will grow the economy.

Oral Questions

●(1440)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister said that the Liberals would “do justice to caregivers”, and today we learned what that meant. The Liberals are cutting 8,000 spots available this year via the caregiver immigration stream. This program provides vital support for families that are looking after loved ones with physical or mental disabilities. These changes leave the most vulnerable Canadians without care.

Why have the Liberals chosen to cut 27% of the immigration spots available to caregivers?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in respect to caregivers, the House and the government stands behind the significant contribution that caregivers make to Canadian society.

We stand by our campaign commitment, which is to eliminate the LMIA fee of \$1,000 that is required to hire a caregiver. We also stand behind our commitment to work with provinces and territories to facilitate the work and the hiring of caregivers.

Caregivers represent a significant contribution to our country. We recognize that and we are working on processing their claims expeditiously.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Therefore, Mr. Speaker, recognizing a contribution means an 8,000 person cut.

The government has also cut the numbers of spots available under the federal skilled worker in Canada experience class by 21%. These cuts to economic immigration come at a time when our workforce is aging, our economy is slowing and refugees are waiting for months to have long-term affordable housing.

In this context, could the minister explain how he plans to provide the services needed to ensure that the government's planned 250% increase in refugees is successful, and how much this will cost?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in terms of our specifics that were announced today, let me elaborate on the plan. It considers the economic needs of our country and it considers the pressing need for family reunification and our humanitarian tradition, which are important vis-a-vis refugees and people coming in under the agency category.

With respect to the economic needs of the country, we hear these needs loud and clear. We are responding to them. The levels that we have announced are over 50% of the overall targets of immigrants that we are bringing to our country. That is responsive to Canadian industry, to Canadian business and to making the country prosper and grow.

* * *

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new study reveals that women now earn 72% of what men earn. That kind of discrimination is unacceptable and unfairly affects women. Thanks

to the NDP, a parliamentary committee will propose an action plan to achieve pay equity.

Will the government promise today to pass the proactive bill on pay equity so that equal work for equal pay, the slogan women have chanted for too long, can become a reality?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, having a gender wage gap in Canada in 2016 is unacceptable. As the first commitment toward pay equity, our Prime Minister appointed a gender-balanced cabinet. We are firmly committed to a public service that reflects the diversity in society, which includes gender parity, and we have supported the appointment of a special committee on pay equity.

We will continue to lead by example and work with all members of the House and our provincial and territorial partners to close the gap.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not just about wages. Women are also far more likely to be engaged in precarious work. Two-thirds of all part-time workers and more than half of all temporary workers in Canada are women. This makes it harder for women to earn a stable income, to afford food and rent, and to qualify for programs like employment insurance.

Why did the Liberals let Canadian women down by voting against lowering the threshold on EI?

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely true that the gap is growing for women, and that more and more are not able to access the very services they deserve. That is why we committed during the election to review the EI system, modernize it, and bring it into today's world, which will serve all Canadians.

●(1445)

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart (Fundy Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is International Women's Day, a day when we celebrate women's achievements and their potential in Canada and globally.

Speaking of achievements, we saw a record number of 88 women elected to the House in the last election. The Prime Minister appointed an equal number of women and men to cabinet.

Could the Minister of Status of Women inform us of other actions this government is taking to ensure women can participate more actively in democratic and public life?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to advancing gender equality in all areas of Canadian life. The theme of International Women's Day this year is “Women's Empowerment Leads to Equality”.

Oral Questions

I recently launched a call for proposals for projects that would increase women's participation by supporting the work of indigenous women in their communities and amplifying the voices of women working to enhance their civic and political participation.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ISIL has declared war on Canada, yet the Prime Minister responds to the women and men who died and fought in Afghanistan with a message that their efforts were worthless by ending the CF-18 air cover.

How many deaths overseas and here at home will it take for the Prime Minister to accept that some campaign promises are made to be broken?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we can agree that ISIL is a horrible threat. However, we have a difference of opinion on how we will achieve the defeat of this horrible entity.

In order to do this, and from our experience, it will have to happen on the ground. To achieve the outcome, we need to train Iraqi security forces and ensure they have the right intelligence to create the right plan; hence, the reason we have tripled our trainers and doubled the intelligence.

I hope the opposition votes with us and supports our plan.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we asked the Minister of Veterans Affairs to give Canadians an explanation as to why the Liberals were cancelling the Afghanistan war memorial.

There were 40,000 brave men and women in Afghanistan, some who trained in my riding of Base Borden and served there. All he had to say was: "More information regarding the project will be available in the coming months".

Why will the Liberals not honour our veterans and why can the minister not provide a straight answer?

[*Translation*]

Why did this Liberal government and this minister cancel the plan for the Afghanistan war memorials?

[*English*]

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at the question because I thought I answered it very clearly yesterday.

It is important to honour the men and women who served in Afghanistan. In 2014, an all-party motion was put forward, and it was accepted by the House. I am working closely with the Minister of Canadian Heritage to see this memorial built.

TAXATION

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives balanced their budget and we helped families balance their budgets. The Conservative family tax cuts enhanced universal child care, helped 100% of families and kids, and gave back \$2,000 of their own money. Families can and have to balance their budgets. The Liberals cannot and will not balance their budget.

Why do the Liberals insist on taking benefits away from hard-working moms and dads to pay for their out-of-control spending?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear this question. That matter was an important element of our platform in the last election and contributed to electing a government that is sensitive both to economic growth and to inclusive growth.

We will have very good news in a matter of a few days, which I think all members in the House are looking forward to, including members opposite.

* * *

ETHICS

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week we heard that the Prime Minister's brother was lobbying the Minister of Public Safety to have a terrorist's Canadian citizenship restored. Then we have the agriculture minister hiring as his chief of staff somebody with a big interest in egg farms in Canada, and then we have the justice minister's husband lobbying her on behalf of his own company, and then we have the House leader and his chief of staff cozying up to the Irvings.

Does the Prime Minister not understand conflict of interest?

● (1450)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister understands is the importance of raising the bar on accountability and transparency from the shabby record in front of us.

That is why when our government was elected we took unprecedented steps to bring more openness and more transparency to government, and that includes always abiding by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner's advice. That is what ministers in this government have done and will continue to do.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, indigenous women in Canada are more likely to be victims of violence. Many studies have shown that being a survivor of violence has a significant impact on mental health, but for women on reserves in rural and remote communities, mental health supports and services are often inadequate or non-existent.

Oral Questions

Will the health minister work with indigenous communities to ensure that culturally sensitive mental health services are available to all women?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to this important question.

I would agree with the member opposite that for indigenous women in particular, violence can often contribute to real challenges in mental health. We are fully committed as a government to responding to the mental health needs of Canadians. The Prime Minister has asked me to make sure that we increase access to mental health services for all Canadians.

I would be particularly interested in working with the member opposite to ensure that we can provide adequate mental health services to indigenous women and men in her community and in all Canadian communities.

* * *

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over the past year, hundreds of women have had the courage to speak out against the harassment and violence they have suffered.

These are systemic problems that require a political solution. For years, women's groups have been calling for a national action plan and investment in more shelter spaces.

Can the minister tell us when, and I mean when, the government will listen to these women and come up with an action plan to finally stop this scourge?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her passion on this issue.

I am extremely proud to lead the development of a federal gender-based violence strategy. I am working closely with my provincial and territorial colleagues right now, consulting with NGOs who have spent a great amount of time working on and exploring this issue, and we should have something to talk about near June.

* * *

ETHICS

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is going to Washington this week to hang out with the anti-Canadian energy Center for American Progress and the Liberal organization called Canada 2020.

Canada 2020's founders are Liberal lobbyists who are registered to lobby the PMO and other federal departments. At the same time, the Liberals have been raising money by promising a free trip to the Canada 2020 events in Washington.

The Liberals have been told to quit doing this. Why are the Liberals still using their government positions to help out their Liberal lobbyist friends while fundraising on behalf of the same old same old Liberal Party?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the House before, at all times the Liberal Party has complied and will continue to comply with the election financing legislation.

It is somewhat ironic that members sitting on the other side raise people that do not respect election financing laws, because nobody on this side has left in leg irons.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the president of Canada 2020 is Tom Pitfield. His spouse is the president of the Liberal Party. They are both self-described friends of the Prime Minister. Understandable.

The Conflict of Interest Act is clear that one cannot further the interests of one's friends, but the Prime Minister himself is in a fundraising email from his friend, the president of the Liberal Party, offering access for cash.

Why is the Prime Minister trying to promote his friends and raise money for the Liberal Party on his supposed official state visit?

• (1455)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are very proud of what the Prime Minister and ministers will accomplish on the important state visit to Washington.

It is an unprecedented honour for Canada, and substantive files will be advanced. Job creation will be a priority on this side of the House. In discussions with the White House and with secretaries in the American administration, at all times we will keep the economic and social needs of Canadians at the forefront.

Drive-by smears about phony fundraising events, frankly, are not honourable in this House.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Let us have some order here. There is some danger of there being fewer questions.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party is using this trip and its position as government to fill party coffers in order to help out the friends of the Prime Minister.

At Christmastime, the Liberals were told that they had to stop this cash-for-access flow. This is exactly what they are doing now, however, only three short months later. They seem to be promising donors access to the Prime Minister and the ministers who are going with him. We have seen this all before with the Liberals.

My question is this: why do the Liberals continue to blur the lines between their party and their position as government?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will find it somewhat ironic that the other side of the House would be lecturing anybody about using government to advance partisan interests.

Oral Questions

What we can say with respect to this particular event is that the member knows very well that no donation was required. This is a normal social media competition that all parties have done.

At all times, the Liberal Party and members on this side of the House respect election financing legislation, something that colleagues on the other side have had considerable trouble doing.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change participated in the GLOBE conference in Vancouver. This conference focused on clean energy solutions. As we have been saying all along, now is the time to stop pitting the environment and the economy against each other, especially when clean energy programs help advance both the environment and the economy.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell us about her meetings at this conference?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question. I had the pleasure of participating in the GLOBE summit, the largest conference dedicated to business innovation that focuses on the environment and clean energy. My parliamentary secretary, the member for North Vancouver, joined me in talks on climate-change leadership, along with the provinces and territories. The Government of Canada remains committed to innovation, clean growth, and the efficient use of resources.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a recent lawsuit by the SSN is looking to declare aboriginal title over private property. The Premier of British Columbia responded that government must defend with conviction the sanctity of private land and private land rights. Furthermore, she told the people of Kamloops she has their backs.

There was no such message from the federal government. Will the justice minister stand shoulder to shoulder with the premier of B.C. and defend private property ownership?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

Our government is committed to developing a substantive nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples in this country, sitting down and working jointly, based on recognition and moving forward in order to ensure that indigenous communities can have an improved quality of life, can settle, ultimately, the land question, and do it based on respect and based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the best ways to achieve equality for women in Canada is to have the House of Commons actually reflect our population. Women make up over 50% of Canada's population, yet only 26% of parliamentarians are women.

The member for Burnaby South has proposed legislation that would help achieve gender equality in Parliament. Will the Minister of Democratic Institutions commit her government to supporting this very important legislation?

• (1500)

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we intend to undertake a meaningful and inclusive conversation with all Canadians to bring our electoral system into the 21st century. We are doing this because here in Canada we can do better.

For us, and for the next generation, we need to do this so that more 14-year-old girls like Veronica from my riding of Peterborough—Kawartha can feel compelled to be engaged in the democratic process.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Scarborough Centre is one of the most diverse communities in Canada. The Prime Minister came to my campaign office during the election and promised to repeal the second class citizenship provision of Bill C-24, telling my constituents that a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship update the House on his progress on this promise to restore the integrity of Canadian citizenship?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to inform the House that we are meeting this important campaign commitment.

Bill C-24, enacted by the previous Conservative government, set a very dangerous precedent. It created two tiers of citizenship in this country. Regardless of whether one is born here or whether abroad, like myself and many members of the House, we deserve a government that values and respects our citizenship.

A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian. The Liberal Party believes this. Canadians recognize this. With Bill C-6, we will be implementing this important fundamental principle and putting it back into our immigration system.

Government

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am a woman and a feminist who wants to talk about free trade. The Americans have always lost, any time they have taken a softwood lumber dispute before WTO and NAFTA tribunals. Quebec's forestry industry has done nothing wrong. It has always complied with the agreement. The government's position should be simple: there is nothing to negotiate.

Will the government tell the Americans that the softwood lumber agreement has already been signed and it is called NAFTA?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question.

Yes, NAFTA is part of the framework of issues regarding the softwood lumber file. However, there are other issues across the country, whether in Quebec or British Columbia. We are aware of the issues, and we are working to ensure that we have stable, fair, and equitable access to the American market. That is what we promised and that is what we are going to do.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the Minister of Foreign Affairs is calling for a return to free trade in softwood lumber, the Minister of International Trade has been saying for several weeks now that her officials are negotiating a new agreement. However, the Quebec forestry industry just wants one thing: a return to free trade, under NAFTA, for softwood lumber.

Who is speaking on behalf of the government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is calling for free trade, or the Minister of International Trade, who is negotiating an agreement that is not suitable to Quebec's forestry industry?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this issue is a priority for our government.

Our position is the same; it has not changed. We want to ensure stable, fair, and equitable access. We understand the various positions that exist across the country. We are working with our counterparts across Canada and our American partners to find a stable, fair, and equitable solution.

[English]

The Speaker: It was wonderful today to hear so many questions and many of the answers from women, on this International Women's Day. How about a hand for them?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: It was unfortunate, however, to have a lot of voices being heard that were male voices, which I was hearing when they did not have the floor. Let us try to have some decorum around here and some respect.

* * *

• (1505)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of Dr. Arthur McDonald, astrophysicist and

co-winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physics, and his collaborators representing four countries and more than 15 universities and research facilities.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Phil McColeman: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding Standing Order 32(2), I would like to bring to the attention of the House the reported surplus of \$2.2 billion at the end of December 2015 and ask for permission to table the documents proving this from the Department of Finance.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the member to table the documents?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as much as I do appreciate your commending all of us on International Women's Day, I would like to ask why you removed a woman from the speaker's list today. I recognize that you have made a point of this, but I am not sure why you would actually punish someone in the House who is a woman, who has been here since I think 2004, doing outstanding service for Canadians, because of the actions in the House of those you claim were men.

The Speaker: I thank the member for her question. I point out to hon. members that question period went past the time allotted for question period; and I point out that I did give an indication earlier that question period might be a little shorter if there were not better decorum in the House. I encourage members to take that to heart and act accordingly. I would have thought, especially on International Women's Day, that we would have had different decorum here.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while I respect your comments with regard to decorum in the House of Commons, I would be remiss if I did not point out that there are also women who heckle in the House. Therefore, rather than a focus on the gender of this, I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you ask all of us to govern our own behaviour accordingly.

The Speaker: I appreciate the hon. member's comment, but I think that my noting of what was happening here was accurate. It is unfortunate that it was male members making most of the noise; some women perhaps, but mostly men.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EFFORT TO COMBAT ISIL

The House resumed from February 24 consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

Government

The Speaker: It being 3:10 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, February 23, 2016, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment relating to government business no. 2.

Call in the members.

The question is on the amendment.

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of amendment to the House*]

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

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

*(Division No. 18)***YEAS**

Members

| | |
|--|------------|
| Aboultarif | Albas |
| Albrecht | Allison |
| Ambrose | Anderson |
| Arnold | Barlow |
| Bergen | Bernier |
| Berthold | Bezan |
| Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) | Block |
| Boucher | Brassard |
| Brown | Calkins |
| Carrie | Chong |
| Clarke | Clement |
| Cooper | Deltell |
| Diotte | Doherty |
| Dreeshen | Egliniski |
| Falk | Fast |
| Finley | Gallant |
| Généreux | Genuis |
| Gladu | Godin |
| Gourde | Harder |
| Harper | Hoback |
| Jeneroux | Kelly |
| Kent | Kitchen |
| Kmiec | Lake |
| Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) | Lebel |
| Leitch | Liepert |
| Lobb | Lukiwski |
| MacKenzie | Maguire |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) | Nater |
| Nicholson | Nuttall |
| Obhrai | O'Toole |
| Paul-Hus | Poillievre |
| Raitt | Reid |
| Rempel | Richards |
| Ritz | Saroya |
| Scheer | Schmale |
| Shields | Shipley |
| Sopuck | Sorenson |
| Stanton | Strahl |
| Stubbs | Sweet |
| Tilson | Trost |
| Van Kesteren | Van Loan |
| Vecchio | Viersen |
| Wagantall | Warawa |
| Warkentin | Watts |
| Waugh | Webber |
| Wong | Yurdiga |
| Zimmer— 95 | |

NAYS

Members

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Aldag | Alghabra |
| Alleslev | Amos |
| Anandasangaree | Angus |
| Arseneault | Arya |
| Ashton | Aubin |
| Ayoub | Badawey |
| Bagnell | Bains |
| Baylis | Beech |
| Bélangier | Bennett |
| Benson | Bibeau |
| Bittle | Blaikie |
| Blair | Blaney (North Island—Powell River) |
| Boissonnault | Bossio |
| Boudrias | Boulerice |
| Boutin-Sweet | Bratina |
| Breton | Brison |
| Brosseau | Caesar-Chavannes |
| Cannings | Caron |
| Carr | Casey (Cumberland—Colchester) |
| Casey (Charlottetown) | Chagger |
| Champagne | Chan |
| Choquette | Christopherson |
| Cormier | Cullen |
| Cuzner | Dabrusin |
| Damoff | Davies |
| DeCoursey | Dhaliwal |
| Dhillon | Di Iorio |
| Dion | Donnelly |
| Drouin | Dubé |
| Dubourg | Duclos |
| Duguid | Duncan (Etobicoke North) |
| Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona) | Dusseault |
| Dzerowicz | Easter |
| Ehsassi | El-Khoury |
| Ellis | Erskine-Smith |
| Eyking | Eyolfson |
| Fergus | Fillmore |
| Finnigan | Fisher |
| Fonseca | Foote |
| Fortin | Fragiskatos |
| Fraser (West Nova) | Fraser (Central Nova) |
| Fry | Fuhr |
| Gameau | Garrison |
| Gerretsen | Gill |
| Goldsmith-Jones | Goodale |
| Gould | Graham |
| Grewal | Hajdu |
| Hardcastle | Hardie |
| Harvey | Hehr |
| Holland | Housefather |
| Hughes | Hussen |
| Hutchings | Iacono |
| Johns | Jolibois |
| Joly | Jones |
| Jordan | Jowhari |
| Julian | Kang |
| Khalid | Khera |
| Kwan | Lametti |
| Lamoureux | Lapointe |
| Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation) | Laverdière |
| LeBlanc | Lebouthillier |
| Lefebvre | Lemieux |
| Leslie | Levitt |
| Lightbound | Lockhart |
| Long | Longfield |
| Ludwig | MacAulay (Cardigan) |
| MacGregor | MacKinnon (Gatineau) |
| Malcolmson | Maloney |
| Marcil | Masse (Windsor West) |
| Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia) | |
| Mathysen | |
| May (Cambridge) | May (Saenich—Gulf Islands) |
| McCrimmon | McDonald |
| McGuinty | McKay |
| McKenna | McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) |
| McLeod (Northwest Territories) | Mendès |
| Mendicino | Mihychuk |
| Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs) | |
| Monsef | |
| Moore | Morneau |

