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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, June 14, 2016

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 14, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)

[*Translation*]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: Pursuant to paragraph 90(1)(a) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House the annual report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in relation to the Conflict of Interest Code for members of the House of Commons for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2016.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(a), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House affairs.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration entitled “Supplementary Estimates (A) 2016-17”.

* * *

[*English*]

MODERNIZING ACCESS TO PRODUCT INFORMATION ACT

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-290, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (machine-readable code).

She said: Mr. Speaker, this private member's bill would modernize the Food and Drugs Act so that regulations may be made with respect to the addition of smart phone code providing prescribed mandatory information and supplementary product

information to the label of all foods, drugs, cosmetics, devices, and therapeutic products.

It is my hope that the use of smart phone code will provide consumers with an easy way to read information more readily and assist them in their daily lives.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-291, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (genetically modified food).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to give first reading of my private member's bill. The purpose of my bill is straightforward. It would make labelling of genetically modified foods mandatory in Canada.

[*English*]

To do that, I propose to amend the Food and Drugs Act to prevent any person from selling any food that is genetically modified, unless its label contains the information prescribed by regulations.

[*Translation*]

I hope to have the support of a majority of the members in the House because, as has been shown many times, there is tremendous support for this among Canadians.

[*English*]

I look forward to further debate in this House.

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

* * *

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-292, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (occupational disease and accident registry).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to introduce a bill that was tabled in the previous Parliament by my colleague the member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksasing, and I thank my colleague from Jonquière for seconding the bill.

Routine Proceedings

This bill would require employers to report information about all accidents, occupational disease, and other hazardous occurrences known by the employer to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour. The minister would be required to maintain a registry containing all of that information, and to make that information available to employees—past, present, and potential—for examination.

Today, I would like to pay tribute to the courageous advocacy of people like the late Howard Willems, who was exposed to asbestos as part of his job as a food inspector in Saskatchewan for the Canadian government. Thanks to Howard, the Saskatchewan government established a mandatory asbestos registry so that workers would know the danger, protect themselves, and be able to come home safe.

This bill would help inform and protect workers so that many more can come home safe at the end of their work day. I hope my colleagues on all sides of the House will support these important measures for workers all across Canada.

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

* * *

• (1010)

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-293, An Act to amend the Department of Health Act (Advisory Committee).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce an important bill to Parliament. It is legislation that would establish a universal pharmacare program for Canadians.

I would like to thank the hon. member for Windsor West for seconding this bill.

This bill is a result of the vision of two bright high school students from my riding of Vancouver Kingsway: Judy Gong from Gladstone Secondary and Mabel Huang from Windermere Secondary.

Judy and Mabel are this year's winners of my annual Create Your Canada contest, held in high schools across Vancouver Kingsway. Judy and Mabel proposed to build on Tommy Douglas' dream of one day delivering to Canadians universal prescription drug coverage, the second stage of public health care.

I hope that all parliamentarians will help realize their aspiration and idealism to make Canada a healthier and better place for everyone.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

PALLIATIVE CARE

Ms. Karina Gould (Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise in the House today to present a petition from my constituents about palliative care.

The petitioners request the House of Commons and Parliament to specifically identify hospice palliative care as a defined medical

service covered under the Canada Health Act, so that provincial and territorial governments will be entitled to funds under the Canada health transfer system to be used to provide accessible and available hospice palliative care for all residents of Canada in their respective provinces and territories.

ARVA FLOUR MILL

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to present this particular petition regarding the Arva Flour Mill, located in Middlesex County in the Municipality of Middlesex Centre.

The mill, which is family owned, has operated a milling operation for 197 years, and it has done that without a single accident. However, the future of the Arva Flour Mill has been put into question following a Canada Labour Code inspection, resulting in certain compliance orders, which the mill cannot afford to meet, nor logistically meet.

The petitioners understand the significance of workplace safety. Therefore, they call upon the government to recognize the Arva Flour Mill as an important historical and tourism destination; and second, that as the oldest operating flour mill in Canada, it would get an exemption from the Canada Labour Code.

WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today with a petition signed by more than 1,000 Albertans regarding the proposed location of the new visitor centre in Waterton Lakes National Park.

The petitioners support a new visitor centre in Waterton Lakes National Park, but they disagree with the proposed location and are looking for additional consultation from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

[*Translation*]

ENERGY EAST PIPELINE

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to present an electronic petition signed by 16,822 people.

The petition calls on the House to respect the wishes of Quebecers and the National Assembly of Quebec, refrain from turning Quebec into an oil sands superhighway, respect Quebec's environmental jurisdiction, and put an end to TransCanada's energy east pipeline. Quebecers should decide what happens within Quebec's borders.

This is an informed environmental choice. It is a choice for society to make.

More signatures on paper will be arriving in the coming days. Over 25,000 Quebecers will have expressed their opposition to the project in four months.

Routine Proceedings

●(1015)

[English]

KILLER WHALES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions to the House. The first petition is an e-petition, which is allowed in our new process.

Hundreds of people have signed this petition. They are concerned about the fate of the southern resident killer whale population of the Salish Sea. These animals are extremely endangered. They face pollution and they face being struck by vessels. There is still the threat to the availability of their major food, the Chinook salmon; and they are harassed by vessels.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to call for the urgent protection of the southern resident killer whale population, particularly by ensuring that the physical distance between the boats that watch them and the whales themselves is at least 200 metres and not the current 100 metres.

FALUN GONG

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition contains hundreds of signatures of people in Toronto and other communities within Ontario, primarily, and it calls for the protection of practitioners of falun dafa and falun gong.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to make it clear to the People's Republic of China that it is unacceptable to harass and to imprison these individuals. The most horrific of all charges is organ transplantation from this population of peaceful practitioners of falun dafa and falun gong.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions to the House of Commons today, the first of which comes from constituents in Sheet Harbour and elsewhere along the eastern shore. It is identical in content to that presented by my colleague from Burlington earlier this morning.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to specifically identify hospice palliative care as a defined medical service covered under the Canada Health Act so that provincial and territorial governments will be entitled to funds under the Canada health transfer system to be used to provide accessible and available hospice palliative care for all residents of Canada in their respective provinces and territories.

POVERTY

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from the very engaged communities of Pictou and River John.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to work with the provinces and territories to develop an anti-poverty strategy based on human rights, reducing homelessness, and providing the basic needs for Canadians.

The cost of dealing with homelessness and poverty is far less than the social and economic cost of having poverty in our communities.

PALLIATIVE CARE

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the House this morning signed by a group of my constituents from a local church in Winnipeg North.

Many Canadians appreciate our health care system. The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to identify hospice palliative care as a defined medical service covered under the Canada Health Act so that provincial and territorial governments will be entitled to funds under the Canada Health Act.

It is with pleasure that I table this petition today.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 143 and 183.

[Text]