Government

Morrissey
Murray
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Pauzé
Peterson
Philpott
Plamondon
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Sahota
Sajjan
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Stewart
Tan
Thériault
Trudeau
Vandal
Vaughan
Weir
Wilson-Raybould
Young

Mulcair
Nantel
Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rota
Ruimy
Saganash
Saini
Samson
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Stetski
Tabbara
Tassi
Tootoo
Trudel
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid— 230

Badawey
Bains
Beech
Bennett
Bittle
Boissonnault
Bratina
Brison
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Dion
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harvey
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jones
Jowhari
Khalid
Lametti
Lapointe
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Monsef
Morneau
Murray
Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Ratansi
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudeau
Vandenbeld

Bagnell
Baylis
Bélanger
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chan
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhalival
Di Iorio
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Foote
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Gameau
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardie
Hehr
Housefather
Hutchings
Joly
Jordan
Kang
Khera
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Lemieux
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Maloney
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Morrissey
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Qualtrough
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandal
Vaughan

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say ye.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1525)

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

(Division No. 19)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arya

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Ayoub

Government

Virani
Wilson-Raybould
Young

Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid— 178

NAYS

Members

| | |
|--|--|
| Aboultarif | Albas |
| Albrecht | Allison |
| Ambrose | Anderson |
| Angus | Arnold |
| Ashton | Aubin |
| Barlow | Benson |
| Bergen | Bernier |
| Berthold | Bezan |
| Blaikie | Blaney (North Island—Powell River) |
| Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) | Block |
| Boucher | Boudrias |
| Boulerice | Boutin-Sweet |
| Brassard | Brosseau |
| Brown | Calkins |
| Cannings | Caron |
| Carrie | Chong |
| Choquette | Christopherson |
| Clarke | Clement |
| Cooper | Cullen |
| Davies | Deltell |
| Diotte | Doherty |
| Donnelly | Dreeshen |
| Dubé | Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona) |
| Dusseauult | Eglinski |
| Falk | Fast |
| Finley | Fortin |
| Gallant | Garrison |
| Généreux | Genuis |
| Gill | Gladu |
| Godin | Gourde |
| Hardcastle | Harder |
| Harper | Hoback |
| Hughes | Jeneroux |
| Johns | Jolibois |
| Julian | Kelly |
| Kent | Kitchen |
| Kmiec | Kwan |
| Lake | Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) |
| Laverdière | Lebel |
| Leitch | Liepert |
| Lobb | Lukiwski |
| MacGregor | MacKenzie |
| Maguire | Malcolmson |
| Marcil | Masse (Windsor West) |
| Mathysen | May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) | Moore |
| Mulcair | Nantel |
| Nater | Nicholson |
| Nuttall | Obhrai |
| O'Toole | Paul-Hus |
| Paupé | Plamondon |
| Poillievre | Quach |
| Raitt | Ramsey |
| Rankin | Reid |
| Rempel | Richards |
| Ritz | Saganash |
| Sansoucy | Saroya |
| Scheer | Schmale |
| Shields | Shipley |
| Sopuck | Sorenson |
| Stanton | Ste-Marie |
| Stetski | Stewart |
| Strahl | Stubbs |
| Sweet | Thériault |
| Tilson | Trost |
| Trudel | Van Kesteren |
| Van Loan | Vecchio |
| Viersen | Wagantall |
| Warawa | Warkentin |
| Watts | Waugh |
| Webber | Weir |
| Wong | Yurdiga |
| Zimmer— 147 | |

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from March 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment.

● (1535)

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

(*Division No. 20*)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|--|------------|
| Aboultarif | Albas |
| Albrecht | Allison |
| Ambrose | Anderson |
| Arnold | Barlow |
| Bergen | Bernier |
| Berthold | Bezan |
| Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) | Block |
| Boucher | Brassard |
| Brown | Calkins |
| Carrie | Chong |
| Clarke | Clement |
| Cooper | Deltell |
| Diotte | Doherty |
| Dreeshen | Eglinski |
| Falk | Fast |
| Finley | Gallant |
| Généreux | Genuis |
| Gladu | Godin |
| Gourde | Harder |
| Harper | Hoback |
| Jeneroux | Kelly |
| Kent | Kitchen |
| Kmiec | Lake |
| Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) | Lebel |
| Leitch | Liepert |
| Lobb | Lukiwski |
| MacKenzie | Maguire |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) | Nater |
| Nicholson | Nuttall |
| Obhrai | O'Toole |
| Paul-Hus | Poillievre |
| Raitt | Reid |
| Rempel | Richards |
| Ritz | Saroya |
| Scheer | Schmale |
| Shields | Shipley |
| Sopuck | Sorenson |
| Stanton | Strahl |
| Stubbs | Sweet |
| Tilson | Trost |
| Van Kesteren | Van Loan |
| Vecchio | Viersen |
| Wagantall | Warawa |
| Warkentin | Watts |
| Waugh | Webber |
| Wong | Yurdiga |
| Zimmer— 95 | |

Business of Supply

NAYS

Members

Aldag
 Alleslev
 Anandasangaree
 Arseneault
 Ashton
 Ayoub
 Bagnell
 Baylis
 Bélanger
 Benson
 Bittle
 Blair
 Boissonnault
 Boudrias
 Boutin-Sweet
 Breton
 Brosseau
 Cannings
 Carr
 Casey (Charlottetown)
 Champagne
 Choquette
 Cormier
 Cuzner
 Damoff
 DeCoursey
 Dhillon
 Dion
 Drouin
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Dzerowicz
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Eyking
 Fergus
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fortin
 Fraser (West Nova)
 Fry
 Garneau
 Gerretsen
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gould
 Grewal
 Hardcastle
 Harvey
 Holland
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Johns
 Joly
 Jordan
 Julian
 Khalid
 Kwan
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Leslie
 Lightbound
 Long
 Ludwig
 MacGregor
 Malcolmson
 Marcil
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 Mathysen
 May (Cambridge)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
 Monsef
 Moore

Alghabra
 Amos
 Angus
 Arya
 Aubin
 Badawey
 Bains
 Beech
 Bennett
 Bibeau
 Blaikie
 Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
 Bossio
 Boulerice
 Bratina
 Brison
 Caesar-Chavannes
 Caron
 Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
 Chagger
 Chan
 Christopherson
 Cullen
 Dabrusin
 Davies
 Dhaliwal
 Di Iorio
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Duclos
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Easter
 El-Khoury
 Erskine-Smith
 Eyolfson
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Foote
 Fragiskatos
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fuhr
 Garrison
 Gill
 Goodale
 Graham
 Hajdu
 Hardie
 Hehr
 Housefather
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Jolibois
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Kang
 Khera
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 Laverdière
 Lebouthillier
 Lemieux
 Levitt
 Lockhart
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Maloney
 Masse (Windsor West)
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Momeau

Morrissey
 Murray
 Nassif
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Ouellette
 Paupé
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Plamondon
 Quach
 Ramsey
 Ratansi
 Robillard
 Romanado
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Sahota
 Sajjan
 Sansoucy
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sorbara
 Ste-Marie
 Stewart
 Tan
 Thériault
 Trudeau
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Weir
 Wilson-Raybould
 Young

Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nault
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Paradis
 Peschisolido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Poissant
 Qualtrough
 Rankin
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Rota
 Ruimy
 Saganash
 Saini
 Samson
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sohi
 Spengemann
 Stetski
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Tootoo
 Trudel
 Vandenberg
 Virani
 Wilkinson
 Wrzesnewskyj
 Zahid — 230

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, government orders will be extended by 28 minutes.

Order. I would like to ask all hon. members who want to carry on conversations to make their way to their respective lobbies at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1540)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—AIR TRANSPORTATION

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: When the House last took up this question, the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth had three minutes remaining in the time for questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York.

Business of Supply

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members on the opposite side have been quoting from a July 2013 study, page 18, that identifies that the economic impact at the airport as currently configured generates approximately 6,500 jobs, both inside the operation of the airport and outside.

If they read the full report, in fact the other half of the page, they would also see that the investment in transforming our waterfront has created 16,000 jobs, almost three times as many jobs, for a smaller investment than is now required to expand the airport.

The airport's flight capacity is capped, and all the jets will do is to change one aircraft for another aircraft but not expand the airport. Given the fact that there is phase two and phase three of waterfront development, which is cheaper than reconfiguring the airport, would the member not agree that the wiser economic investment, with the bigger spinoff, more employment, and more economic activity, would be to invest in the waterfront, not in the airport?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York for asking that question because it hits on exactly what I am speaking about.

There is a city building exercise that is being done at the waterfront. We have invested heavily already in the waterfront. We have seen wonderful development. It has made it so much more accessible. There are people working, studying, and enjoying our waterfront. It is a key part of our city.

It is also a source of employment. In fact, the next phase of waterfront development looks at the port lands. The potential is for roughly 7,700 person-years of employment in the construction phases of that development project.

There is a lot of potential, and we should be supporting that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be a little more general in my approach to asking my question. We do recognize the valuable role that airports play in our society.

A very important aspect, when we look at the potential for expansion, is to take into consideration what our community needs actually are. To that degree, when we look at Billy Bishop airport, I have listened to the parliamentary secretary reflect on what is in the best interests of his constituents and the community.

Could the member reflect on how important it is to let stakeholders know in a timely fashion about the proposals being brought forward, which is what we have seen through the minister responsible? The member might also want to provide some comment in terms of how thoroughly this whole issue has been talked about over the last number of years, as the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister has already indicated.

• (1545)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, there has been a very thorough discussion about the prospects for expanding the Toronto island Billy Bishop airport.

In fact, what we have seen is that the community is engaged in city building. We have an international airport at Pearson. As I stated

earlier, I take no issue with the current configuration of the Billy Bishop airport. However, what we are talking about is expanding runways into our waterfront, and it is not what the community wants. It actually works against the work we have been doing and the investments we have been making to move forward.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I stand in the House to offer the following in regard to the role of Bombardier as an economic contributor to Canada's economy.

As outlined in the text of the motion devised by the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, Bombardier has demonstrated excellence through its ability to construct state-of-the-art aerospace and transportation products for domestic and international markets. Bombardier is not just in the business of creating airplanes and transportation solutions; it is supporting families through jobs, developing ideas, and encouraging growth within the domestic and global economies.

The focus of my speech today is on the effects of domestic regulatory decisions on the future of Bombardier and its C Series project.

On November 27, 2015, the Minister of Transport destroyed the prospects of any expansion of the Billy Bishop airport on Toronto island. The extension of the runway by 1,100 feet beyond its current 4,000 feet would have provided strong economic benefits for Canada's economy, specifically in Ontario and Quebec. In Toronto alone, where the enhanced airport was to be located, the total economic benefit would have been over \$2 billion and would have created over 1,000 additional jobs. That is just the beginning of the benefits it would have provided to our economy, as this does not include the jobs related to the construction of the C Series airliners. These jobs would be located predominantly in Quebec and Ontario, from an estimated \$2.3 billion purchase order, which is dependent on the expansion of the airport, and yet none of this was taken into consideration by the minister, the Prime Minister, or the government.

Without ideals, without evidence, without opportunity for dissension, without a business case, without good information, the current government cancelled the future jobs of thousands of Canadians. The only reason that has been floated to us on this side of the House is that it is some sort of pet project of the member for Spadina—Fort York. Basically, the government made a decision with respect to thousands of jobs, billions of dollars in economic activity, hundreds of families, and competition in a market with significant inhibitors to expansion based on its need to win a couple of seats.

We, the citizens of Ontario, have heard this story before. I know that the Speaker will be very familiar with this one. This is how it goes.

There is a project that needs the consent of a Liberal government. That Liberal government does not do the right thing because it wants to win some electoral seats, and that ends up costing taxpayers billions of dollars. The Liberal government then does everything it can to prevent parliamentarians from all parties from finding out the truth about how all of that went down. In Ontario, we call it the gas plant scandal. In Canada, in this Parliament, and in the industry committee we call it the Bombardier affair.

Business of Supply

In a time of economic uncertainty, the current Liberal government has said no to the island airport, no to billions of dollars in positive economic activity, and no to increased competition. The result is that not only has the Province of Quebec had to subsidize Bombardier to the tune of \$1.3 billion, not only has the growth of Porter Airlines been sidelined, not only has competition helping consumers been obstructed but now the federal government is also under unrelenting pressure to bail out and subsidize Bombardier and its C Series program because it blocked a \$2.3 billion deal.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Prince Albert.

The current government is directly responsible for job losses and preventing job creation in the service and manufacturing sectors. When this boondoggle was finally drawn into the public arena, my Conservative colleagues on the industry committee asked publicly for an investigation into what had transpired, but as this committee is dominated by Liberals, we have not heard a single thing.

Is the current government following the example of its provincial cousins, the Liberal Party of Ontario, and blocking representatives of the citizens of Canada from knowing what transpired behind closed Liberal doors? Is it hiding behind processes to protect members of the government? Is it intentionally stalling the work of parliamentarians and stifling transparency and accountability for actions that have cost taxpayers billions of dollars directly, and billions more in unrealized tax revenue?

After all of that, what I find most difficult to rationalize about the government is that its behaviour is so contradictory to what it says. Its rhetoric is not just out of sync with its actions, it is just plainly false.

● (1550)

The throne speech delivered to the House four months ago states the following about Canadians:

...they want leadership that is focused on the things that matter most to them. Things like growing the economy; creating jobs; strengthening the middle class, and helping those working hard to join it. Through careful consideration and respectful conduct, the Government can meet these challenges, and all others brought before it.

The House must hold the government accountable for its statements and actions. So I ask the following. When the government opposed the Toronto island airport, did it grow the economy? No, it weakened the economy throughout Canada, and specifically in Quebec and Ontario.

Did it create jobs as the throne speech says it would? No, it killed 1,000 jobs in Toronto and countless elsewhere.

Did it strengthen the middle class and help those that are working hard to reach it? No, it made it more difficult to reach the middle class by reducing the number of jobs available.

When it decided not to allow the airport expansion, was that carefully considered and respectfully conducted? No, there was no rationale and it was announced through a tweet in the middle of the night.

Finally, did the government meet the challenges facing this country? No, there were no challenges except for the Liberal

government itself, which has created the need for a billion-dollar bailout by doing what was politically expedient.

Only the Liberal government, only this Prime Minister, and only the Minister of Innovation can turn a \$2.3 billion windfall into the need for a \$1-billion bailout. The government's conduct is just crazy. All it had to do was nothing. Do not interfere with the process under way. Do not play politics with jobs for hard-working Canadians. Do not post a tweet in the middle of the night, and the results would have been celebrated.

Bombardier would have received a \$2.3 billion purchase order. Porter airlines would have been expanding its fleet, its infrastructure, its number of employees. Consumers would be gaining from the benefits of increased competition in the marketplace. The government would be receiving increased tax revenue instead of increasing its deficit by looking at providing a bailout.

It could not be more clear. Canadians have a right to know. This is not a bailout of Bombardier, it is a bailout of Liberal intervention in Toronto politics. It is a bailout of failed Liberal policies by the Prime Minister. It is a bailout of politically motivated decision-making for electoral gains and, worst of all, it is a bailout of millionaires and billionaires on the backs of hard-working Canadians.

The Prime Minister should not be subsidizing millionaires and billionaires using the tax dollars of lower- and middle-income Canadians. He should be looking those Canadians straight in the eye and apologizing for costing our youth their first job, our workers their next raise, and our unemployed their opportunity for economic independence.

I stand today speaking in favour of the motion, not to support one airline over another or one airport over another, or even one sector over another. I speak in favour of the motion because it means lower prices for consumers through increased competition. It means more jobs in Toronto, more jobs in manufacturing in Ontario, more jobs in manufacturing in Quebec. It means supporting the aerospace industry simply by getting out of its way instead of forcing it into cardiac arrest and having to give it a billion-dollar shot of adrenaline.

I believe that Canadian companies build the best planes, that Canadian companies provide the best flights, and that Canadian job creation is best for the Canadian economy. I therefore believe that the House should adopt the motion.

● (1555)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if a runway is built the length of the extension just mentioned in that speech, the jets would end up in the water. For someone who claims to have read the reports and understands the facts around this conversation, it is odd that the runway extension he is citing is about 60 metres short of the one required and being requested by Porter airlines.

Business of Supply

I will put the fact that the member does not use facts aside and get to the issue he raised about employment. If he goes to page 18 of the economic impact study that the members quote liberally from one side of the page but not on the other side, does he not understand that the decision to invest in developing the waterfront creates 16,000 jobs? It will not happen if the airport is expanded, which will only create 6,000 jobs. The 6,000 jobs we are speaking of are not affected by the decision we have made. In other words, if we pursue their policy, we will lose 16,000 jobs in Toronto. Has he not read the report? Is the only person he has spoken to Mr. Deluce?

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the member cited me as referring to 6,000 jobs. I do not believe I said that. I am not sure where he was during the speech, but I welcome him back.

At the end of the day, the member is talking about public funds going in. The best business case for the Government of Canada and its shareholders is when we do not put a dollar in, but we get increased tax revenue. That is what we are talking about with the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport. That is why our party is standing up for that expansion. That is why our party is standing up for the expansion of Porter Airlines. That is why our party is standing up for Bombardier and its shareholders and the employees who depend on it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member says that he does not want to subsidize corporations and industries.

As a Quebec member who is from a riding where Bombardier employees are going to lose their jobs, I want to understand why it was all right for the Conservatives to subsidize Ontario's automotive sector and why now, all of a sudden, the Conservatives have decided that it is not a good idea to help Bombardier during a difficult time and protect these Quebec jobs.

[*English*]

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Mr. Speaker, it is incredible, but that is the second question in a row that shows they obviously were not listening to what I said. I did not say we would not support any sort of subsidization or help. What I said was that it is Liberal policies, that it is the current government's policies, that have left us in a situation where we do not know what the future of Bombardier will be.

If only the current government had allowed the expansion to continue, we would have had thousands more employees in the Toronto area and thousands more employees throughout Quebec and Ontario directly employed by Bombardier and Porter, as well as by suppliers to those companies. I think the member needs to perhaps go back to the notes.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of working for de Havilland in Toronto, building the Dash 7s and Dash 8s in the late 1970s, as a summer student. Unfortunately, we all know of the demise of that company.

The Dash aircraft is commended for its STOL technology, which also allowed for the expansion and the utilization of the Billy Bishop airport. Since that time some 40 years ago, the expansion of the Toronto skyline along the waterfront has been exponential and the

economic benefit has been exponential. I wonder if the member could give us some indication as we talk about the expansion of that waterfront of the jobs there would be not only from extending the runway but also from expanding the skyline.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Mr. Speaker, as far as I can see, these things go hand in hand. Obviously, increased infrastructure in the area would also increase the need and demand for housing, the demand for commercial space, and the demand for industry down there as well. Certainly, these are things that would go hand in hand from an expansion of the airport as well as the development of the waterfront.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues for this great motion, moving forward. I think there are a lot of things we can talk about in considering why this should actually be considered and looked at to move forward.

I want to highlight a few things, and the first thing I want to talk about is the process itself that was used to say no.

We heard about the midnight text. We heard about how things are done behind closed doors. This is coming from a government that said it would not do things that way and that it would hold consultations.

In fact, with the TPP, we are going across the country holding consultation after consultation, because of the importance of that type of agreement. Well, this airport expansion is not just about Toronto.

I had the pleasure of flying into Billy Bishop airport, and what a great name for an airport. When I say the name, it just rolls off my tongue. It is a great little airport.

I joined a flight here in Ottawa to Toronto, and I sat beside a new friend, a Scot from Moncton, who was going to the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference in Toronto. He was telling me that he is a prospector who does business in Toronto.

Of course, we all know that Toronto is the mining capital of the world. When one is looking at investing in a mine, one goes to Toronto to get the expertise on how to do that. Our Canadian companies are the best in the world when it comes to not only mining but to corporate social responsibility in the development of mines everywhere across the globe.

It was interesting listening to him. He said he did a lot of prospecting and he goes to Toronto, and what a great way to do it. He flies right into downtown Toronto, and 15 minutes after getting off the plane, he goes through the tunnel, which has just been developed. I have to say it is an improvement over the ferry. However, he goes across by the tunnel, grabs a taxi, and he is at his place of business for work in half an hour. He said it is just so convenient. It allows him to go down in the morning and do his business in Toronto and fly home that afternoon or evening. That is a very strong tool for Toronto to attract business people to its business community.

Business of Supply

I just looked at that C Series jet that has come in. First, it is not a jet. It is a turbofan. The engine is different. It is quieter and more efficient. In fact, we are looking at 50% to 75% noise reduction in that engine. That is one thing that I would think anybody in the Spadina riding would look at and think it was great. They would want that plane flying in there because it is quieter. Its fuel reduction is 60%. It is a more fuel-efficient plane to run and operate. That is why I think Porter, Air Canada, and other companies are looking at this plane. I think that is why they have some 230 orders on the order books.

However, we also need Canadian companies to show confidence there. We need to show that Canadian companies like to buy Canadian products. However, when we see a barrier put up like we are seeing put up in Toronto at this airport, so that they cannot take advantage of this new technology, so they cannot have a quieter and more fuel-efficient plane coming onto that runway, it does not make a lot sense. What makes even less sense is the process.

We have a process under way, and it is looking at all the implications of the expansion of that runway. Instead of waiting for that process to finish, they say no. That is what they said: no. There is no consultation with any other communities that may be flying in and out of Toronto. There is no consultation with the airlines and the employees that are using it. There is no consultation with the businesses outside of the Spadina riding. What we have here is a classic NIMBY.

However, this is an asset. When we look at this area, we see this airport that used to handle about 26,000 people and now handles two million people a year. When we look at the area around the airport, we see it is developing like crazy. That airport is not a hindrance. In fact, some people would tell us that they are living in that area because they are close to the airport. That airport is important for them. Why would we not give them the opportunity to fly in the latest and greatest aircraft? If we look at the options we are putting in front of Canadian travellers with this new C Series jet, we see it is actually something that should be strongly considered and should not be discounted in a midnight text.

I have seen the current government do a few things that really make me scratch my head. When we look at processes that are put in place to help decide whether we should go forward, whether it is with a pipeline or runway expansion, we would put together a process that is actually at arm's length from government so that no political decisions can be made based on partisan politics. It would be based on the merit of the project itself.

We have a tripartite agreement here, three parties that actually would look at this project and decide whether it should go forward. They agreed on the study. The study was in process. Then one party said no, based on partisan politics. This is what is really scaring me when I talk about energy pipelines, when we are looking at getting energy to the east coast or to the Petronas project in B.C., which we heard about in question period today.

• (1600)

Having a process that lays out the rules that say, for example, that if companies want to build pipelines, they have these 99 recommendations they have to follow before we agree to it, that

makes sense to industry. It is bankrolled. It says, okay, this is what it has to do to meet the requirements to build a pipeline.

However, when we add at the end of the process that not only will the companies have to do these 99 things but the government will make a partisan decision and it will come back into politics and the government will decide on the final yea or nay, how does that work?

What is the decision factor at that point in time? Companies go through it as a business, spend \$12 billion, meet all the requirements laid out in front of them, keep meeting more requirements; then they find out that, unless they take a few people in cabinet out for lunch or dinner, they may not get it. That puts our cabinet ministers in a horrible position. It puts companies in a horrible position. It takes the process, which is very simple and straightforward, and pollutes it. That is what the government has been doing. It is really disturbing, because any type of governance would say we would not do this, but the Liberals are ignoring that, and I find that really disturbing.

I talked a little bit about Canadian companies showing faith in Canadian companies, whether it is bringing oil from Alberta into Quebec and eastern Canada or whether it is buying jet planes that will be flown across western Canada. I am actually pretty excited about the C Series jet, because this might be the ticket to actually having a commercial carrier flying out of Prince Albert. Maybe so, maybe not; economics will decide it, as they should.

I look at Saskatoon, Regina, and Winnipeg. The range of this jet will create the opportunity for those flights to actually come into downtown Toronto. That is something we do not have with the existing aircraft of today. If we look at Toronto and the potash sector in Saskatchewan, we see these people are filling up planes every week, going back and forth from Toronto to Saskatoon, and they are based in downtown Toronto. If they can fly in and out of Billy Bishop, that is pretty exciting for them. Just think of the time they would save. Just think of the time they will have with their families because they are not sitting in an airport, a subway, or a taxi.

This is a very important key economic activity, a tool that is important for the entire Canadian economy. We cannot just look at the NIMBY effect and say that is how we will make our decision. We have to look at all the pieces of the puzzle, and then sometimes we have to make a tough choice. We have to recognize the fact that sometimes we will not please everybody. Somebody will be upset. That is the thing about governing. That is the thing about tough choices.

Government members over there are very naive, thinking that just increasing the number of times they talk to people will somehow change their minds. In a lot of cases, their minds are already made up. All they are doing is playing the Liberals for fools, and they are delaying projects in such a way that the people who are backing those projects can no longer financially afford to continue going through the process.

Business of Supply

I will wrap up my speech with that point. This is a process that should have been thought through. It should have been recognized as a process that would come to some sort of result and then brought forward. It was cut short. It was cut by partisan politics and it was cut by NIMBY. It does the Canadian economy no good, it does the city of Toronto no good, it does the commuters who fly in and out of Toronto no good, and for what? The Liberals should tell me.

• (1605)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): That was another lecture about process, Mr. Speaker. Let us go through the process that was not followed.

The City of Toronto agreed to study the proposition if 25 conditions were met, and the port authority said it would not do that, and it proceeded in defiance of the parameters agreed to by the city and city council.

The environmental assessment was not to be proceeded with until such time that the two parties could agree on a cap on users of the airport that respected the planning criteria that were defining how much traffic could get in and out. It had nothing to do with noise. It had nothing to do with whether anyone liked the airport. It had nothing to do with anything other than the physical constraints on an airport that has a single two-lane road accessing it. The port authority refused to comply with those parameters.

In five council meetings since the port authority has been party to this process, city council has had in front of it the question of whether or not it wanted to go ahead with this proposition, and five times the city council refused to take that position.

On the issue of process as well, Mr. Deluce has not registered as a lobbyist. Porter Airlines has not registered as a lobbyist, despite the fact that he has been up on Parliament Hill talking to individual members of Parliament and the ministerial staff. He has not obeyed the rules.

How can your party advocate for a lobbyist and a private interest that refuses to obey the laws of Canada? Where is the shame in your party in standing up for a private individual who will not obey the rules of Parliament?

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask the hon. member again to direct his comments through the chair. There is a reason for that, actually. By directing it to the chair and talking in the third person to other hon. members, we avoid references that can become personal and lead to potential disorder in the House.

The hon. member for Prince Albert.

• (1610)

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I have 40 billion reasons not to take advice from the member or his party, and that is \$40 billion that went missing some years ago in Quebec.

I want to get it on the record that, in April 2014, the Toronto city council voted unanimously to adopt the city staff report that would allow the city, the Toronto port authority, and the federal government to negotiate conditions for proceeding with Porter's proposal to add jet service and extend the runway at Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. That was unanimous support to proceed with a process. This

was a process that the minister cut short in a text. He did not even have the courtesy to do it in public. He did it through Twitter. I rest my case.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member needs to be a little more transparent in terms of the reality of the situation. The government has taken a very proactive approach. The motion deals with the industry, and the government has been dealing with the industry. The motion deals with the airport and the potential request for an expansion. The government has been very straightforward with its position on that.

What we are seeing is a very transparent and open government on the whole issue. Through questions and answers, we have seen an opportunity for Canadians to really get an understanding of why the government took the position it did on the issue.

He seems to be offended by a tweet. I remember the former prime minister being overseas when he made the off-the-cuff decision to increase the age for old age pension from 65 to 67. It might have been Twitter. I am not too sure exactly how it came down the pipe. It might have been handed over on a napkin. Who knows?

The bottom line is that the Government of Canada has been fully transparent on the issue. We have to, at the very least, recognize what the majority of citizens in the affected area truly want, and ultimately the economics of it make a whole lot of sense.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, is Twitter how they are going to do their announcements from now on?

As far as the effect on the area is concerned, there is more than Spadina in play here. That is the point I am trying to get across. The gentleman was from Moncton. If he did not have service to downtown Toronto, it would affect him. It affects the travellers out of Ottawa, the potential travellers out of Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Thunder Bay, London, and all these other cities that actually have service into the centre of Toronto. I am not even talking about the American cities that would look at that airport. Those are the options that are available if they proceed.

Right now, you went and cut it off at the knees with no justification.

The Deputy Speaker: I remind hon. members again to direct their comments through the chair.

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 Calgary Nose Hill, in respect to immigration, refugees, and citizenship; the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway, regarding international trade; and the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, in respect to foreign affairs.

Now we will go to resuming debate. The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Business of Supply

I am very pleased to speak to today's Conservative opposition motion. The Bombardier file is very important to me not only because I represent a riding that is home to many workers affected by the unfortunate news we have heard over the past few weeks, but also because this is part of my family history. My grandfather spent his life working in one of the Canadair plants in Saint-Laurent, which is where many members of my mother's family were raised. Some of them still live there.

For those who may not know this, Canadair is now an essential part of Bombardier. It was a crown corporation that, when privatized, became a key component of Bombardier. I am very familiar with this file. My family is from a neighbourhood where many people work for Bombardier. I have family members, friends, and especially constituents who work there. I recognize that the aerospace industry is critical to Quebec's economy and to Canada's, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to talk about it today.

I want to start by addressing the issue raised by the Conservatives regarding the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. The Conservatives are saying that the C Series will reduce noise and pollution because the aircraft is more efficient and makes less noise. The problem is that the increase in air traffic will cancel out those benefits. If we take 10 away from 30 but then add 15, we are left with a higher number than we started with. That is the situation we are in now. Furthermore, proper procedures were not followed. Some of the proposals that were made did not go through the appropriate channels. The wishes of Toronto residents who will be affected by this also need to be respected.

The problem is bigger than the details of a file that specifically affects the City of Toronto and the people living near Spadina Avenue. This situation shows how ridiculous the Conservatives can be because, in 2008, that party did not hesitate to help the automotive industry in Ontario. We understand how important that sector is. The point is not to pit one sector against another. It is to show how now, all of a sudden, they seem more reluctant to help a company, an industry, that is so important to Quebec's economy and the Canadian economy in general, and that is aerospace industry. It is unfortunate that that willingness does not seem to exist today. Saying that an airport will solve a very complex and difficult issue shows how the Conservatives propose simplistic solutions to very serious and complicated problems. I find that unfortunate because we are now in a situation where many people are paying the price. People are going to lose their jobs. Why? Because the government that was in office for 10 years did absolutely nothing for the aerospace industry or the manufacturing industry in general.

This type of motion seems very hypocritical to me. It talks about wanting to support Bombardier, wanting to support an entire industry, but wanting to address just one issue that has to do with an airport is not the answer. Our criticism of the Conservatives does not let the current government off the hook. We are in a situation where, once again, given that this industry is so important to the economy of Quebec and Canada, it was no secret that these issues would land on the new government's desk from the get-go.

The NDP was proactive on this very important issue. During the last election campaign, we proposed an aerospace strategy. This industry does not depend on Bombardier alone, in spite of how big it is. There are also related businesses. We are talking about businesses

that do research and development. Many of those businesses are located in my riding and neighbouring ridings. It is an industry that supports other businesses, not just Bombardier. That is why there needs to be a long-term vision, a strategy. The NDP was prepared to make investments. Unfortunately, the Liberals have not made any commitments on this. That is just the tip of the iceberg.

• (1615)

When we heard that people would lose well-paying, good-quality jobs and that families would be struggling, I participated in a number of panels and conducted numerous interviews. I had the chance to talk with some Liberal members, who gave me the same old story we hear for every issue. They tell us that they need some time because they just started. Then they say that they have made commitments and they give us the same lip service we heard during the election campaign.

In the United States, people often say that if the American president has not accomplished anything after 100 days, he will not accomplish anything in his term. I realize that American politics and Canadian politics are different. However, the first 100 days are crucial. At some point, the government needs to start helping people and taking real action.

Employment insurance is another good example. Some workers lose their jobs and do not receive any government assistance. With all due respect to the Minister of Transport, who has accomplished a lot and is a great Canadian, when he tells the House that he has been in a C Series aircraft, he is showing how out of touch he is with the people who are losing their jobs. It is ridiculous. They are going to have to get over themselves eventually. The election campaign is over and these people need help. Now is not the time for them to repeat what they said during the election campaign. Now is the time for the government to govern and come up with a proposal.

The simplest proposal is to subsidize the company. We need to sit down at the table and get to work. Any financial assistance provided to a company like Bombardier must come with conditions. Taxpayers have the right to be concerned and ask questions. We are spending their money after all.

That is why the NDP firmly believes that the government must provide assistance, but that there must be conditions attached. There have to be loan guarantees. Furthermore, talks must be held to determine how the company will restructure and how the C Series will be deployed after it receives federal government assistance. It is not complicated: we can help, but there must be strings attached.

Business of Supply

During the last election campaign, I went door to door and met people working at Bombardier in plants, in research and development, and in administration. They did not feel that people were ready to govern and make proposals that would help workers. Fortunately, the NDP had a strategy to help this industry.

As I already said, the election campaign is over. The government needs to wake up, take responsibility, and help these people. It is unfortunate, but we will have to vote against the motion. The Conservatives decided to move a motion that is written in such a way as to divide people. They want to leave the House saying that we voted against a motion that recognizes the importance of Bombardier. However, we must talk facts, not semantics.

If the Conservatives strongly believe that increasing airport traffic and creating an environmental nuisance and traffic problems in the largest city in the country will really help an industry that is so important to Quebec and Canada, they are dreaming in technicolour. We wonder why, in 10 years, they did not do something to avoid the current situation.

In conclusion, I will take advantage of this opportunity to say that workers in my riding and all over Quebec who are affected by this unfortunate news can count on me and the NDP caucus. Fortunately, the NDP will stand up, and not just with respect to Bombardier. We have also reviewed the Aveos file and other files that are just not getting the attention they deserve from the Liberals and the Conservatives.

I am very proud to belong to a team of MPs who will stand up and put forward a real plan to help a major industry. I have a personal interest in the industry because it affects my constituents, my friends, and my family. I know that.

I am very proud to have shared this with the House and to offer my support to my constituents.

● (1620)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to the industry. As such, my question will be based on that.

Over the years, the aerospace industry has been impacted negatively. Its potential has not been fully recognized in Canada. It is important that government identify the importance of technology in moving forward and investing in our aerospace industry. We heard that in some of the responses today.

Unlike the previous administration, this government truly cares about the aerospace industry and that bodes well for the community I represent, Winnipeg North, where there is a strong aerospace industry. We want the government to show that it is genuinely concerned about it. I have attended many rallies in support of our aerospace industry.

Canada has a significant aerospace industry in a number of pockets throughout Canada. Would the member not agree that it is important that we as a government and as members of Parliament advocate for the protection of the industry so it can create jobs into the future?

● (1625)

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, if the government cares so much about the industry, why did it have nothing to say during the election campaign about helping the industry? The Liberals were completely silent on this issue.

That is why I have questions about files like Bombardier. On the day the new government was sworn in, one of the first questions addressed to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, as the portfolio is now known, was about Bombardier. That was one of the first questions addressed to several ministers who paraded before the media. That was in November, and we still have not gotten any real answers. In the meantime, people are losing their jobs and looking for help.

I also want to mention the Aveos workers, who are also living with uncertainty. They remember a Prime Minister who was eager to demonstrate with them and show the so-called good faith that the member mentioned, but who is nowhere to be found now that the Liberals are in power.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to salute and congratulate my colleague on his interesting remarks, particularly regarding his personal background, as well as the fact that some of his constituents work for Canadair, and therefore for Bombardier. I would remind the House that it was in 1986 that the government of the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney decided to privatize the company. It was then purchased by the Quebec company founded in Valcourt, in the Eastern Townships, thanks to the creative genius of Joseph-Armand Bombardier. He acquired it for basically what the company was worth. A few years later, Bombardier completely revolutionized and reinvented the aviation world with regional jets.

Here is what I want to say: for the C Series to work, Bombardier has to sell planes. Here is a Canadian company, Porter, that is ready to buy 30 aircraft. For that to happen, the government has to allow these planes to land at an airport. It would not cost the federal government a single dime to let Porter buy them.

We will see what the government proposes to help Bombardier. We know that the Quebec government made a proposal, but it was harshly criticized by the opposition. We need to give the government some time and then decide whether we agree with the proposal. Why would anyone oppose a proposal that will not cost taxpayers a single dime and, more importantly, will allow Bombardier to sell planes?

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's passion for the history of Canadair and Bombardier. Indeed, there have been highs and lows. My grandfather experienced that. At one point, he was one of the only workers left at plant 1. Then there was a wind of change. We acknowledge the history of the industry, especially in Quebec, and it is part of our collective history.

I understand the hon. member's question and his concern. My problem is that we know that Porter is currently having financial difficulties. We also know that the Conservatives are promising us that this will not cost the taxpayers anything. However, we have questions about the hidden costs. We have all sorts of questions. Is this something that will truly not cost the taxpayers anything? I am not convinced. After all, we know that this could cause traffic and nuisance problems, which could result in hidden costs. Costs are not always financial, of course. At the end of the day, what we take issue with here is that this is not the perfect solution. It takes a government that is ready to show some leadership, ready to propose a real strategy for this industry and finally tell us whether or not it is going to help Bombardier.

My colleague alluded to what was done in Quebec. We are very aware that it is in the taxpayers' interest that we respect their money. That is why we want any agreement between the federal government and Bombardier to have all the necessary criteria to ensure the proper use of taxpayers' money.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Beloeil—Chambly for his very elegant and nuanced, but also realistic speech on the future of this important industry and the situation of people living in downtown Toronto. I would like to elaborate on one point brought up by my colleague from Beloeil—Chambly.

Once again, the Conservative motion reflects the politics of division. It is trying to pit Toronto against Montreal; it is trying to pit the quality of life and concerns of Torontonians against the future of a sector mainly based in the metropolitan area. The Conservatives are mixing apples and oranges for political gain and to put the other parties on the spot.

Some might say that it is not so difficult to put the Liberal Party on the spot because it seems to be doing an embarrassing flip-flop on the promises it made to the people of Toronto during the election campaign.

I think it is terrible that they are trying to start a war between Montreal and Toronto, at the expense of residents, when this debate is about a very important airport that, I admit, many passengers appreciate. However, the Conservatives seem to favour a case-by-case approach, as though we could fix the problems in Canada's aerospace industry one airport at a time.

That is not the way to support industries that provide jobs for hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands of people, if you count indirect jobs.