Question No. 143—**Mr. Scott Reid:**

With regard to electoral reform for the period between October 19, 2015, and April 22, 2016: (a) what individuals and organizations were consulted by, or provided submissions to, the office of the Minister of Democratic Institutions, broken down by date, including, (i) the name of the individual, (ii) the organization represented by the individual, (iii) the organization consulted, if the names of the individuals being consulted are not known or available, (iv) the location or method of the consultation, (v) the specific subject matter of the consultation; (b) with respect to the eight principles to guide electoral reform, (i) what process was used to establish the principles, (ii) what instructions were given by the Minister of Democratic Institutions regarding the process in (b)(i), (iii) what instructions were given by any other minister for the process in (b)(i), (iv) what individuals and organizations were consulted to inform the principles in (b)(i), if different than information provided in (a), (v) what are the details of any research undertaken to contribute to the principles, (vi) what submissions were received, if any, by the office of the Minister of Democratic Institutions from sources outside the government, including the identity of the source of the submission, the date the submission was received, and the title or topic of the submission; (c) have any Memorandums to Cabinet (MC) or any Ministerial Recommendations (MR) been signed by the Minister of Democratic Institutions; (d) if (c) is answered in the affirmative, (i) what was the date each MC or MR was signed, (ii) what was the topic of each MC or MR; (e) what were the itemized total expenses incurred for public opinion research, broken down by contract, including for each, (i) the date ordered, (ii) the date delivered, (iii) the vendor; (f) what were the itemized total expenses incurred by the office of the Minister of Democratic Institutions for consultations, broken down by type, including, (i) the date of the expense, (ii) the person who incurred the expense, (iii) the purpose for the expense; (g) what were the itemized total expenses incurred by the office of the Minister of Democratic Institutions for travel related to consultations, broken down by type, including, (i) the date of the expense, (ii) the person who incurred the expense, (iii) the purpose for the expense; (h) what were the itemized total expenses incurred by the Privy Council Office, excluding those incurred by the office of the Minister, for consultations, broken down by type, including, (i) the date of the expense, (ii) the person who incurred the expense, (iii) the purpose for the expense; and (i) what were the itemized total expenses incurred by the Privy Council Office, excluding those incurred by the office of the Minister, for travel related to consultations, broken down by type, including, (i) the date of the expense, (ii) the person who incurred the expense, (iii) the purpose for the expense?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part a) of the question, the Privy Council Office does not hold information regarding a formal consultation process on electoral reform between October 19, 2015, and April 22, 2016, although various meetings and discussions took place on the topic. On May 11, 2016, the Minister of Democratic Institutions announced that the government had given notice of a motion to establish a special all-party committee on electoral reform which would be directed to conduct a national engagement process that includes a comprehensive and inclusive consultation with Canadians through written submissions and online engagement tools.

With regard to part b) of the question, on April 14, 2016, the Minister of Democratic Institutions presented a keynote address at a conference, the theme of which was “Electoral Reform Principles”. The Minister of Democratic Institutions’ remarks canvassed a number of principles to be drawn from electoral reform experiences in other jurisdictions, including Canada and abroad, which was later reported as an announcement of eight principles for electoral reform. As mentioned above, the proposed all-party committee would be directed to conduct a national engagement process that includes a comprehensive and inclusive consultation with Canadians through written submissions and online engagement tools and to consider five principles in conducting its work.

With regard to parts c) and d) of the question, in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and this information has been withheld on the grounds that it constitutes cabinet confidences.

With regard to parts e) through i) of the question, PCO did not incur any costs related to public opinion research or consultations on electoral reform from October 19, 2015, to April 22, 2016.

Question No. 183—**Hon. Michelle Rempel:**

With regard to the government's refugee initiative: (a) what is the total number of private sponsor groups who applied to sponsor a Syrian refugee family or individual from October 21, 2015, to February 29, 2016, broken down by outcome (i) approved, (ii) refused, (iii) withdrawn; (b) what is the total number of approved applications which have not yet met the stage of transporting the sponsored family or individual to Canada; (c) of the applications identified in (b), what is the anticipated timeline for arrival of these families; and (d) what is the total limit or cap imposed on the number of private sponsorship of Syrian refugees within the original 25,000 goal?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, IRCC, is concerned, regarding part (a) of the question, 254 groups made sponsorship applications between October 21, 2015, and February 29, 2016, for 10,559 persons where: (i) the total number of persons whose applications were approved was 10,494; (ii) the total number of persons whose applications were refused was five; and (iii) the total number of persons whose applications were withdrawn was 60.

In response to part (b) of the question, 812 persons have been approved but have not had a notice of arrival transmission indicating pending travel in the next 10 days.

Regarding part (c), once the visa has been issued, the International Organization for Migration is responsible for arranging travel to

Canada. Most applicants are contacted within three months of visa issuance to make travel plans. Applicants may choose to delay further if they have personal affairs to handle, for example, arranging the care of a relative, or if they are waiting for other family members with applications still in process who seek to travel at the same time.