These petty politics, or divisive politics, are nothing new from the Conservatives, and we saw the same thing in recent years with PortsToronto. If I can, I will come back to this later.

The New Democrats believe that the quality of life of Toronto residents is what is most important. Toronto's waterfront belongs to all Toronto residents, and that is essential to us. We want to protect a clean and green waterfront, where noise pollution does not affect residents' quality of life.

The Liberals shared this position for years, but that no longer seems to be as clear, since the Minister of Transport sent out his infamous tweet.

Business of Supply

For years, people in Toronto have been banding together and working hard to preserve their quality of life, an initiative that we applaud and agree with. We understand and share these residents' legitimate concerns about an excessive expansion that could negatively impact ecosystems and increase air and noise pollution.

The NDP's position is and remains that the 1983 tripartite agreement must be honoured. I hope that that is still the Liberal Party's position. For us, it is clear, and an NDP government would guarantee the enforcement of the 1983 tripartite agreement in order to limit excessive noise and noise pollution for the residents of Toronto.

The NDP also hopes that the airport will fall under the responsibility of the City of Toronto and not PortsToronto, as is currently the case, because the Liberals and the Conservatives have been playing politics there for years by holding fundraisers and appointing political contributors to port authority positions. That is the case in Toronto and in Montreal as well.

Members will remember all of the wheeling and dealing that the Conservative Party did over the past few years with regard to the Port of Montreal. I spoke about this numerous times. The NDP wants to prevent any more problems like this in the future, and that is why we are proposing that the airport fall under the responsibility of the City of Toronto from now on.

Given the NDP's values, policy positions, environmental positions, and respect for citizens' movements, we hope that a rational approach will be taken on this issue. We also want actual assessments to be conducted regarding the noise levels.

I would like to remind members of a proposal that my colleague, the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, made during the discussions that we had in Quebec, or at least on the south shore.

● (1630)

His riding is home to the Saint-Hubert airport, a major regional airport that could be used as noise level testing grounds for the new C Series aircraft, which are much less noisy and polluting. These tests could be conducted in collaboration with the City of Toronto. My colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert put the suggestion out there. I would like my colleagues to comment on that. That would be a constructive, logical approach.

I would also like to highlight the aerospace sector's contribution to Quebec's economy and Canada's. This is a big deal to an MP from the greater Montreal area. I should point out that Bombardier alone accounts for 17,500 jobs and 40,000 direct and indirect jobs in all. This key sector sustains tens of thousands of families. It is also a sector in which we excel on the world stage. We can build some of the best airplanes in the world, if not the best. The C Series plane is considered the best in the world in its class.

Business of Supply

Sadly, the Conservative government was asleep at the wheel for the past 10 years as far as the aerospace sector goes. It invested nothing in worker training or innovation and did nothing to promote purchases here at home. We hope that the new Liberal government will have a different approach and pay closer attention to the people of the greater Montreal area, whom the Conservatives ignored for 10 years. Unfortunately, things are looking pretty grim, if I may say so.

With respect to Aveos, the 1988 Air Canada Public Participation Act was crystal clear. The Conservatives ignored the issue for years, and now the Liberals are doing the same. I would note that according to section 6 of the Air Canada Public Participation Act, 2,600 Air Canada aircraft maintenance jobs were supposed to be maintained in Winnipeg, Mississauga, and Montreal, if I remember correctly. That was part of the deal.

For years, the Conservatives chose to disregard the law and leave workers to fend for themselves in the courts, and they won twice. Today, after demonstrating with Aveos workers, expressing its support, and calling on the Conservatives to abide by the law, the Liberal government is opening the door to changing the law in order to legalize something that was illegal for many years. That is what we call stabbing the Aveos workers in the back, when they had a real chance in the Supreme Court to get their jobs back and force Air Canada to listen to reason.

It is Liberal hypocrisy pure and simple. In 2012, the Prime Minister chanted “so, so, so, solidarity”, here on Parliament Hill, when he was the leader of the second opposition party. Today, we get radio silence. The Liberals are missing in action. The government can no longer assure these people that it will uphold the law to keep these important jobs that are the bread and butter of hundreds of families across the country, including 1,700 people in the Montreal area. Unfortunately, they were abandoned by the Conservatives for many years.

The aerospace sector is tremendously important. As the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, I am reaching out to the Liberal government and all the other opposition parties to work together on developing an action plan that will help Bombardier sell its C Series aircraft here in Canada, create connections between all the airports, and promote this product so that it is purchased here at home and sold all around the world.

I hope that the Prime Minister will do what President Obama did for Boeing and take the plane himself and go to major international shows where the sale of such aircraft is negotiated, so that, as the leader of the NDP proposed during the election campaign, the company becomes the main seller of Quebec and Canadian products, especially when they are of the calibre of the C Series.

• (1635)

Let us not play politics with this. Let us come up with an action plan, a comprehensive, overarching strategy, to promote our products, Bombardier's products, the C Series planes, which will allow us to keep jobs and create new ones here at home.

• (1640)

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first

want to say that the passionate and urgent request from the member opposite to deliver security not just to Bombardier but to the families of the workers at Bombardier is heard on this side, and we understand and hope that the talks currently under way will deliver a prosperous future for a great Canadian company and, more importantly, for a great Quebec company that provides significant employment based in Montreal. We heard the call for action, and I know the ministers are attending to that.

What I am concerned about is the fact that nobody on the Conservative side seems to have read a single report contained in this decision. We just heard from the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent that 30 planes were going to be ordered. If we read the letter to the City of Toronto by the head of Porter Airlines asking for the jet exemption, we see that he claims to have only a provisional order, a conditional order, for 12; it was never 30. The Conservatives talk about the runway being 335 metres long, and that is all the extension that is required. If we read the same report, we see that it is 200 metres, plus safety aprons.

In light of the fact that the Conservative Party seems to be incapable of getting the facts right or even reading the reports that the decision is based on, does the member opposite have any confidence that the Conservatives have any idea of what is happening in the airline industry or the aerospace industry in this country?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Spadina—Fort York for his question.

The answer to that question is pretty simple. If my colleague is asking me if I trust the Conservative Party to support the aerospace industry, the answer, of course, is no. I would add, however, that I also have some doubts about his government. I welcome the openness it is showing in terms of supporting Canada's aerospace industry. However, actions speak louder than words, so I would like the Liberal government to promise, first of all, to honour the tripartite agreement reached in 1983 regarding the expansion of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport and, second, not to change the 1988 Air Canada Public Participation Act, in order to keep the Aveos jobs in Canada.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and for all the hard work he has done over the past five years to defend the workers of Bombardier, Aveos, and Quebec, when the Conservative government turned its back on them. Unfortunately, if we continue down this path, the new government will end up doing the same thing.

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I would like to come back to the work that my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert is doing regarding the Saint-Hubert airport. He mentioned it in passing. I am originally from Saint-Bruno, so I am very familiar with this issue. People have voiced concerns regarding the development of this airport. I think that a parallel can be drawn here. We need to respect what residents in Saint-Hubert and Toronto, for example, think about what is being done or what should be done. Unfortunately, that was not the approach taken by the Conservatives. The Saint-Hubert airport is close to where I live. It is located in a neighbouring riding, or what used to be a neighbouring riding in any case. I am mentioning this because it relates to a point that I raised in my speech. Too often, the argument used by people who do not want to support Quebec industry is that the assistance is just a bailout for Bombardier. We are not talking about just one company. It is important to understand that. Perhaps my colleague can talk a little more about it. A number of companies depend on the aerospace industry. We are not just talking about workers at Bombardier. Thousands of workers in Quebec depend on this industry.

Mr. Alexandre Boulrice: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Beloeil—Chambly for his question. As he is from the south shore, my colleague is obviously familiar with the issues affecting jobs in the aerospace sector, since many of his constituents earn a living in that sector. He has touched on an extremely important point. The federal government has a role to play in supporting a leading-edge industry such as the aerospace industry, just as it had a responsibility to help Ontario's auto sector a few years ago. It is exactly the same type of investment. It is a reasonable and responsible investment, and taxpayers will get a return on their investment. This is not just about throwing money at a problem.

It is true that we are not talking about Bombardier alone. We are talking about the whole structure of small and medium-sized businesses, the suppliers of parts, labour, expertise, contracts that increase Bombardier's ability to make good and better products. All this makes up an industrial fabric that we are very proud of and that we must continue to support.

• (1645)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

[*English*]

My constituents care about the future of Billy Bishop airport in Toronto. Our riding of York—Simcoe is in the greater Toronto area and what happens at Billy Bishop airport will affect how much choice and competition there is in air travel for my constituents. With more choice and competition meaning lower prices and more options if they travel, for many of them it may even make the difference whether they can afford to travel.

What is more, the Liberal government's decision to block the new Bombardier C Series planes will also directly affect many of my constituents who work at Bombardier.

My constituents do not understand why the Liberal government is blocking the growth of GTA jobs. They want the government to reverse its decision and allow the Billy Bishop airport expansion plans to proceed.

Currently, the airport is responsible for some 6,500 jobs, and some of the people who live in my riding enjoy some of those jobs. There are \$385 million in wages and over \$2 billion in economic output that result from the airport. It is also a major contributor of taxes to the city of Toronto and the federal government, at approximately \$71 million per year.

However, what we have seen from the Liberal government is not an approach of using decision-making to create jobs, but rather we have seen spending decisions by the government and growing deficits that are dragging down the economy. Instead of fighting to grow employment in the GTA, the government is rejecting an important airport expansion that would see more jobs brought into our area. While the government has said that it needs to spend billions to create jobs, with the cancellation of the Billy Bishop expansion, it is killing \$2 billion in contracts with Bombardier. Yet without spending a single dollar of taxpayer money, it could reverse the decision to halt the Billy Bishop airport expansion and create significant economic activity and job growth.

The government talks about evidence-based decision-making, but it rejected the proposal before it even had the evidence. It cancelled it before it could consult with the city of Toronto, which had already begun preparing three reports that included a full environmental assessment, an airport master plan, and a runway design plan. Instead of taking the time to look at all of the information that it would have had before it, the Liberal government has chosen to ignore any evidence and is moving strongly and straight away to kill GTA jobs and choices for Toronto area travellers, tourism and businesses. The decision is pure ideology, and in this case an anti-C Series ideology.

Members should consider this. If the Government of Canada says that the C Series planes has such a negative impact that they cannot be allowed to fly into Billy Bishop airport in downtown Toronto, why would anybody buy that plane?

The negative impact on Bombardier will go well beyond the \$2 billion in lost sales to Porter. Other potential purchasers will take note. Of course, the competitors, Boeing, Airbus and Embraer, will be out telling that story to potential aircraft purchasers. They will be telling prospective purchasers that the C Series is so loud that the Government of Canada will not allow it into downtown Toronto. "Watch what they do, not what they say", is what those competitors will tell prospective purchasers. "Don't listen to what the government says", as the transport minister said today, "about what a great plane it is, look at what they actually do with their decisions, and that's how you should judge them. Yes, they are making claims", Bombardier is, "that the jets will be quiet, but their own government does not believe it and that is why they aren't allowing them to fly into the only airport in the city of Toronto."

Then, for good measure, the other plane manufacturers will also say that the C Series cannot be trusted on safety. They will say that the opponents of the C Series flights said that they raised significant safety issues, that the government has agreed with those opponents and has banned the C Series jets from the only airport in the city of Toronto.

Business of Supply

The opponents of the C Series flying into Toronto will say that the jets will pollute so badly that they will cause health problems for local residents, and that apparently the Government of Canada agrees with those opponents. Those selling jets for the other manufacturers will be pointing that out to any prospective purchasers that this is the opinion of the Government of Canada on the C Series jets.

That is not the truth. The C Series jets are a great Canadian innovation. Using advanced composite materials, they are fuel efficient, clean, and quiet, with a design that is passenger-friendly. Bombardier claims it is highly reliable plane. However, the Liberal government is siding with those who have been campaigning against them by saying that they are too dangerous for Toronto.

● (1650)

Bombardier says that the C Series is 20% less carbon emitting than the competition and emits 50% less nitrogen dioxide than the competition does, but the Liberal government has agreed with those who say it pollutes too much for Toronto. Bombardier says that the C Series is the quietest plane in its class and even quieter than the smaller turboprops, but the Government of Canada instead agrees with those who say it is too noisy for Toronto.

The brand damage that is being done to the C Series by the Liberal government decision to keep them out of the only airport in Toronto is so great that likely no subsidy to Bombardier can rescue it. No matter how big, it cannot save the C Series. The only thing that could actually save the C Series would cost nothing. It is a reversal of the ideological decision to block the C Series from Billy Bishop airport.

As the former international trade minister, I have experienced a bit about the international market for planes and how it works. It is a fiercely competitive market and governments are heavily involved in it. It is very aggressive. The marketing is intense and it is important for a company to have its government behind it when trying to make sales.

Purchasers will judge the acts of governments when they make those decisions and in that fierce market, a vote of non-confidence from a company's own government, a decision that its planes are too dangerous, too noisy, and too polluting for the only airport in the biggest city in the country, that decision made here by the Liberal government is devastating and it is impossible to explain away.

The only way to explain it away is to acknowledge that there is no evidence or no basis for that decision, that there really is not any evidence that they were noisy, dangerous, or polluting. Never mind that they were the basis of the objections to it, but the decision was made anyhow for some other abstract political reason.

The Liberal government has to acknowledge that. If it acknowledges that there is no basis for this decision on the evidence, reverse that decision. This is the only thing that could be done to reverse the brand damage being done here and allow the C Series to survive.

What impact will it have on future C Series sales as other manufacturers can now say with a factual basis that the Government of Canada agrees with those who say that the C Series is too noisy, too polluting, and too dangerous to fly into the only airport in Canada's largest city? What does that say? How can Bombardier explain that to any purchaser? How can it defend against that brand

damage inflicted by its own national government? It is impossible and that is the problem here.

The answer is that we will have some subsidies, that we will have some thoughts, that we hope they will turn out well. No subsidy can save a company when its own government says this plane is so bad that it will not let it fly into the only airport in our biggest city. That is the recklessness and foolishness of this ideological decision by the Liberal government. It will cost jobs in the GTA. It will cost jobs across Canada.

A few weeks ago, I rose in the House to ask the Minister of Transport why the government had chosen to attack Toronto's economy and jobs in the vulnerable aviation sector. His response was that Air Canada had decided to buy some C Series jets from Bombardier and this was great news for Bombardier and Quebec.

Let me put this great news into perspective for the minister because the truth is that Air Canada signed a letter of intent to purchase the C Series aircraft and the rumoured amount it will pay is approximately \$28 million per plane, this for a plane that is listed at \$60 million. Apparently, the brand damage has been done. The brand damage has already cut the price in half for these planes. How will it survive that? That is with a friendly purchaser in Canada. What does that say to every other prospective purchaser around the world?

That is \$2 billion in plane orders being thrown out the window because the government is too stubborn to recognize its mistakes and reverse its decision, but the real damage is the brand damage.

I also want to return to the impact on consumers, the loss of choice, the loss of competition, the loss of potential lower prices for air travel. Let us go one step further. If we do not have further options for travelling and we do not have competition and lower prices, that hurts ordinary families, working families, families that the hon. member who is the leader of the campaign against these jets, claims to fight for. People who sometimes never get to travel for whom those higher prices will guarantee those travels will never happen. My constituents are like that. They work hard and for them to save to travel on a vacation is a tough thing. They will have fewer of those choices.

● (1655)

However, a further question exists, and perhaps this is the real agenda here. If we have an economic downturn and we are hamstringing one of these airlines or airline groups and we are not letting them compete and not letting them have other options to go head to head with other airlines, what will happen to them in an economic downturn? Would we lose that airline? Would that mean even more job losses, less competition, higher prices, and only Air Canada out of Mississauga to fly with? That may be the future. It is a foolish decision, an ideological decision, one that should be reversed.

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Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the hon. member should really consult the reports that are on the table and that have been considered by the city of Toronto. They completely contradict virtually every fact in his argument, including the fabricated words he tries to put in our mouths. We have never damaged the brand. We stand firmly behind Bombardier, and there has been no criticism of the airplane from this side of the House. We support the development of the C Series plane and we think it is a good plane. The trouble is it does not fit the airport it is trying to fly it into.

The issue is this and it needs to be explained. The member opposite talked about competition. Is he aware that Continental looked at the airport and refused to fly in and out of the airport because there was an anti-competition law at the airport that did not allow new airlines to compete against Porter? It is the same provision that is keeping WestJet out of that airport. It is the same provision that is keeping Air Canada out of that airport. If the member believes in open skies and competition, why did his party stack the port authority with individuals who gave Porter a monopoly, and forbid WestJet, Air Canada, and Continental from competing on price and on schedule? Why did the Conservatives allow that to happen?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member fails to understand that the kind of rules in place at the Billy Bishop airport about landing slots are the same as every other airport around the world. There are these kinds of struggles over landing slots everywhere, and everybody complains. Air Canada has the inside track in Mississauga, and its partner is United. That is not relevant to the issue.

What is relevant is what the member just said, that this plane was not right for Toronto. That is the decision of the Liberal Party and that is what everybody from Boeing, from Embraer and from Airbus is going to go around saying, that the Liberal government's members are saying that this plane is not right for Toronto, that they cannot fly it into Toronto. They will all be saying that their airports are in those kinds of environments, that they want to fly their airplanes into every airport they can.

They will be saying that they cannot fly this plane into the only airport in the biggest city in Canada because it pollutes too much, because it makes too much noise, and because it is not safe. They do not have any other reason. Those are the reasons raised by the objectors.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: The runway is too short.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, he says the runway is too short. The runway could be made a little longer. We all know we can do that. The whole airport is full. The whole of downtown Toronto is full. Most of the member's riding is full and the lake. It is not a new concept. It is not radical. It is not different.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are getting two different messages from the members opposite. Some Conservatives are saying that we are spending too much, that we are overspending. Now, my colleague opposite is saying that we need to invest more.

As everyone knows, it is very costly to build this airport and expand it above water. There are also other factors to consider. The government recognizes that Bombardier contributes to the Canadian economy and the airport industry. That is very important to us.

I should also point out that the Conservatives did nothing in the past 10 years. We committed to consulting the public. That is what we have done, and that is what we are doing right now.

Could my colleague opposite tell me whether he would be comfortable making a decision today, if he were in power, to invest more in the airport, without consulting the public and municipalities and without examining the regulations and legislation on this issue?

• (1700)

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, the people of the greater Toronto area have been voting with their feet and with their dollars. The growth of travel at that airport has been significant. The investment, not with taxpayers' dollars, but by air travellers and by the companies operating out of there, has been huge. Jobs have been created. There are more people flying out of there now than in decades. Why? It is because it works. It is successful. People want it. We think that is important. When people choose to fly out of there, that is a good thing. Let us give them more choices and more opportunities and not kill them through an arbitrary decision.

The problem of the member's friend sitting two seats away from him is that he did not like the growth in traffic. He did not like the tunnel being constructed so people could walk directly to the airport to facilitate travel. He did not like any of those things. In his ideal world, that airport would be shut down, or perhaps used only for air ambulances. That would be it. That is his position.

However, when the decision, made as it was, discriminates against the C Series aircraft, that we are not going to let this plane fly in and out, what does that say? It is not a decision by the people. It is not a decision by our ratepayers association. It is a decision by the Government of Canada that these planes should not be permitted to fly into Toronto.

What does that say about these planes? How do we explain that to any prospective purchaser? It is impossible. It is killing the C Series. This decision by the Liberal government is doing far more damage to the C Series than anything that any competitor is doing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin the main part of my speech, I would like to read the motion. I have been hearing a lot of things today, but I think that members are forgetting the main points of the motion under debate. In the motion, we are asking:

That the House: (a) acknowledge the contribution Bombardier makes to the Canadian economy and the aerospace industry;

We all agree on that. We are also asking that the House:

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(b) recognize that there is a market solution already available that could support Bombardier; (c) acknowledge that Bombardier has designed the quietest and best aircraft in its class that is well suited to urban airports like the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport; (d) recognize that the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is a major economic driver for the Greater Toronto Area that supports both business and leisure travel; (e) recognize that the expansion of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport would allow airlines to purchase Bombardier aircraft; and (f) call on the government to reverse its decision on restricting the expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

I do not think that there is anything negative for anyone in there. Let us take this one step further and come back to Bombardier. My maternal grandfather was the mayor of Valcourt and a good friend of J. Armand Bombardier. Mr. Bombardier always said to my grandfather, "I invent and my accountant does the math." The point I am trying to make here in the House is that we need to find creative ways to help, but we also need to be able to do the math.

I am pleased to be able to participate in today's debate on the future of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport and the quality jobs that Bombardier provides all across Canada, but particularly in Quebec. The tripartite agreement between the City of Toronto, PortsToronto, and the Government of Canada describes what can and cannot happen at the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. The agreement, which was signed in 1983, has been amended twice, once in 1985 to allow the Bombardier Dash 8 aircraft to land at the airport and again in 2003 to allow for the construction of a tunnel linking the city to the airport, which, by the way, is on an island.

When this tripartite agreement was signed, the Liberal government of the day had just expropriated hundreds of farms north of Montreal to establish an airport near Mirabel for intercontinental flights. As we all know, because of technological advances, an aircraft can now fly non-stop from Vancouver to Paris, and Mirabel airport now solely serves cargo companies. Today, air transportation is accessible and affordable for most Canadians, which was not the case 30 years ago. For that reason, there are better links between our cities.

Government regulations for airports and aircraft must also be in step with technological advances. Bombardier designed and built the best plane in its class with the C Series. This is the quietest aircraft, even quieter than the Dash 8, which has been authorized to land at Billy Bishop for more than 30 years. This aircraft consumes less fuel per passenger than a new car.

This aircraft will give passengers a more comfortable travel experience with its innovations. The new Bombardier aircraft is, quite frankly, ideal for use at small airports such as Billy Bishop in Toronto or LaGuardia in New York.

However, the Liberal Party, through its Minister of Transport, unilaterally decided to eliminate numerous potential orders for this new airplane by blocking the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport. Furthermore, in a single tweet, the Minister of Transport imposed his will on every Toronto resident and city councillor. In a single tweet, our champions of consultation put an end to thousands of hours of consultation and studies that were already complete. I point this out, since my colleague earlier did not seem to be aware of this. We have to wonder where this decision came from, what motivated it, and whether the minister truly understood the impact of his decision.

I would like to share a little information. In 2013, a Canadian airline submitted a request to the City of Toronto to extend the Billy

Bishop airport runway and end the ban on jets. This airline's hub is located at the Billy Bishop airport, which generates many jobs in Toronto.

After long debates at city council, after receiving briefs and presentations from stakeholders, Toronto city council unanimously voted to allow the city manager to negotiate with Transport Canada and the Toronto port authority on a phasing framework to manage growth at Billy Bishop airport. As a result, the City of Toronto ordered a full environmental assessment, an airport master plan, and a runway design plan. The cost to the City of Toronto for these plans and assessments is estimated at \$4 million. The three studies were 90% complete, and City of Toronto officials were to make recommendations to city council in early 2016.

• (1705)

When the minister sent out his tweet blocking the expansion in November 2015, the city stopped examining the proposal.

The City of Toronto had a list of 25 issues to be addressed before it would approve expanding the airport, and it was in discussions with the Toronto port authority regarding its concerns.

Given that the Liberal government will not stop talking about the importance of working with Canada's provinces and municipalities, it took some real audacity for the minister to throw nearly two years of hard work out the window with a single tweet. It is shocking.

Is it because the Minister of Transport wants to give priority to rail development in Toronto? It is a legitimate question.

Expanding the airport would be good for Bombardier. The Government of Quebec announced that it had purchased a 49% stake in the C Series program at a cost of \$1 billion U.S. The Quebec and Ontario governments are calling on the federal government to make a financial commitment and support Bombardier and the entire aerospace industry.

We think that Bombardier expects to receive at least \$1 billion in financial support from the Canadian government. What Bombardier really needs is more orders for C Series planes. So far it has orders for fewer than 300 aircraft.

Bombardier needs airlines that want to showcase the assets and advantages of this new aircraft. There is a solution that would really help Bombardier, would not cost taxpayers a dime, and would allow that company to create jobs. However, this government made a decision that was entirely political, one that is going to cost thousands of jobs in Toronto and Montreal. One has to wonder whether the political leanings of the stakeholders in this matter explain and justify that decision.

I hope the government House leader will allow the Liberal members to vote freely on this motion, which is important to the economic future of Montreal and Toronto.

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[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again there is this reference to a City decision, a decision that was made when I was on council. It stipulated very carefully that 25 conditions needed to be met before the City would consent to any more studies being done, including the environmental assessment.

The port authority wrote the council back. They were required to consent to these 25 conditions. They said they could not and would not meet those conditions. Some studies went ahead, but they went ahead without the permission of the City. As a result, the City has now met five times and refused five times to endorse this proposal. In fact, the port authority itself has now withdrawn the studies and withdrawn any request.

No member of the tripartite agreement stands in support of this process. Only the airline does. In light of the fact that no consent has ever been granted, can the member not concede that the City of Toronto, given ample opportunity over three years to approve this request, has now refused it? It has refused it because the port authority has said it cannot proceed under the conditions stipulated by the elected representatives for the people of Toronto.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for his point of view.

However, it is clear that the process was still under way and that the minister put an end to discussions with a single tweet. That was it. One tweet from the Minister of Transport, and it was over.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his highly informative and well-researched speech regarding the facts, the sequence of events, and especially the sad reality that one of the first things the minister did as minister was put an end to a research and assessment process that was under way. The whole thing was shut down.

We all need to understand that in this case, the best way to help a company is to allow it to sell its products. It is as simple as that. The best approach, the best way to support a company, is to sell its product.

Here we have a Canadian company offering to buy Canadian products if it can get permission to land at a Canadian airport, and with a single tweet, the government brought it all to a crashing halt and told them to forget about it.

That is a far cry from what happened with the auto sector 10 years ago when the Conservative government decided to give that industry a helping hand. It was a global problem, we had connections with the United States, and it involved three major companies. In this case, it is just one product and one company.

With respect to our motion, can the member tell us why the government is refusing to let Bombardier make airplanes that would be bought by a Canadian company and could land at a Canadian airport in Canada's biggest city?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention.

The Conservative Party, the NDP, and the Liberal Party have a totally different way of seeing things. The Conservatives are all about supporting entrepreneurship. The Billy Bishop airport is a project that will support Bombardier's development as well as business development. The airport will create more opportunities for business and leisure travel.

We know there will probably be some financial assistance, but that is not even what our motion is about. We admit that Bombardier is a large corporation and that it has certain needs. However, we think that the Billy Bishop airport is a factor in economic development and, for the Conservatives, that is what counts. It is not just about handing out money, it is about helping businesses grow.

Mr. Joël Lighthound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank my colleague for his speech. We all agree here on the importance of the aerospace industry in Canada, especially in Quebec. I am the first to defend it and believe in it.

However, I have a hard time understanding how the Conservatives can believe that expanding the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is the right strategy for helping Canada's aerospace industry. We knew that the Conservatives lacked ambition when it came to this industry over the past 10 years and that has now been confirmed.

I would like to know whether the hon. member thinks that this is the right strategy for the aerospace industry.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my esteemed colleague for his question. We obviously support economic development. The economy has always been the prime concern of the Conservative Party.

Expanding the runway at Billy Bishop airport would make it possible for the company currently operating there to purchase Bombardier planes. We support the development of the aerospace sector as well as business development. There are a number of other issues in Canada but here, in Toronto, we are talking specifically about Billy Bishop airport. If the runway were extended, Bombardier could sell its planes to Porter, just to name one company. Perhaps Air Canada could fly C Series aircraft into the Billy Bishop airport.

In what way are we opposed to development?

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

The motion before us gives me the opportunity to speak about Bombardier's C Series aircraft. I will delve further into the technical details of an approval and show how Bombardier gets its certification.

On December 18, the hon. Minister of Transport announced that Bombardier had finally obtained certification for its C Series aircraft. This certification represents Transport Canada's approval of the design, airworthiness limitations, and operating conditions for the aircraft. Certification requires an exhaustive review of the design in order to verify that it meets airworthiness standards and environmental regulations.

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Bombardier can now take the final steps to deliver C Series aircraft to clients around the world, such as obtaining international approvals and training staff. Although Transport Canada's main role in this area is to ensure air safety, it is also closely involved in the financial success of the aerospace industry. Obtaining certification was vital to Bombardier's operational needs and to support ongoing activities required for entry into service of the aircraft in the summer of 2016.

Swissair is the first of many European airlines that will receive deliveries in 2016. Air Canada also recently confirmed that it has ordered Bombardier aircraft. Since these planes are built in Canada, Transport Canada is responsible for determining the airworthiness of Bombardier's aircraft, in accordance with the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

There is still much work to be done before the aircraft will be ready for service. However, the department takes its responsibilities seriously and is actively working with Bombardier to keep the process moving. The C-Series project was an important achievement, the result of excellent co-operation among Transport Canada and Bombardier officials. In addition to the work being done by Transport Canada, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and the European Aviation Safety Agency, or EASA, are also validating the Canadian certification.

These validations are required before the aircraft can be put into service. The EASA validation is especially important, since the first flight will fall under its jurisdiction. In order to simplify this process, Transport Canada is in talks with other agencies to reduce the involvement of the validation authorities by taking advantage of existing bilateral agreements. In September 2015, these agencies met in Brazil, and their meeting was key to moving this initiative forward. Work is under way to move forward with the procedures subject to these bilateral agreements, and this will require agencies from around the world to work together.

It is a constant challenge to adapt new aircraft technologies and the evolving certification process to the existing regulatory structure. As a result, international agencies must work closely to keep the aircraft design and manufacturing industry on a level playing field. Transport Canada's involvement and expertise are essential in maintaining Canada's status as a key player in the global aerospace industry.

The expertise required to approve aeronautical products at Transport Canada is very specialized. There are engineers who specialize in various fields, from cell structure to quality assurance to software design, as well as test pilots and qualified flight test engineers. The certification of the C Series is supported by a team of approximately 61 experts at Transport Canada.

Ministerial delegation is another essential aspect of the aircraft certification program. Approximately 450 ministerial delegates are qualified to make findings of compliance with design standards. Transport Canada experts work with these delegates in an oversight capacity. The delegates play an important role in the certification of the C Series. The certification of any product involves a comprehensive examination of the design to verify that the product complies with its basis of certification; that is, the applicable

airworthiness standards and environmental regulations with which the product must comply.

• (1715)

There are five phases in the process. In phase one, the applicant applies for the type certificate, and provides details of the product design. Transport Canada establishes the certification basis.

In phase two, the applicant and Transport Canada agree on a certification plan that describes the means and methods to be used in showing compliance with the basis and the involvement of the certification team members.

In phase three, the product is built and tested, reports are written, compliance documents are reviewed for acceptability as documenting compliance, and the supporting approval documents are prepared. After the flight test phase, inspectors visit the manufacturer periodically in order to ensure that aircraft production and assembly comply with regulations.

In phase four, which is based on the compliance demonstration in phase three, the design, airworthiness limitations, and operating conditions are approved, and the type certificate is issued.

Finally, in phase five, the product enters service and any post-certification design changes made by the type certificate holder are incorporated.

For the C Series, the process took over five years, and many, many hours were needed to ensure its success. After the type certification and commissioning, Transport Canada is responsible for monitoring the safety performance of the aircraft in the fleet. If there are any safety concerns, Transport Canada must take the necessary measures to ensure the continued airworthiness of the product. This can range from mandatory inspections to a requirement to replace a defective part, or in some cases, prohibiting an aircraft from flying until the cause of the safety concern is better understood.

Canada has one of the safest air transportation systems in the world. Over the last decade, we have seen a steady decline in the accident rate. Our safety record contributes to our international reputation as a world leader in aviation safety. This allows us to promote our aviation safety program and the interests of our air industry around the globe. Our safety record provides a solid foundation for promoting Canadian products wherever they are used.

Our vision of air safety in Canada is one in which improvements are made at every level, where safety is not the sole responsibility of one particular sector of the aviation industry, but rather the responsibility of all of its members, and where the regulatory body is part of the culture of safety and rounds out an already robust and progressive safety system.

That is how Transport Canada envisions the growth of Canada's aviation industry. After all, in order for the growth to be sustainable, it must be safe.

Business of Supply

The aviation community did not hesitate to rise to the challenge to make the business of flying safer than ever before and deserving of the trust that Canadians continue to put in the safety of air operations in Canada.

• (1720)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his eloquent explanation of the importance of the certification process for flight approval. However, if we look at certification by U.S. organizations, we see that the timelines are exceedingly long.

I would like to know whether the member believes that this could be a deliberate attempt to delay entry of the C Series aircraft onto the U.S. market and, therefore, to help Boeing.

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

Obviously, the main reason for certain delays is safety. Safety cannot be jeopardized. I do not have any information that would lead me to believe that our neighbour's government is causing unnecessary delays, because it has a vested interest, as we do, to ensure optimum safety.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on a point that was raised a little earlier on the amount of effort by some to deal with the issue of the Billy Bishop airport.

We understand fairly clearly that there is a tripartite agreement that needs to be taken into consideration. The City of Toronto, on several occasions, has had to approve any sort of expansion of the Billy Bishop airport and has chosen not to do so. The port authority itself is choosing not to proceed. It would seem to me that this is an idea being put forward by the Conservative Party as a wedge issue to try to divide communities, quite possibly, when in fact the government's position on this issue is very transparent and fairly straightforward. We are not trying to fool anyone.

Would the member want to comment on the fact that this has been talked about for many years and that it is time for us to move on? Yes, it is important that we do what we can to support the aerospace industry, which also includes Bombardier. I would ask for his comments and thoughts.

• (1725)

[Translation]

Mr. Ramez Ayoub: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for giving me an opportunity to clarify.

Much has been done to enable Bombardier to market and sell its C Series planes. I think it is insidious to throw up more pointless roadblocks by trying to make us believe that expanding the Billy Bishop airport will instantly breathe new life into Bombardier.

They are conflating two separate issues, but what we should be doing is working together to help Bombardier perform as well as possible and secure new orders as quickly as possible. Instead, people are spending time in the House moving motions designed to divide us on a subject that should bring us together and inspire a

sense of national unity. I did not hear anyone say anything bad about Bombardier. Everyone has very good things to say about the company.

Everyone in the House should come together to talk about Bombardier rather than mix up the issues all the time. Issues involving different airports are all being mixed up here today.

There is another file that focuses on communities. It is important to listen to them, and that is what we are doing. Our government wants to consult and hear from communities before making major changes.

[English]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the department of transport and the public first heard of the proposed expansion of, and changes to, the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport on April 10, 2013.

At this time, Porter Airlines announced that they planned to purchase Bombardier C Series aircraft, but only if the City of Toronto, PortsToronto, and the federal government amended the tripartite agreement that governs certain operations at the airport to allow an expansion of the runway and the use of the airport by jet aircraft such as the C Series.

This created, in people's minds, a link between the C Series and the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. This, however, was misleading. The future of the C Series is not tied to that airport. No aircraft, regardless of the manufacturer, is tied to a specific airport. The real discussion to be made was whether or not the changes to the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport were appropriate in the circumstances.

Following the announcement in April 2013, the former government had multiple opportunities to make a decision on the future of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

On April 3, 2014, the Toronto City Council adopted a motion that asked city staff to begin negotiations with the then-Minister of Transport and PortsToronto to, among other things, and here I am quoting:

...request the Government of Canada (represented by the Minister of Transport) to submit a letter confirming the government's commitment to managing growth at Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport through caps and phasing, and their engagement in negotiating Tripartite Agreement amendments...

The government of the day could, at any time after that April 2014 decision by the Toronto City Council, have entered into the requested negotiations, and negotiations are just that, in that one party does not always have to accept exactly what the other party says. However, they did not engage.

The issue of the proposed changes to Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport was discussed and debated for several years. There were many opportunities to make decisions on this issue, and this did not happen.

The members of the current government heard those debates, participated in those debates, and in November 2015, the government made a decision. The government stands by its decision regarding the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

Business of Supply

The government feels that the current tripartite agreement strikes the right balance between commercial and residential interests. The airport provides a significant economic benefit to the city of Toronto. The remarkable growth in passengers using the airport demonstrates that, and these are largely new passengers, not a transfer of traffic from Pearson International to Billy Bishop.

For just about every city that a passenger can get to from Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport and from Toronto Pearson, the number of passengers has increased from both airports. The number of flights has increased, and fares have decreased. That benefits not only the city of Toronto and the cities at the other end of the flight, but the whole system. These increased flights mean more connections, more spending, and more jobs.

However, the government also had to consider other interests of the surrounding community, the people who live near the airport, the people who work near the airport, and those who use the waterfront and Toronto Islands for recreation. Those people also had to be considered. The opportunities for recreation that the waterfront and the islands provide for the entire population of Toronto are equally important.

The ongoing efforts to redevelop Toronto's waterfront also had to be considered, and as I just said, the waterfront is very important to the people of Toronto and the people who visit Toronto. The efforts to improve it, enhance it, and make it even more useful and interesting to all those people are most certainly worth protecting.

Toronto Pearson is 25 minutes from downtown Toronto by train. It is a fully jet-capable airport with flights to all parts of the world. The C Series can just as easily be operated from that airport as from Billy Bishop. There is nothing to say that Porter Airlines or any other airline is forced to fly from one airport.

• (1730)

Airlines are not licensed and certified to fly out of one specific airport, and they can weigh the options, make the business assessment, and choose to fly out of many airports all across the country. That is why we have an economically deregulated system. It allows airlines to exercise their business judgment.

That economically deregulated system is working well, as the recent Canada Transportation Act review said. Our major airport and air navigation infrastructure is excellent, and our airlines are profitable and internationally recognized for customer satisfaction. That system, in 2014, carried 125 million passengers and transported \$116 billion worth of cargo worldwide. In 2012, it employed 141,000 Canadians, contributed \$34.9 billion to the country's GDP, and paid \$7 billion in provincial and federal taxes.

Porter has repeatedly demonstrated the entrepreneurial spirit that is the backbone of the entire industry. It is up to the airline to decide what best meets its needs in a given circumstance.

Porter Airlines is a commercial entity and makes decisions about the aircraft it acquires, and the markets and routes it serves in its best commercial judgment. Although its base is at the Billy Bishop airport, it can operate from any appropriate airport where the airline, in its commercial judgment, sees opportunities.

Many carriers have delivered service from Billy Bishop. Some have failed and others, such as Porter, are succeeding, but the Government of Canada must look beyond the immediate needs of a carrier and strike the right balance in ensuring the greatest public good in its decisions.