In response to part (d), no total limit or cap was imposed on the number of applications that could be submitted to privately sponsor Syrian refugees within the original 25,000 goal. Applications were processed for both government-supported and privately sponsored Syrian refugees as they were received. Individuals were resettled to Canada once their applications were approved and they were prepared to travel to Canada.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Question Nos. 119 to 122, 124, 125, 128, 132 to 137, 139, 141, 142, 145, 147 to 149, 152 to 157, 159 to 162, 164 to 169, 171, 172, 176, 178, 179, 181, 182, and 184 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 119—**Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With respect to the government's investments in broadband from 2010-2011 to 2016-2017: (a) what amount was budgeted to be spent by the Connecting Canadians Program; (b) what amount was actually spent by the Connecting Canadians Program and how much of this money has been, or is being, re-profiled moving forward; (c) which projects were funded by the Connecting Canadians Program; (d) what contribution agreements have been signed for previously announced Connecting Canadians projects; (e) which projects were denied for approval by the Connecting Canadians program; (f) which projects are currently waiting to be approved by the Connecting Canadians Program and for how long have these projects been waiting; (g) what amount was budgeted to be spent on broadband by FedNor and how much of this money has been, or is being, re-profiled moving forward; (h) what amount was actually spent by FedNor on broadband; (i) which broadband projects were funded by FedNor; (j) what contribution agreements have been signed for previously announced FedNor broadband projects; (k) which broadband projects were denied for approval by FedNor; and (l) which broadband projects are currently waiting to be approved by FedNor and for how long have these projects been waiting?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 120—**Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to government costing, assessments, or analysis prepared by the Department of Finance or other departments or agencies of the Liberal Party of Canada's election platform, and prior to the 2015 federal election: (a) what were the details of these assessments; and (b) which policy positions proposed in that platform were assessed?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 121—Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With respect to budgets at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada (INAC) from 2010-2011 to 2016-2017: (a) what amount was budgeted to each INAC regional office and program area, broken down by (i) program area, (ii) fiscal year; (b) how much of those amounts identified in (a) were spent; (c) what amount of the total budgeted funds were returned to Treasury Board as unspent; (d) what incentives do regional and headquarter offices have to lower their spending below budgeted amounts; (e) how many INAC personnel received financial bonuses for their work, broken down by fiscal year; (f) what were the amounts of each bonus identified in (e); and (g) what was the total amount spent by INAC on bonuses in each province and territory, broken down by fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 122—Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to departmental spending, for the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016, what were the total costs of rentals and purchases of individual staging, lighting and audio equipment, and production and assorted technical costs for all government announcements and public events?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 124—Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to grants, contributions, and funding applications to departments for the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) what applications were approved by departmental officials, but were (i) rejected by the Minister, or (ii) approved on terms other than those initially recommended by departmental officials; (b) for each case in (a)(ii), what are the details of how the approved applications differed from (i) what the applicant sought, and (ii) what the department recommended?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 125—Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to Ministerial and Governor in Council appointments for the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016, what the details of all such appointments, including for each the (i) name of the person appointed, (ii) title of the appointment, (iii) organization they were appointed to, (iv) duties of the position, (v) authority for the appointment, (vi) salary and per diems associated with the position, (i) and the name of any sponsoring Minister or Member of Parliament?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 128—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With respect to any department or agency, from November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) what are the details relating to any advertising campaigns done with (i) Facebook, (ii) Twitter, (iii) Google, (iv) Yahoo, (v) Huffington Post, (vi) YouTube, (vii) Bing; (b) for each campaign identified in (a), (i) how long did the advertising run, (ii) what was the total cost of the advertising, (iii) how many people were reached by the advertising, (iv) what did the advertising consist of, (v) what was the purpose of the advertising, (vi) what were the keywords, demographics, and other targeting items included in the ad, where applicable, (vii) who was the desired target audience of the advertising, (viii) was a third party advertising agency used to purchase the ads and, if so, what is the name of that agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 132—Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to consultations undertaken by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister, and any members of their staff with respect to the Office of Religious Freedoms, for the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: what are the details of these consultations, including (i) the persons consulted, (ii) any persons representing or employed by the government present or involved, (iii) the position presented by the party consulted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 133—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to each one of Canada's CF-18 Hornets, as of April 22, 2016: (a) what are the aircraft numbers; (b) at which Canadian Forces Bases are they currently

based; (c) what are their current ages; (d) what is the total number of airframe hours each of them have logged; (e) what are each of their approximate expected airframe hours at retirement; and (f) in what year are they expected to be retired?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 134—Hon. Peter Van Loan:

With regard to briefings provided to the Liberal caucus or Liberal Members of Parliament by each department, agency or Crown Corporation since November 3, 2015: what are the details of these briefings, broken down by (i) topic, (ii) reason, (iii) individuals who were in attendance?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 135—Hon. Peter Van Loan:

With regard to Ministers' office budgets since November 3, 2015: (a) how many expense claims were submitted by the Minister or his or her exempt staff, but returned or amended by the relevant financial officer, or amended by a Minister or his or her exempt staff after being initially submitted; (b) what was each claim for and for what amount; (c) what was the reason for each expense claim being returned or amended; and (d) what was the nature of each amendment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 136—Hon. Peter Van Loan:

With regard to Ministers' office budgets since November 3, 2015: (a) how many expense claims were submitted by the Minister or his or her exempt staff but rejected by the relevant financial officer; (b) what was each rejected claim for and what was its amount; and (c) what was the reason for each expense claim rejection?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 137—Hon. Peter Van Loan:

With regard to each department, agency or Crown Corporation since November 3, 2015: (a) how many requests have been made by the media to have departmental employees (excluding ministerial exempt staff) speak with or provide information to members of the media; (b) how many of these requests were declined and for what reasons; and (c) who gave the order to decline each request?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 139—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to removal orders for the period of November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016, broken down by country: (a) what are the number of issued (i) departure orders, (ii) exclusions orders, (iii) deportation orders; (b) for each category of orders under (a), what is the total number of people who were issued removal orders, broken down by country to which they were to be removed; and (c) for each category of orders in (a), how many of these orders were successfully executed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 141—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to government institutions subject to Access to Information requests, and as of April 22, 2016: (a) what is the budget for processing these requests, broken down by institution; (b) for each institution in (a), how many employees process these requests, broken down by full-time and part-time employees; and (c) for each institution in (a), what is the breakdown of employees and funds allocated to each (i) division, (ii) directorate, (iii) office, (iv) secretariat, (v) other organization that processes these requests?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 142—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to materials prepared for Deputy Heads of departments, Senior Associate Deputy Ministers, Associate Deputy Ministers, Assistant Deputy Ministers, or the equivalent of these positions at any Agency, Board or Crown Corporation, for the period of November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: for every briefing document prepared, what is (i) the date, (ii) the title and subject matter, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 145—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to the representation of First Nation, Métis, Inuit or Aboriginal Canadians employed by Correctional Service Canada (CSC), as of April 22, 2016, broken down by province and territory: (a) what was the number of CSC employees; (b) how many CSC employees were First Nation, Métis, Inuit or Aboriginal Canadians; (c) what percentage of CSC employees were First Nation, Métis, Inuit or Aboriginal Canadians; (d) what was the number of management-level CSC employees; (e) how many management-level CSC employees were First Nation, Métis, Inuit or Aboriginal Canadians; and (f) what percentage of management-level CSC employees were First Nation, Métis, Inuit or Aboriginal Canadians?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 147—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to each Minister's office, including costs paid out of the Minister's office budget or other government funds, from November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: what was the total cost spent on (i) wine, spirits, beer and other alcohol, (ii) bottled water, (iii) soft drinks, (iv) potato chips, nuts and other snacks, (v) coffee, cream, non-dairy creamer, sugar and related supplies, (vi) food, other than food included above?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 148—Hon. Candice Bergen:

With regard to the transitional environmental review process for natural resources infrastructure projects: (a) of the five principles of this process, what is their order of importance, arranged from most important to least important; (b) how will ministerial representatives appointed to projects be selected; (c) for all those identified in (b), to whom will ministerial representatives report; and (d) what criteria will be used in selecting temporary members for the National Energy Board?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 149—Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, as of April 22, 2016, what is: (a) the number of all positions authorized through Labour Market Opinions, broken down by region and National Occupation Code; and (b) the number of all temporary foreign workers, broken down by region and National Occupation Code, employed by (i) any government department, (ii) any government agency, (iii) any Crown Corporation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 152—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to government travel, for the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) which ministers have used rented limousines while on official business, within Canada or elsewhere; and (b) for each use identified in (a), what was (i) the date of the rental, (ii) the location of the rental, (iii) the nature of the official business, (iv) the cost of the rental?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 153—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to each department or agency, as of April 22, 2016: (a) how many employees are serving in positions that are below their substantive level; (b) how many employees are serving in positions that are above their substantive level; and (c) what are the additional salary costs to the department or agency if positions have been over-filled?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 154—Hon. Candice Bergen:

With regard to every decision made by the Treasury Board to reprofile money from one departmental program or activity to another, for the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) which department made the application; (b) on what date was the decision made; (c) which program or activity was the money reprofiled from; and (d) to which program or activity was the money reprofiled?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 155—Hon. Candice Bergen:

With regard to the licensing or sale of trademarks, official marks, copyrights, patents, industrial designs, integrated circuit topographies, or plant breeders' rights: (a) how much revenue has each department, agency, or Crown Corporation received for each fiscal year since 2006-2007 inclusively; (b) how much has each department, agency, or Crown Corporation spent on enforcement; (c) how many notices has each department, agency, or Crown Corporation issued or transmitted to third parties in respect of alleged infringements; (d) how many actions has each department, agency, or crown corporation commenced against third parties in respect of alleged infringements; and (e) what is the current status of each action identified in (d)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 156—Hon. Candice Bergen:

With regard to content removal requests issued to an internet search engine, aggregator, web hosting service, or other internet service provider, for the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) how many such requests have been government-issued; and (b) what is the (i) date of each request, (ii) originating department, agency, or other government body, (iii) recipient of the request, (iv) detailed reason for the request, (v) outcome or disposition of the request?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 157—Mr. Bob Saroya:

With regard to all gifts and benefits with a value of over \$200 accepted, directly or indirectly, by the Prime Minister, all Cabinet Ministers, and their families, since November 3, 2015: (a) broken down by first and last name of the recipient, in chronological order, what are all gifts or benefits that were not forfeited to Her Majesty, and, for each such gift or benefit, (i) what was the date of receipt, (ii) what was the content, (iii) what was the monetary value; (b) broken down by first and last name of the recipient, in chronological order, what are all gifts and benefits forfeited to Her Majesty, and, for each such gift or benefit, (i) what was the date of receipt, (ii) what was the date of forfeiture, (iii) what is its current location, (iv) what was the content, (v) what was the monetary value; and (c) what is the policy for recipients regarding which gifts are kept and which are forfeited?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 159—Mr. Bob Saroya:

With regard to spending related to the preparation, presentation, and promotion of the Budget 2016, how much was spent in the following areas, broken down by cost, date, location and description of expense, (i) travel, (ii) accommodation, (iii) office supplies, (iv) promotional materials, (v) miscellaneous expenses?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 160—Mr. David Anderson:

With regard to ministerial offices outside of the National Capital Region: (a) what is the rationale for operating these offices; (b) what criteria are used to determine the location of the offices; (c) what branches or programs are operated out of the offices; (d) where is each office, broken down by region and province; (e) what is the address and location of each office; (f) what is the number of exempt staff in each office; and (g) what is the number of full-time and temporary departmental staff in each office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 161—Mr. David Anderson:

With regard to government travel, from November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: how many visits to First Nation reserves have each of the following cabinet members made, broken down by reserve, (i) the Prime Minister, (ii) the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, (iii) the Minister of Justice, (iv) the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, (v) the Minister of Finance, (vi) the Minister of Canadian Heritage, (vii) the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, (viii) the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, (ix) the Minister of Natural Resources, (x) the Minister of Health?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 162—Mr. David Anderson:**