Porter Airlines has succeeded at Billy Bishop through innovation and hard work. Condé Nast Traveler's 2015 Readers' Choice Awards just named Porter Airlines as one of the best international airlines.

I have every confidence that Porter Airlines will continue, as will Bombardier, to provide innovative products and services for Canadians and the world.

Aerospace is important to the Canadian economy, and Bombardier is a key player in that sector. I realize that Bombardier faces a difficult economic situation, and this government sympathizes with the Bombardier employees who are affected by the company's restructuring announcement. The federal government will continue to work with Bombardier to better understand the company's situation and position. This government believes in Bombardier and in the C-Series aircraft.

As was said earlier, the recent announcement by Air Canada that it intends to purchase the C Series is significant, and Air Canada's commitment to maintain these aircraft in Canada further encourages job creation in our country. This government has said before that it believes that this aircraft is gaining momentum.

Bombardier is confident that the first C-Series aircraft will be delivered to Swiss Airlines International as planned in the summer, just a few months from now. The pending entry of the C Series into commercial service will give Bombardier the chance to show what it has produced to the world, what the C-series is capable of, and what it can do for airlines.

This government trusts that the C Series will demonstrate to all that it is the excellent aircraft that reports are predicting it will be, and it will be able to show that regardless of what happens with Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

• (1735)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the aerospace industry is obviously very important in Canada. It is not the kind of industry one can exit and then get back into later. Therefore, I think it is important that we show support for the aerospace industry.

We cannot really consider the motion outside of the larger question of a strategy for the aerospace industry in Canada. If the motion is meant to pit Toronto against Montreal, it completely forgets the western aerospace industry. If part of the point of the motion was to present cost-neutral, free, or costless things that the government could do in order to support the aerospace industry in Canada, one of those things would be to call on the government to enforce the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

Business of Supply

I would ask the parliamentary secretary if she would stand in her place and express support for simply enforcing the Air Canada Public Participation Act. It is something the previous government did not do. We lost hundreds of jobs in aircraft maintenance in Winnipeg as a result of that, and we would like to see a change from the current government. However, so far, the language of the current government has not indicated that it is willing to do so. In fact, the Liberals seem to be considering changing the law to let Air Canada off the hook that the Conservatives did not pursue.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, underlying the whole conversation is the strength of the aerospace industry, but the most important thing we have to remember is that the future of the Toronto city airport and Porter Airlines is not conditional on the C Series and Bombardier, and the aerospace industry as a whole.

We are very fortunate that the aerospace industry in Canada is the fifth largest in the world. We are the third-largest manufacturer in the world. Many certainly think that comes primarily from Quebec, but in actual fact we have five very vibrant regions of aerospace industry in our country, and they are growing quite considerably.

My hon. colleague made reference to in-service support and aircraft maintenance, and that is almost 40% of the overall contribution to GDP that the aerospace industry makes. A robust in-service support capability and aircraft maintenance is one that this government recognizes, and is looking at all the mechanisms that can support it.

This government is committed to supporting the aerospace industry, recognizing the strength it has both in manufacturing and in-service support, and ensuring it is strong and regionally diversified across this nation.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my colleague's service in the Royal Canadian Air Force, particularly on International Women's Day. We are very proud of her service to Canada.

The government has announced a reckless decision to cancel the F-35 project. Bell Helicopter is slowing down its manufacturing in Canada. The Liberals are making a political decision for a few members from their Toronto caucus, which will essentially set Bombardier back from a private sector sale when it is asking for public money.

In her experience in the defence industry and in uniform, should we not be helping our proud aerospace industry and the jobs related to it by taking the politics out of decisions related to Billy Bishop airport?

• (1740)

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague also served in the Canadian Forces and attended Royal Military College, as did I. We do not have the same college number, though.

We have separate politics and the conversation around the Billy Bishop airport and whether the future of it and of Porter Airlines is tied to the C Series and Bombardier, or that Bombardier and the C Series are by virtue tied to the airport and that absolutely has to be deconflicted.

If we are talking then about the aerospace industry, this government has committed to a fighter replacement program and will ensure that we get the right fighter aircraft for our country. In terms of a long-term in-service support capability, it will be one that will serve Canadians well.

To say that we may or may not have made a decision on which fighter does not in any way jeopardize or hamper our commitment to the aerospace and defence industry.

From a Bombardier perspective, it is a very viable company and it has done incredible things, both in business aircraft and commercial aircraft. It will continue to do so with this flagship, the C Series.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting time for me to rise and speak to our opposition day motion, which catches the new Liberal government in a quandary, in that the old Liberal Party and promises to Liberal politicians are coming back in vogue and so-called evidence-based decision-making is being tossed aside if it impacts one or two people in the PMO or close to the Prime Minister.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Carleton.

I stand today with an interesting perspective. This has to do with Toronto island airport, or Billy Bishop airport, and Bombardier. I have had personal experiences with both, much like the last speaker, who did not talk at length about her experience with the air force and with Bombardier in particular.

My first landings at Billy Bishop airport were with the RCAF, which has long used Toronto island airport as a search and rescue stopping point. I have landed there with both a C-130 Hercules crew and with my Sea King crew.

Interestingly enough, the CT-142, the modified Dash 8 flown by the RCAF for navigation training in Winnipeg, was a de Havilland aircraft, later a Bombardier aircraft, that became a pillar of that company's production and its worldwide reputation. At that time, to help the company, the Canadian government acquired and utilized aircraft within the RCAF at a time when de Havilland was transitioning into Bombardier. However, today we are looking at a situation where the government is allowing politics to interfere with a private sector sale that would help Bombardier, and that is troubling.

I will be speaking on both aspects of this opposition day motion.

As an MP in the greater Toronto area and as a lawyer who, after my air force career, practised law in Toronto, both in North York and downtown on Bay Street, I used Porter Airlines the second week it was operating. The member for Spadina—Fort York was hoping that the second week would be its last week of operations, but it flourished. That first flight I took to Montreal for business had about five people on it. Its exceptional service and attention to detail led both the airport and the airline to expand.

Other partners used Billy Bishop as well, based on its function and its ease of use, thereby taking people off the highways and allowing them to use public transit to get to an airport much more frequently than the new Union Pearson Express does.

Business of Supply

The Q400 became the linchpin of the Porter Airlines fleet. It became the standard. This aircraft sustained jobs in Montreal and the success of Bombardier. It is assembled in Toronto, and I am proud of the fact that a lot of constituents in Durham work on that line in Toronto. It is a significant employer in the GTA. Highly paid and highly skilled people work on that world-class line at Downsview, including an old friend of mine, Jeff Laird from Bowmanville, who is one of the lead engineers with Bombardier.

We are proud of the success of that aircraft and that its private sector partner was allowed to thrive and have sales around the world.

The C Series is the next Q400, the next aircraft that Bombardier is on the cusp of unleashing around the world to new customers. With its fuel efficiency, its silent operation, its ability to land at fairly smaller airports with smaller runways, it is a versatile aircraft that is best in its class.

Porter Airlines seized the ability for the next stage of its growth to allow more opportunity and more consumer choice for the millions of people who live in the GTA and use Billy Bishop airport. I have used Billy Bishop airport without ever having put a car on the highway. One would think a lot of members, particularly my friend from Spadina—Fort York, would like hopping on the GO train 70 kilometres away from the airport, getting into the city, taking a shuttle, and taking off from Billy Bishop without ever getting on a 400 series highway.

• (1745)

When I was a lawyer with Procter & Gamble in North York, I used to take the TTC subway Yonge line to catch my flight at Porter. It is a remarkably versatile airport and airline that would be able to do even more with the C Series.

The motion today highlights that after not even 100 days, the politics of the old Liberal Party is back and that the quid pro quo for a few members of that caucus will hold back something in the public interest for wider southern Ontario and our aerospace industry.

We have a situation where the government likes to talk a lot about evidence-based decision-making and yet issued its decision on Billy Bishop airport with a tweet limited to 140 characters, to say that thousands of jobs and an airline's expansion would be at risk, and the travel options for millions of people in the GTA would be limited.

What does this mean? Does it mean that the government will support the Pickering airport, which it ran against in the last election? At least for the decision related to the Pickering airport, we had Transport Canada do a volume assessment study. It did not just look at Pearson. It looked at Hamilton, at the John Munro airport, named after one of the Liberals' former colleagues. It looked at Kitchener-Waterloo, at Toronto island Billy Bishop, and whether there would be a Pickering airport in the future.

If the government is to make an evidence-based decision, where is the study on the impact of this and lower growth that would result in Toronto centre? How would that impact Pearson? How would that impact Pickering? Would it make the Pickering airport larger. Perhaps the MP for Pickering—Uxbridge could answer that to the House.

None of that was done because this was tweeted to keep a few people happy within the Liberal Party. Let us not fool ourselves and deny this was done for the narrow interests of a few.

The second aspect of this is that the government, in making this political decision for a few insiders, is potentially hampering the growth of our aerospace industry. The irony is that the government is weighing a billion-dollar bailout for Bombardier but blocking a private sector sale. It is ludicrous. Here is a private sector company that does not want assistance in acquiring the C Series aircraft. In fact it wants to acquire it because it is the best in the world for the operation it needs. It wants to purchase it, but the government's decision for a few insiders is limiting that sale and hampering Bombardier's ability to get the first number of sales out the door. The Minister of Transport likes to talk a lot about Air Canada's interest. That is great, but we know that a number of customers are needed to get the production line and the values for that aircraft in place. What we have here is political interference for a few people impacting thousands of jobs.

This is at a time when, as I said to my colleague from Aurora, a former air force officer herself, that Lockheed Martin, Pratt & Whitney, Bell, Bombardier, our entire aerospace industry, is worried. With the political decisions about cancelling the F-35 and prospect of being back in a decade of darkness for the military from our withdrawal from our modest mission in fighting ISIL, these global aerospace providers are looking twice at making investments in Canada. This is at a time when we have a stellar company with a world-class reputation like Bombardier.

The last thing a prime minister of our country should do is to allow borough politics, old school Boston era 1880s politics, where a few people with a megaphone and some drums can limit a private sector sale to help a company survive and the jobs of thousands of people, including people in Durham, and limit competition and the options for millions of people in the GTA. There are more people in the GTA than in Spadina—Fort York.

My hope is that the Minister of Transport steps back and says that more than 140 characters are needed to make an evidence-based decision to help a company and to make sure our aerospace industry thrives.

• (1750)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite speak of politics and political decisions; I prefer to speak of societal choices. Societal choices are transmitted through the democratic process, and that is exactly what happened in the election in this part of the country.

Business of Supply

Let us use Banff as an example. A decision has been made that the people of Alberta no longer want additional development in Banff. Is the member saying that according to the evidence it is because one additional secondary residence in Banff would be catastrophic for the area, or is it a societal choice on the part of the people of Alberta who do not want to live in that kind of environment?

My comment for the member is this. The people who make decisions about buying planes, the engineers and the experts at the airlines, understand the merits of the plane. They know what it can do. That is what they are going to base their decision on. They are not going to base their decision on whether the government in Canada allowed this airport to expand its runway or not expand its runway. It is not germane to the purchasing decision.

Europe has a history of protests over airport expansions and so on. Europeans understand this. It is part of their history and culture that some people want to preserve their quality of life. That is exactly what is happening here. There has been a societal choice to preserve a quality of life in a part of a big city in Canada.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. A societal choice was made by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Transport to listen to a few inside voices and not the millions of people in the GTA or the thousands of people working in the aerospace industry.

There is no airport in Banff. The member should visit that spectacular part of our country. However, there has been a Toronto centre airport for 50-plus years. It has been used by the Canadian Armed Forces for search and rescue, by local hospitals, by small aircraft providers, and by airlines such as Porter. This is about an existing facility that provides the ability for hundreds, if not thousands, of people to take public transit to an airport on a daily basis.

For some of the members who are most opposed to this, we are going to be waiting, because they have been promising billions of dollars in public transit. We can take public transit to an airport and give consumers options and allow a company, a private-sector player, to buy one of the best aircrafts in the world, except the choice was to listen to one or two MPs and impact a whole industry for that societal choice.

• (1755)

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank my colleague for his comments on this very important issue, and for the insight that the experience he has had brings to this debate. It is very informative.

I want to ask him if he would comment on the need to respect the jurisdiction of a municipality to complete the studies it has undertaken when it is looking at a proposal that has a major impact, not only on its community and its city, but also on its economy. I am wondering if the member would like to comment further on that.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for bringing this important debate to the floor today. We have to explore societal choice, which has been brought forward today, and discuss it. Jurisdiction is a key one.

The former minister of transport, my colleague from Milton, talked about how long and how well-negotiated the tripartite

agreements were. Public policy decisions like this were not made with a tweet or with one member of Parliament pulling a minister aside and saying that they need this. This is about rational decision-making, working with the partners in the tripartite agreement. Tri means three; it does not mean one and one or two insiders.

The other thing I have mentioned, and I would like the government to be clear on this, is on the Pickering airport, the land seized by Pierre Trudeau. We provided a plan for a Pickering airport, but now that the Liberals are limiting Billy Bishop airport, the volume study that Transport Canada relied on is no longer effective. Are they essentially saying that they are going to build a Pearson two at Pickering? They have to approach this in a responsible public policy manner.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the motion is about more than an airport. It is about unlocking the creative power of the entrepreneurial spirit for the betterment of our people.

Entrepreneurship is nothing new in Canada. It built our economy. The lumberjacks of the Ottawa Valley who harvested the wood were entrepreneurs. So, too, were the craftsmen who turned it into farming implements and timber-framed barns. The wood from these barns is ironically more popular today than ever before. Trendy coffee shops, restaurants, and new homes use it as veneers, flooring, and decorative beams.

If one types the words “vintage wood” into house.com, a popular home design website, one will find 37,000 pictures of recycled products that are used in the most beautiful ways, and it is not cheap. It can go for \$10 a foot. That is more expensive than many engineered hardwood floors. A few years ago, this wood was an abandoned barn that was no longer good enough to house cattle and was left as a home for rats and pigeons.

Why is it suddenly worth so much? The wood's value is in the story it tells.

A big piece of an old barn beam now on my fireplace mantle has axe marks that tell of a logger who cut it and squared it. Its mortises and tenons tell of the craftsman who joined it into a building frame that held for over 100 years. The rusted nails and the boards remind us of the calloused hands of the 19th century Lanark farmer who pounded it into a barn and his descendants who worked in it for generations thereafter. That is the story people buy when they purchase this reclaimed wood.

The modern-day story of recycling that wood is also the story of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs like Tim Priddle, one of the owners of The Wood Source in my riding, have taken the material that would otherwise decompose into a decrepit and condemned barn and have created something beautiful that makes people happy and connects them to their past. This is the triumph of free enterprise and it is part of a \$36-billion second-hand economy, according to a report sponsored by Kijiji just last week.

Business of Supply

Recently, The Wood Source expanded and invited the community for a tour of its facility, where I learned the tale of two buildings.

One was built 40 years ago. Back then, the government required a one-page drawing, stamped by an engineer, and a one-page application. Then it was done, approved, and ready to build.

If members think that is not safe, the building is still standing and in use today, decades later.

About six years ago, The Wood Source applied to build another workshop, roughly the same size and dimensions. It took 1,500 pages of applications and \$600,000 in fees, reports, and professional consultants. He had to hire an arborist to write a report on each tree being removed, including the size and the species, these trees being on a few acres of otherwise useless brush. They even made it pay a fee for the loss of parkland, even though the land had never been a park. One would think it was a pulp mill and not a lumber mill because half the cost of building it was paper costs. In fact, with the money he spent on paperwork, Tim could have hired another 10 employees for a year.

Then comes the electricity costs. In the last five years, it has gone from \$3,200 a month to \$9,000 a month. That is \$70,000 a year in increases, which is enough to hire yet another talented employee. Much of the increase pays for subsidies the government imposes for wind turbines and solar panels, which produce only a minute fraction of Ontario's electricity, despite billions of dollars in subsidies that consumers like Tim must shoulder.

He complained of these costs to his local Liberal minister, who said that he would put him in touch with some people in his office who could help him with various grant programs that might be available. Why not just let Tim keep his own money? The answer is that there would be no place for the Liberal minister. If we just let people succeed through their own hard work, that minister would not be so important. The entrepreneur would not need to come back, asking him for his money.

President Reagan used to say that the Liberals would tax anything that moved. If it kept moving, they would regulate it. When it finally stopped moving, they subsidized it.

• (1800)

Such is the case with Bombardier and the Toronto island airport. The airport's runway is too short to land Bombardier C Series jets. A 400-metre expansion of that runway would solve that problem and would result in Porter purchasing \$2 billion worth of Bombardier planes to land there. Yet, in a tweet sent out only weeks after taking office, the transport minister announced that he was blocking this infrastructure project without any public rationale whatsoever.

The result is that the government is blocking a massive infrastructure project at the same time as it plunges the country into deficit to fund infrastructure projects. It is blocking \$124 million in economic growth in Toronto while spending billions of dollars of borrowed money, ostensibly to stimulate economic growth. It is blocking \$55 million in newly generated tax revenues while increasing taxes to get more revenue. It is blocking \$2 billion in additional sales for Bombardier C Series planes and then proposing \$2 billion in federal-provincial bailouts for Bombardier.

It is blocking business people from landing in Toronto's business district, which puts more cars on the road between Pearson airport and downtown. Then the government says that it needs to spend more money to relieve traffic gridlock. It has done this to protect the privileges of the wealthiest 1% with waterfront homes near the island airport, at the expense of middle-class workers who miss out on the jobs, middle-class passengers who get less choice, and middle-class taxpayers who bear the cost.

Elsewhere, the government pledged to raise taxes on start-ups by doubling the tax on stock options. However, it plans to simultaneously subsidize start-ups with taxpayers' money. Or, they add a nine-month delay to an already 18-month approval process for a pipeline that will carry western Canadian oil to eastern Canadian refineries. Selling Canadian oil to Canadians means we do not have to accept a discount from Americans. As former energy entrepreneur, Gwyn Morgan, wrote this week, this discount currently amounts to \$10 a barrel, meaning that we forfeit \$38 million every day. That means that a \$250-million injection from the federal stabilization fund announced by the Prime Minister on his recent visit to Alberta would not even offset one week of market access losses.

The pattern is this. The government is standing in the way of entrepreneurial opportunity. It is blocking development. It is holding back the spirit that helped to build this country from the time of the settlers who built the barns that I spoke of earlier. Seeing back allows us to see forward.

I know that trends in interior design come and go, but the popularity of this timeless old wood, and the story it tells, gives me hope that Canadians remain committed to the same common sense, ingenuity, and work ethic that make our country great. I believe that the government, with time, will be forced to reconsider its decision to block this important economic opportunity for the people of Toronto and the people of Canada. When it does, entrepreneurs will celebrate, the middle class will celebrate, our aviation sector will celebrate, and all the people of this land who love to visit Canada's biggest city by landing in the heart of the downtown district will also celebrate. I look forward to celebrating with them.

• (1805)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will give the opposition credit. It is getting closer and closer to the facts.

A while ago, a speaker said that the runway extension was 335 metres. It was then corrected to 353 metres, and now it has reached 400. The actual number is 500 metres. If you had read any of the reports, you would know that, but clearly you have not.

The second issue is this.

Business of Supply

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will remind the hon. member that he is speaking through the chair and not directly across the floor.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, the other point is that the Conservatives keep talking about this being a cost-free proposal. The reality is that it is going to cost \$1.2 billion to squeeze an airport the size of the Ottawa International Airport into one-seventh of the land mass.

One of the criteria for the City to study this, which the port authority had to agree to, was that it would pick up the cost for the expansion. The port authority said it would not pay for that. It then turned to the Government of Canada at the time, the previous Conservative government, and said that it had to pay. Faced with a choice for the new building Canada fund, the government did not choose to put the money into an expanded airport; it chose to put it into transit in Scarborough.

Where should this government expect to find the money if the previous government could not find \$1.2 billion to expand this runway? It needs to be expanded by 500 metres. The cost of doing it and building the land-side infrastructure is \$1.2 billion. The previous government balked at the price, so why would we spend it?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, we did not receive an application for a \$1.2 billion expansion because the plan is to fund the expansion through the airport improvement fund, which is paid for by passengers. We in this country have commercialized our airports, something that happened about 25 years ago under a previous Liberal government, and it was a wise decision, because it put the costs of airport improvements onto the users who benefit from those improvements.

The improvement of the Billy Bishop airport would be funded in a similar manner. No one is applying for a federal grant to build an expanded airport. In fact, the reality is that, if the member really believed that the airport could not build it without a grant, then he would not have had to send his minister out to block the project in the first place. They could have just rejected the application when it arrived. Why would they not have waited for such an application to arrive on the desk? The truth is that there was no need for such an application.

The \$1.2 billion cost that the member is using is a number he is inventing, because he is speaking for a very tiny minority of very well connected and very wealthy people who do not want to see this expansion go ahead. It is unfortunate, but they are doing it at the expense of middle-class taxpayers, middle-class workers, and middle-class Torontonians who will lose out as a result of the government blocking this opportunity.

• (1810)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I was starting my career, I lived in the Beaches area of Toronto and helped my friend John Tory run for mayor in what I call the version 1.0 campaign, and the bridge to the island airport was a big issue, as well as the subject of Porter. The issue of noise often came up. Living in the Beaches, south of Queen, on the water, I found that issue was always conflated and exaggerated. In fact, after a while, for people in the downtown of the busiest city with a vibrant boardwalk and waterfront, it became background.

I would ask my colleague to comment on how the C Series aircraft, impacted by this insider decision made by the government, is actually quieter and has the ability to operate. Noise is usually the concern people have. It is unusual that it be in a city centre airport because people downtown are not in the country, but how can the C Series impact that noise issue that was the original concern with Porter's original operation?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I myself reminisce about my time spent living one summer in downtown Toronto. It is the centre of a major metropolis. There are sounds there. One of the sounds I rarely noticed when I worked there was the airport and the air traffic.

The member is quite correct that the C Series is renowned for technology that suppresses the noise and makes it more friendly to surrounding communities in which it lands and lifts off. This innovation, of which the government claims to be such a great fan, should be encouraged rather than blocked, and that is why I am pleased to stand today in support of the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege and a pleasure to rise and address issues in this wonderful chamber.

I find it interesting that the official opposition has chosen to bring forward an opposition motion that attempts to do two things: confuse members and put a bit of a wedge issue between different communities. I would like to expand on that.

I have had the opportunity to listen to a number of the Conservative members of Parliament speak on the motion, which reinforces what I am about to say.

Let us recognize what the motion is really talking about. It speaks to the importance of Bombardier, and we all agree on how important that corporation is. Then it is calling upon the government to agree to the expansion of the Billy Bishop airport.

What took place on November 12 was that the government stated that it would not be opening up the tripartite agreement with respect to the Billy Bishop airport. What a novel idea for the Conservatives. Can members imagine a government being transparent and saying, in a public fashion, that it would not see that tripartite agreement opened up? That has assisted a great number of stakeholders with their own planning and so forth in terms of where to go from that point.

Let me be clear. The port authority at one point wanted to see some sort of an expansion take place. In fact, when it was discovered that it was giving that idea some consideration, the City of Toronto said that for that to happen, there would be a number of conditions. I believe my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, said that it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of about 25 conditions. Therefore, if there was to be any sort of expansion, from its perspective those 25 conditions had to be met. The port authority made it clear that it did not feel obligated by those conditions, nor was it prepared to meet them. It continued on with a number of different studies, and after having had the opportunity to study the project, although the city was not prepared to support it, it ultimately came to the conclusion that it was not going to be moving forward on it.

Business of Supply

Then the City of Toronto, which on at least five different occasions could have voted in favour of seeing the expansion take place, chose not to do so.

Therefore, we have two out of the three who were fairly clear that they believed that the runway expansion of the Billy Bishop airport would be unnecessary.

Then, on November 12, the federal government made its decision based on what it had witnessed. There are very strong personalities within the Liberal caucus, and many outside associations and groups no doubt participated in the decision that ultimately led to the Government of Canada proclaiming that it was not prepared to open up the tripartite agreement, so it should not be any great surprise.

I am surprised that the Conservatives believe that today it is an issue and that this is the reason they brought the motion forward. They sat in government for 10 years. They had the ability to move that project forward and influence it, and they chose not to. Now they stand in their place and proclaim that the federal Liberal government must see that extension take place, to the degree that they are being critical of us for what we have done by being transparent, working with others, and ultimately making a decision.

Why, then, are they pushing it today?

• (1815)

This is where we start to get a better sense of it. The Conservatives are trying to pitch the issue of Bombardier and the importance of that particular company. I have listened to a number of them stand and speak, and they are saying that, if that does not happen, if the expansion does not take place, the Bombardier C Series aircraft is dead. They are saying it will not go anywhere, and imagine all the jobs that will be lost.

I can tell the Conservative members that Bombardier is an international company that employs thousands of people. It goes far beyond the borders of Quebec. It has a proven track record. It has an aircraft on the market that is, in fact, going to have a significant imprint into the future.

This whole running around and saying that the sky is falling, that Bombardier will be doomed if we do not expand Billy Bishop airport, is total garbage. It makes no sense whatsoever. The Conservative policy wonks in their leader's office have made the decision to try to use it as an issue to divide. I believe that the government's approach in dealing with this issue has been very clear, virtually from the beginning.

I want to talk about the aerospace industry, because when we talk about the aerospace industry, what we are really talking about not only is that first-class world product that many manufacturers in virtually all regions of our country contribute to, but it is an industry that provides good, quality jobs.

If one were to talk to my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, each and every one would boast about the importance of the aerospace industry. There is a great deal of support for our aerospace industry in the Liberal caucus, from ministers to members. We recognize the valuable contributions it makes to Canadian society. We recognize it as an industry that, if properly supported, could continue to grow into the future, creating more jobs for Canadians.

We are a party that believes in technology, in advancing it where we can. We have a budget coming up in a few more days. I am sure we will see good signs of just how valuable our manufacturing industry is. In particular, from my perspective, today we are talking about the aerospace industry.

We recognize the value of the thousands of people who work for Bombardier. We want to do what we can to ensure, as much as possible, that jobs will be protected. There is a role for government to play. Negotiations are taking place.

The Canadian government is not turning its back on the aerospace industry, unlike the Conservatives when they were in government. In fact, when I was first elected, I saw many jobs lost and devastated because the then government of the day chose to turn its back on the industry.

The industry does not have to fear that with the Liberal government. We recognize the importance of those valuable jobs and the livelihoods of those who fill those jobs. It is an industry we truly care about. Negotiations are under way. I am an optimist. I believe not only that we, under this Prime Minister, will in fact continue to have a healthy aerospace industry but that it will grow. It will grow because the Government of Canada truly cares about that industry, unlike the former government.

I see that my time has virtually expired. Suffice it to say that I believe it is important that we do not support this motion put forward by the Conservative opposition party; it is not in Canada's best interests.

• (1820)

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite would have us believe that the City of Toronto chose not to pursue the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport's proposal, and yet we know there were a number of studies under way when the minister tweeted that he was unilaterally ending the process and blocking the potential expansion. We also know that the city's expectations were that the studies being undertaken would address the conditions adopted by city council.

Does the member think that a tweet is a good way to announce major public policy?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, the statement in the early part of the question is just wrong. The City of Toronto had, on at least five occasions, the opportunity to say yes to the proposal. It was the City of Toronto that set the conditions, and it was told that those conditions would not be met. If the City of Toronto truly wanted it, then they would have voted yes, so I do not know where the Conservatives get that from. Moreover, it is not as if I am the first member to stand up and emphasize that point. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister has also highlighted that particular issue.

Business of Supply

The only entity that seems to be listening to what is actually taking place on the ground is the Government of Canada. I am inclined to believe the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, as I do not believe that the Conservative members have done their homework on the issue. They have not read those studies the member refers to. I do not think they understand the arguments that have been put forward today. As a result, we have an inappropriate motion. Actually, I should not say “inappropriate”, because the opposition can submit whatever opposition day motion they want, but I suggest they could have done a better job and brought forward a more informed resolution that might have made a contribution to the issue.

I would have been more than happy, for example, to talk about the aerospace industry as a whole, or our airport industry as a whole because we have airports in every region of our country. We all know the valuable role they play, and there is a high level of interest in that.

• (1825)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was surprised not to hear the member for Winnipeg North mention our home town of Winnipeg as he spoke about the aerospace industry.

He did allude to some job losses, and it was the case that under the previous government, we lost hundreds of jobs in Winnipeg because that government would not enforce the Air Canada Public Participation Act. I understand that member at that time was quite critical of the government for not being willing to enforce the act.

I wonder if the reason he did not mention our city is his shame for now sitting with a government that will not enforce that act. I wonder if he would now take this opportunity to absolve himself of that shame, stand in the House and call on his own government to enforce the act, and to stop talking about possibly changing the Act to let Air Canada even further off the hook.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I make no apologies for being a strong advocate for the aerospace industry, whether that aerospace industry is in my home city of Winnipeg, which I love and care deeply about, or the aerospace industry in Ontario, Quebec, B. C., or other regions. While we are dealing with this particular issue, I want to highlight just how important the industry is as a whole.

To my own city, I would advocate for those jobs, and we do that through the negotiations. I was really disappointed about the NDP provincial government not taking Air Canada to court. Why did the NDP not do that?

The member's own father was a part of the Manitoba legislature, a part of the NDP government that chose not to take Air Canada to court. One could ask why they did not do that. The Province of Quebec did. However, at the end of the day, I am choosing to believe that there are negotiations taking place and I believe in good faith that the Winnipeg aerospace industry will be healthier as a direct result of a national government that truly cares about the industry, and not just be the industry in one region, but the industry across Canada.

Where there is a concentration and a focus on developing the aerospace industry, the Liberal Party will be there to support it.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House and speak to today's opposition motion regarding the Liberal government's decision to restrict the expansion of the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

Having spent approximately 20 years in aviation, I am aware firsthand of the challenges and opportunities that come with growth and expansion of airports. Airport development is always a hotly contested discussion, and so it should be.

In the early 1990s, the government at the time decided it was going to get out of the airport business. With the introduction of the national airports policy, a new framework was defined in relation to the federal government's role in aviation. The NAS comprises 26 airports across Canada that were deemed critical links for our country. These airports were deemed essential to Canada's air transport system. These airports also served 94% of the air traffic in Canada.

The airports were transferred under lease to airport authorities, and in some cases to municipalities. The infrastructure in many of these airports, if not all, was antiquated and desperately in need of attention. Through these transfer negotiations, reinvestment money was given, but the expectation for these airports was that they were to do everything in their power to build strong business cases so that they could be self-sufficient.

Airports have very few revenue generation streams. With the transfer of airports and new-found independence also came the realization that user-pay systems were needed. Airport improvement fees became the norm, and today we have airports that are incredible examples of the NAS airport transfer. However, we also have airports that struggle daily to be competitive and to remain innovative. They struggle daily to ensure that safety precautions are taken.

While we all share a love for the maple leaf and common borders, the reality is that airports compete from one to the next for machinery and for air service for the community. Airport authorities and municipalities are now responsible for developing their business case for development and creative solutions for achieving their air service development goals. The land that surrounds airports is often valuable agricultural land, and as our communities grow, we have seen residential encroachment around airports.

In my former position, I was tasked with promoting regional, provincial, and national passenger, cargo, and tourism opportunities on the world stage. I was the person who was sitting before the airlines marketing our country, marketing my community, and marketing our province, ensuring that we were competitive. During my years, I had the opportunity to represent Canada throughout Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas on trade missions, industry conferences, and regulatory panels. I have also had the chance to represent on industry topics, such as air service development, cargo, supply chain management, security, and regional tourism opportunities.

Business of Supply

I have heard some of the arguments around unfair monopoly on slots and concerns over environmental and potential noise pollution, which are all valid points. They are concerns that are seen throughout Canada.

However, we are missing a key point: Canada needs to remain competitive. How do we do this? It is by removing trade barriers; by creating innovative air policy and trade policies; by removing barriers for the movement of passengers and cargo, thus ensuring a seamless flow of goods and people to and from Canada; and by doing everything we can to promote and facilitate growth of Canadian companies. By protecting and growing Canadian jobs and products, Canada can continue to grow.

Expanding the Billy Bishop airport would allow any company that uses the C Series aircraft to benefit from having access to downtown Toronto, whether it be Air Canada, Porter, or WestJet.

Carriers are also increasingly asking airports for longer runways. With the creation of new machinery come new safety policies from manufacturers regarding the safe operation of aircraft, not just from Bombardier but from Boeing and Airbus as well.

Why are carriers asking for longer runways to be provided? It is because it is easier on equipment and provides greater safety precautions in the event of unpredictable weather conditions.

● (1830)

Currently, Porter has Q400 aircraft. The current CEO has said that the company is being increasingly asked to lengthen the runway, with the increasingly challenging weather and climate we have and the issues we have in terms of the new regulatory or safety policies coming from the carriers and the manufacturers. It is a challenge for airport authorities or municipalities to be able to fund this. Billy Bishop airport is not the only one facing concerns over these safety precautions.

Billy Bishop airport is considered one of the busiest in Canada. Roughly 2.5 million passengers passed through the terminal last year, and this number is expected to grow over the course of 2016. The runways are currently at 3,990 feet, and this new proposed expansion would bring it to about 5,400 feet and allow for aircraft to run hotter and faster and safer. On a typical weekday, there are 202 commercial take-offs or landings on the island, connecting airports to 24 short-haul destinations in eastern Canada and the United States, connecting Canadian passengers and cargo to U.S. markets and vice versa. Business is good.

However, in the early 2000s when the airport infrastructure was falling apart and Air Canada Jazz was the only commercial carrier, flying to one destination, this airport was able to sell a vision to a carrier. Somebody believed in it. In Canada, we champion our pioneer spirit. The Billy Bishop airport should not be penalized for having a carrier believe in it and invest in its project and the future of this critical transportation hub. Porter should not be penalized for having the fortitude to take bold steps forward, despite a national aviation climate that protects its largest carriers. Both Porter Airlines and Billy Bishop airport should not be scrutinized for a slots monopoly or anti-competition, as WestJet faced the very same challenge when we were starting out. Yes, I was a WestJet owner. In

our larger airports, both of these carriers still enjoy the very same opportunities that they are complaining about at Billy Bishop airport.

When small airports in communities across Canada are being held hostage by big carriers that wield their influence by pulling code share and shift their services at a whim regardless of the importance and vital connectivity that air service provides, somebody has to stand up to them. We should be applauding airports, municipalities, and airport authorities that are taking the bold step forward and trying to do everything in their power to preserve their air service.

However, this is about Bombardier and saving jobs, and potentially saving a government bailout by creating an opportunity and providing leadership in getting these groups around a table for open and transparent discussions. The member for Spadina—Fort York has been a vocal opponent of any airport expansion for any purpose since Porter began growing its operations out of the airport. In a letter to a citizens group aimed at stopping the growth of the airport, the member for Spadina—Fort York wrote, “No Jets. No Expansion. Period”. However, that is not all, and it has been mentioned earlier today that, just days after the election, the Minister of Transport used Twitter as his sounding board to announce that there would be no expansion at the Billy Bishop airport.

Let me put this in perspective for the hon. members of this House. Airports are key economic drivers in the regions and the communities they serve. Billy Bishop airport is responsible for 6,500 jobs, \$385 million in wages, and over \$2 billion in economic output. Airports are communities in the regions they serve. It is also a major contributor of taxes to the City of Toronto and the federal government, to the tune of \$71 million.

This motion is about jobs and economic growth, and the airport is a major contributor to both. Blocking the expansion of this airport would limit the Canadian market for C Series aircraft, which would affect workers across Canada. It sends the wrong message to Bombardier's customers, and it gives its competitors an unfair advantage. Should we not be doing everything for a Canadian company?

Expanding the airport would facilitate billions of dollars in potential orders for Bombardier from Canadian carriers. Instead of spending billions of dollars bailing out a major company, the Liberal government should redirect its focus and concentrate on reducing red tape for entrepreneurs, rather than adding it.

It was our former Conservative government that supported the smart development of the Billy Bishop airport because it provides a convenient travel option for passengers who are going to and from Toronto and it provides a critical transportation gateway to Canada, to another community. That is why the federal government supported the construction of the tunnel to the airport.

● (1835)

The new Liberal government unilaterally imposed its will on Torontonians and Toronto City Council. This is a local issue. The City of Toronto should be responsible for deciding whether or not to allow the airport to expand given these considerations.

I have heard the argument from the member opposite, and I agree that there are conditions that have to be met, but the airport should be allowed to fulfill that and to work with the City of Toronto. The City made its concerns about the possible expansion known, and the project proponent will have to demonstrate that it can and will satisfy Toronto's concerns. Let us allow the two of them to have a discussion and work through it.

Toronto City Council was clear that the landing slots and passenger cap would have to be maintained, and the strict noise limits had to remain in place. This is no different from airports across Canada. We all face it. Yet, the Minister of Transport unilaterally blocked the right of the City of Toronto to hold consultations and decide whether to allow its local airport to expand and grow along with the city.

The City of Toronto also has an aggressive event management group, which is going after a number of big international events. This airport would help to alleviate congestion at its bigger airport and facilitate more tourists, more passengers, to the city of Toronto. If the minister had stated any evidence-based reason for his denial of the potential airport expansion, then proponents of the expansion would be able to alter the plans to integrate these concerns in regulations.

We can all agree that the people who are most impacted by the future of Billy Bishop airport are those who live in Toronto, not Ottawa, and not Montreal.

For a government that obsesses endlessly about consulting on everything, the deliberate lack of consultation in this case is telling. When it comes to economic growth and job creation, the Liberal government should act as an enabler rather than an impediment, as it clearly has demonstrated with this action. Instead of killing jobs, maybe it should try creating some.

While the federal government keeps looking for ways to support Bombardier, which will cost taxpayers billions of dollars, it is ignoring the private-sector solutions that would not cost taxpayers a dime. Bombardier has designed a best-in-class aircraft that is ideally suited for smaller airports like Billy Bishop. Expanding the airport would create a market for Bombardier with any company who chooses to use the airport. Let us go back to my earlier point. It is about keeping Canada competitive, keeping our communities competitive. We fight for air service.

We were all elected based on our ability to see local issues through a national lens. The future of Bombardier and Billy Bishop airport

will have national repercussions if the Liberal government continues to abuse its decision-making powers.

It is my sincere hope that all members in the House will support today's motion and that the Prime Minister will begin the process of supporting Bombardier and the C Series aircraft program without asking taxpayers to foot the bill.

● (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 6:43 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, March 9, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is International Women's Day, and it is a day where we celebrate the accomplishments of women and also look at issues that face women, face women's advancement, women's health, women's safety; and I would be remiss if I did not bring up the plight of the Yazidi women within the context of several Middle Eastern conflicts right now.

Earlier in this parliamentary session, I asked the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship if he would categorize or classify what is happening to the Yazidi people as genocide. He declined to answer that. I asked how many Yazidi women had been brought to Canada as part of the Liberals' refugee initiatives. He also declined to answer that.

We cannot turn a blind eye to the violence that is happening against the Yazidi women. I really feel that, if we take it lightly, if we turn a blind eye to it, when we use the term "never again", it is going to turn into "never mind". There are reports every day of the rape, sexual slavery, and atrocities committed to children. These are girls who are six or seven years old. I can pull out numerous newspaper articles and talk about how women are being used and treated as a subspecies. They are not even being treated as human. They are being treated as less than human.

The impact on this group of people affects everyone around the world. Everybody who is a human being on our planet should be concerned about what is happening to these women in this area, and we need to do more.

Adjournment Proceedings

I want to highlight and emphasize some of the things that are happening. There have been mass graves found filled with Yazidi women. There are reports that ISIS has established an international sex ring by smuggling captured Yazidi sex slaves. They are being sent to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Chechnya. Women's children who are born while they are in captivity are being killed in front of them. These women are being forced to watch young girls bleed out after being raped multiple times by ISIS soldiers.

On International Women's Day, it is very important for people in the House to understand that throughout history women have been controlled by their body and by their sexuality. It is a very common thing to demean women by using acts of sexual degradation to treat them as less than human or less than whole. It is only societies and cultures that recognize that this is wrong, something we should not celebrate, something we should actively fight against, where we see true gender equality and parity of women.

I ask my colleague, not from a partisan perspective but on International Women's Day, a day when we talk about women—the United Nations has even classified what is happening to the Yazidi people as genocide—if the government will in fact call this what it is, a genocide, and if he will tell Canadians how many Yazidi women have been brought to Canada under the Liberal government's tenure.

• (1845)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her statement today and the interventions she has made on this issue.

Obviously on International Women's Day, it is a very timely topic of discussion. This government and my party stand steadfast in solidarity with women in Canada and around the world, including the Yazidi women who were mentioned by my friend, the member for Calgary Nose Hill.

The important piece is that there have been many Yazidi atrocities, despicable, inhumane, and tragic atrocities. We deplore all acts that have been taken in the name of the so-called Islamic State: loathsome murderous actions toward the Yazidi people, toward all people. These terrible attacks have contributed greatly to the Syrian refugee crisis that has captured the attention of governments and people around the world, including here in Canada. It goes without saying that the response to the crisis in Canada has been overwhelming. There has been a complete national effort, a large-scale effort, involving government and non-government actors. It involves private-sector individuals and service-provider organizations.

We are the only country on the planet that has private sponsorship of refugees. As of last week, 8,950 privately sponsored refugees had arrived in this country from Syria, of all different ethnicities, backgrounds, and religions. Those groups span the entire country. There are many groups in my riding itself, such as Roncesvalles Refugee Relief and the Junction Helps. It expands beyond that to include other entities that are assisting with the settlement once people arrive. This is truly the best of the Canadian spirit.

We have had people like Dr. Anna Banerji and the Parkdale Community Health Centre emphasizing and working on positive health outcomes of Syrian refugees. There have been clothing drives

by people like Laura-Jean Bernhardson of the Fresh Collective, and the Humbercrest Public School, which did a coat drive. I mention this to emphasize that the care and concern for people affected in the region, including Yazidi people, is shared by this government, but it is also shared by Canadians across the board.

However, there is an important distinguishing feature here, which arose in the minister's original comments in response to my colleague. The point that was made is that we are using the UNHCR to help us target vulnerable groups. The groups it is targeting includes people across all boards and all categories. It specifically includes complete families, persons who are vulnerable due to membership in LGBTI communities, and it also includes women at risk. Let me underscore that one more time. Women at risk are a category we are looking at as vulnerable and that the UNHCR is looking at as vulnerable. That is especially important to underline today, on International Women's Day.

More importantly is that when we bring in Syrian refugees, we do it in a manner that is ethnically and religiously blind. I cannot emphasize this enough. I have said this in the House before, and I will say it again. This stands in stark contrast to the policies of the previous government.

My colleague's party chose to be selective in who was let into this country and who was not. In documents tabled in the House in response to a question on the order paper put forward by the NDP opposition critic, all of our suspicions were confirmed; the previous government targeted religious and ethnic minorities to the detriment of other groups. We are not doing this. We accept any people into this country who meet the Geneva Convention definition of refugee, regardless of their religion, be they minority Yazidis or majority Sunni Muslims. Religious hierarchies have no place in this government or this country, and we are ending that kind of policy.

• (1850)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, in a *60 Minutes* interview this week, the Prime Minister said they were picking and choosing refugees in this initiative. That is directly contrary to what my colleague just said.

He talked about being blind in this issue. That is exactly the wrong approach. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report, in March 2015, specifically outlined this as a genocide. Why will the government not stand up and call this what it is? It is genocide. He can do that right now and send a message.

The parliamentary secretary spent four minutes avoiding telling Canadians how many Yazidi women have been brought to Canada under this initiative, and that is shameful.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, the issue of the Yazidis is a complex issue, a pressing issue, and a human rights violation that is occurring in the Middle East as we speak. We recognize that and we understand that. However, it is not the only crisis that is occurring in the Middle East, and it is not the only community affected in the Middle East.

Adjournment Proceedings

As I said in my earlier intervention and will repeat, we are not solely restricting who is coming into this country from Syria as refugees based on their membership in an ethnic or religious minority. It is quite the contrary. This government accepts that there are victims of ISIS across the board, including Sunni Muslims themselves, who are victims of ISIS and deserve our compassion and humanitarian reception as much as any other group. That is the important point. That is a point that I will underline today on International Women's Day, because it affects women in flight in the region, across the board, across all categories. It is a point that we have been making since the start of this resettlement project, and it is a point that we will continue to make. It informs all of our policies.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health on February 4 addressed the potential rise in pharmaceutical costs in Canada as a result of the signing of the trans-Pacific partnership, and in fact other trade deals. As I stated in my question, a recent study has put that figure at around \$600 million annually. This is particularly concerning, because over the last 20 years pharmaceuticals have been the fastest-growing cost to Canada's health care system. Only in recent years has the pace of growth in drug costs in Canada subsided somewhat. However, Canadians still pay the second-highest prescription drug prices in the world, second only to the United States.

The growing costs for prescription medications in our public health care system and for individual Canadians is unsustainable. With the coming tidal wave of baby boomers reaching their elder years, sky-high medication prices are even more concerning for the fiscal sustainability of our health care system.

Most observers and stakeholders of Canada's medicare system agree that federal, provincial, and territorial governments must begin ambitious work to overhaul health care delivery in Canada. We need new ideas, new plans, and innovative approaches to find savings, provide better care, and improve access to health care.

Providing universal coverage to all Canadians for prescription medications is one of the most practical and achievable short-term reforms that could be undertaken by the government.

It is practical because the cost of maintaining the status quo is too high for public health and for the public purse. Recent research indicates that a shocking one in four Canadian households reports that family members neglect to fill prescriptions because of cost. This is unacceptable in a country that purports to have universal health care. This epidemic of cost-related non-adherence to prescriptions means more Canadians become sicker and more Canadians end up in hospital. This costs our health care system avoidable billions every year.

Pharmacare is also achievable because the payoff from national universal coverage for medications outweighs the investment. Canada's leading health economists have conducted groundbreaking research demonstrating that upfront government investments of between \$3 billion and \$5 billion would result in savings of between \$4 billion and \$11 billion per year. Better yet, most of these savings would go straight to the pocketbooks of Canadians and the budget lines of businesses.

Pharmacare is a silver bullet for many of the troubles facing Canada's public health care system. New Democrats strongly urge the health minister to make national pharmacare a priority issue over the coming years.

Addressing costs, improving care, and strengthening and growing public coverage of health services will be the number one challenge for the new health minister. This goes beyond just the issue of prescription drug costs. New Democrats are calling on the health minister to conclude negotiations for a new health accord with stable funding between the federal government and the provinces and territories. Our party echoes the calls by many in the health care community for an increase in Ottawa's contribution to at least 25% by 2025 at the latest.

A new health accord must also include strong strings attached. Provinces must be compelled to roll back harmful privatization in the delivery of health care services and crack down on user fees and unfair barriers. Adherence to the principles of the Canada Health Act must be non-negotiable. Canada's public medicare system must be strengthened, not weakened.

Finally, it is also long past time for federal government leadership in community and home care. All major health care stakeholders agree that health care must move into communities and closer to Canadians through multidisciplinary health care clinics and quality home care services. It is time we improved care for Canadians while reducing costs.

• (1855)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a trading nation, Canada's economic growth is directly linked to international trade. Our government supports free trade as a way to open markets to Canadian goods and services, grow Canadian businesses, and create good-paying jobs for the middle class.

The scope of the TPP, or trans-Pacific partnership, is significant. To restate the oft-quoted figures, the TPP encompasses 800 million people in 12 countries, with a combined GDP of US \$28 trillion, covering nearly 40% of the world's economy.

Our pledge to Canadians is to ensure they are fully consulted on the outcomes of the TPP. Our job right now is to carefully review the text and continue to consult with Canadians.

[Translation]

The government wants to ensure that Canadians can consult on the TPP, ask questions, and share their views, to determine whether Canada's participation in this agreement is in their best interest.

Adjournment Proceedings

To do so, the Minister of International Trade is conducting an extensive consultation process in order to give Canadians the opportunity to share their views on the agreement and on Canada's participation in it before the government makes a decision on ratifying it.

Signing the TPP is just the first step in the process and is not synonymous with ratifying it or implementing it in Canada. Signing it allows Canada to maintain its original partner status and keep all the rights and powers that this status confers. This stage also allows our government to pursue its consultations and give parliamentarians the opportunity to discuss the repercussions of the agreement on their respective regions and on the future of the country.

Furthermore, the Minister of International Trade is working closely with her colleagues whose portfolios are affected by the TPP, in order to mobilize Canadian stakeholders and gather their views. These are government-wide efforts. The Minister of Agriculture is in charge of bringing together stakeholders from the agriculture sector to discuss the TPP. The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development is doing the same with his portfolio stakeholders. All the other ministers are making this effort.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, it is also my job to mobilize Canadians on this file.

Since November, the Government of Canada has held over 200 meetings with more than 300 national stakeholders from the provinces, territories, industry, civil society, and university think tanks. Global Affairs Canada has received more than 10,000 letters and emails as part of this consultation process over the same period.

The department will also consult Parliament. The House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade has begun its study on the TPP.

[*English*]

As a knowledge-based economy, Canadians employ innovative ideas and creative thinking that become products, technologies, and services that change the way we live. The intellectual property framework, which our hon. member has noted, is an important element of any knowledge-based economy.

Canada's longstanding approach with respect to intellectual property has been to strike a balance between creators and users. I know this balance well, as I have had the privilege of teaching and conducting research on intellectual property in one of the best law faculties in Canada and the world over the last 20 years.

Over the past months, the government has heard from a range of stakeholders in different areas of intellectual property who have expressed views on TPP and IP outcomes.

We look forward to continuing these discussions. We continue to invite Canadians to tell us what their opinion is on these important issues. We continue to tell our parliamentary committee to study the issues raised by the hon. member in order to—

• (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, if the goal is to substantively improve the health of Canadians, then the Minister of Health must become an advocate for health in all policies.

Major health organizations, like the Canadian Medical Association, have endorsed the view that health outcomes are primarily social in origin. Income, housing, job security, access to education, and social inclusion all fundamentally impact the health and well-being of individual Canadians.

New Democrats believe it is time for the federal government to put the social determinants of health at the core of all policies in this country. This means making a commitment to end poverty in Canada and to provide quality affordable housing for all Canadians. This means making improvements to the quality of public education, and it means affordable universal child care, and greater protections for minorities suffering from discrimination. This means providing resources for mental health services for Canadians seeking help, and efforts to reduce stigma.

In this Parliament, New Democrats will work hard towards these goals and be a willing partner with the government toward them.

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to consulting widely with those who have an interest in intellectual property in Canada in the context of trade agreements.

Nothing in these agreements precludes any sort of policy with respect to pharmacare in Canada. Signing the agreement is not the same as ratifying it. On the TPP, we are doing exactly what we promised we would do during the election campaign. We told Canadians that we would take the time to listen to them and to consult widely on this deal. We have begun this process.

[*Translation*]

A government-wide approach was taken with regard to the consultations and, as I mentioned, over 200 meetings have been held. This agreement is important and Canadians must be consulted on it.

We heard arguments in favour of the TPP and we heard people's concerns about it. We will hold a proper parliamentary debate on the agreement before a decision is made about whether to ratify it.

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to again ask the government what it is going to do with the Office of Religious Freedom.

We and others have been asking it to put ideology aside, to recognize the good work the office has done and to simply renew its mandate. The office is working, is doing good work, and should continue doing that work. When it comes to this office and its mandate, it is worth referencing the old saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it".

Adjournment Proceedings

Unfortunately, with many important issues hanging in the balance, the government has yet to answer our simple questions about its plans for this office. Has it still not decided, or is it simply not ready to tell us yet?

Canadians, and especially the growing number of Canadians with personal and family connections to hard-pressed religious minority communities around the world, really want to know what the government is going to do with this office. The government has been sending mixed signals and is trying to buy itself time with a short-term extension. Still, Canadians and people around the world want to know what is happening with this office.

We have spoken before in the House about the good work of this office, in Africa, in the Middle East, in Pakistan, and in Ukraine.

In fact, I was recently in India and had an opportunity to speak to students at Indian universities about human rights and religious freedom. I was asked, specifically, about the Office of Religious Freedom.

It is not just something that Canadians are paying attention to. People around the world, students, the elderly, and everyone in between, are listening and asking if Canada is still going to be involved in fighting for human rights and human dignity in this vital way.

This past Sunday, I was speaking about this issue at a major gurdwara in Mississauga. I was pleased to highlight the co-operation between faith leaders in Canada calling for the renewal of this office. Sikh, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian leaders have spoken out together in support of this office. The office advocates for all people. It was officially launched in a mosque, and its advocacy includes for non-believers who have specific representation on the office's external advisory committee.

The government has not answered the central question. All it has said on this subject is, "Human Rights are universal, interdependent and indivisible". Absolutely, they are. We are also well-served by centres of excellence within government and within the Department of Global Affairs, which focus on specific areas.

To name another example, we have a department for the Status of Women. Certainly, human rights are interdependent and indivisible, but we still have, and we should have, a department that focuses specifically upon the status of women.

Why is it important that we have these types of centres of excellence? Because to have all types of rights lumped together risks a situation in which no one is focused upon individual specific areas of rights and rights violations. Without specific centres of excellence, individual areas that need attention can risk getting lost in one murky interdependent and indivisible soup.

What is the downside in keeping this office open? The total budget of the office is \$5 million. I am all for cutting costs when it makes sense to do so, but \$5 million is 1/180th of the cost of the government's changes to public sector sick leave. The vast majority of that \$5 million is used directly to help suffering people caught in regions of conflict.

Will the government just go ahead and say yes already? While we cannot solve every problem, it is better to light a candle than to curse

the darkness. The Office of Religious Freedom is the candle that is burning bright far beyond its size would suggest it could. I ask the government to please not snuff this candle out.

• (1905)

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the promotion and protection of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, is an integral part of Canada's constructive engagement in the world.

Canada recognizes that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated, as the hon. member said.

As a part of broader efforts to cultivate long-term stability, tolerance, and respect for human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, Global Affairs Canada, through the Office of Religious Freedom, is supporting two projects in Ukraine to promote interfaith dialogue and to strengthen the capacity of local authorities to respond to hate crimes.

As the hon. member is aware, the Office of Religious Freedom has advocated on behalf of religious communities under threat, opposed religious hatred and intolerance, and promoted pluralism and respect for diversity abroad.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs has already stated repeatedly, we are grateful for Dr. Andrew Bennett's service as the head of the Office of Religious Freedom and for his ingenuity, sensitivity, and competency over the past three years.

We are currently examining options on how to build on the work that has been accomplished in the promotion of freedom of religion or belief and to enhance our efforts to champion peaceful pluralism, respect for diversity, and human rights as a whole. Rest assured that we will build on and strengthen the work undertaken by the Office of Religious Freedom.

There is still much to be improved in the field of human rights, at home and abroad, and Canada will work continuously to promote positive change.

However, I do want to take the opportunity as well to comment on the situation in Ukraine, because the hon. member brought it up in his original question. I want to repeat that our government supports Ukraine, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs already stated many times, and particularly during his recent visit to Kiev. This government remains unwavering in its support to Ukraine, which encompasses a broad range of development, financial, humanitarian, and non-lethal military assistance.

Canada continues to condemn Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its support to separatists in eastern Ukraine.

As the Prime Minister emphasized to President Putin at the G20 in November, we expect Russia to implement its commitment under the Minsk peace process. Canada is maintaining pressure on Russia to do so and will not contemplate the lifting of sanctions until Russia has completely met all of its Minsk obligations. Any engagement with Russia would include direct and blunt messages on Russia's unacceptable action in Ukraine.

Adjournment Proceedings

We remain concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in eastern Ukraine. According to the latest report from the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, more than 9,000 people have been killed and more than 20,000 injured since the conflict began in April 2014.

With respect to freedom of religion, the report documents a number of violations committed primarily against Jewish communities and Jehovah's Witnesses. In the majority of these incidents, the local police failed to intervene or investigate the case. In the city of Luhansk, for example, four Jehovah's Witnesses were interrogated for six hours by the insurgents' so-called state security authorities, with interrogators forbidding them to distribute religious literature and to publicly practise their religion.

Canada's embassy in Kiev regularly engages and advocates on a wide range of human rights issues.

• (1910)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, there is a paradox in the way the government is responding to these questions because, on the one hand, it is clear that Liberals recognize that Ambassador Bennett and the office have done very good work since the office was created.

Some of the original critics said all kinds of things about this office being a partisan thing or about political pandering, but clearly those who observed the record, and clearly the government observing the record and the experience of this office, know that in fact that is not the case and the office has done very good work.

Why is it so difficult, then, for the Liberals to just come out and assure Canadians, assure communities that are particularly invested in this office, that the office will be able to continue to do its work?

Why is it so difficult for them to simply commit to renewing the mandate of the office?

We know it is doing excellent work. We continue to need to have this centre of excellence; so is the parliamentary secretary willing to simply provide Canadians with the assurance today that the mandate of the office will in fact be renewed?

Mr. Omar Alhabra: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why it is so difficult for the hon. member to understand that there is always room for improvement. We can always do better. Therefore, we congratulate the work of the Office of Religious Freedom. We congratulate Dr. Bennett on his accomplishment. We will build on and strengthen the work undertaken by the Office of Religious Freedom.

Canada remains committed to supporting and promoting interfaith dialogue across the world, and to defending religious freedom around the world. Canada will continue to promote and protect human rights abroad, including in Ukraine. Human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated. The government is considering how best to enhance efforts to champion peaceful pluralism, and respect for diversity and all human rights, including the rights of freedom of religion or belief.

[*Translation*]

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 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:15 p.m.)

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