With regard to any government body obligated to respond to requests under the Access to Information Act, from November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) how many Access to Information requests have been received; and (b) of those requests in (a), how many (i) were completed within 40 days, (ii) were extended for 40 days, (iii) were extended for 60 days, (iv) were extended for 90 days, (v) were extended for more than 90 days, (vi) missed the deadline to provide the requested information?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 164—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the mandate letters to the Minister of Health, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, as it pertains to the renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples and the consultations on euthanasia and assisted suicide: (a) what measures were taken to consult with First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities in Canada on euthanasia and assisted suicide; (b) how many of the 634 First Nations communities were directly consulted; (c) for each consultation in (b), (i) what individuals were consulted, (ii) what were the dates, (iii) what was the location; (d) what analysis has the government completed into the impact of legalizing assisted suicide on First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities; (e) what are the details of any reports that have been completed, broken down by date; (f) what information, including all the details of documents and correspondence, has the Minister of Justice, her staff, or the Department of Justice Canada shared with, or received from, First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities; (g) what information, including all the details of documents and correspondence, has been exchanged between the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Health or their ministerial offices, and between the Department of Justice Canada and Health Canada; and (h) what information, including the details of all documents and correspondence, has been exchanged between the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs or their ministerial offices, and between the Department of Justice Canada and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 165—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to ministerial revenue, broken down by department, for the period of November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016, what are: (a) all sources of ministerial revenue and the amount the department received from each source; and (b) each individual exchange that resulted in the government receiving more than \$100 000, including, (i) the specific good or service provided by the government, (ii) the exact amount for which the good or service was sold?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 166—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to promotional items, for each department, agency and Crown Corporation: (a) from November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016, (i) what is the total amount spent on promotional items, (ii) what types of promotional items were purchased, (iii) what is the total amount spent on each type of promotional item, (iv) what is the total volume purchased of each type of promotional item; and (b) what is the current inventory level of each type of promotional item?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 167—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the government's efforts to resettle 25 000 Syrian refugees by the end of February 2016: (a) what are the details of this resettlement; (b) what financial transfers had to be made by the Government of Canada to foreign governments or organizations in order to facilitate or enable the resettlement of the refugees, and for each transfer, (i) to which foreign governments or organizations, (ii) what were the amounts, (iii) what were the specific, itemized purposes of the amounts, (iv) to what extent can it be demonstrated that these transfers have to be made, contingent on timelines set by the Government of Canada, (v) from which departmental budget; (c) were any taxes, fees, or other charges per head levied against the Government of Canada by any foreign government for resettlements; (d) what proposals or requests were made by foreign governments for financial or monetary transfers, subsidies, or payments by the Government of Canada; (e) what conditions were placed on planned resettlement of said refugees by the local governments in whose jurisdictions the refugees were resettled; (f) how many members of Public Service personnel were involved in the resettling of the refugees, and what overtime, salaries, per diems,

flight costs and hotel costs were associated with meeting government timelines; (g) what organizations were involved in the resettling of the refugees, and how much was spent by the government of Canada on the contracting of said organizations; (h) for each organization identified in (g), (i) how much was spent by any organizations or governments, including the Government of Canada, on flying refugees to Canada and what airlines were used, (ii) what alternative airlines or flights were considered to minimize costs to the Government of Canada, (iii) how much in management, consulting, or administrative fees were paid to the organizations, (iv) what other contractual details were agreed upon with the organizations, (v) what other flight, airline, airport, landing, entry or exit-related charges or fees were paid for by the Government of Canada; (j) what costs were associated with any use of the Canadian Armed Forces in the resettling or receiving of refugees; (j) what efforts were made between various departments to find sufficient funds or financial resources to enable the meeting of the government timeline, in particular, (i) from which departments were funds sought, (ii) which departments provided funds, (iii) how much was sought from and provided by each department; and (k) what other costs did the Government of Canada incur in said resettlement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 168—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the rental or charter of private aircraft for the use of ministers and parliamentary secretaries, for the period from November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) what was the cost of each rental or charter; (b) what are the details of the passenger manifest for each flight; (c) what was the purpose of the trip; (d) what was the itinerary for each trip; and (e) was a press release issued regarding the trip and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 169—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the federal executive vehicle fleet, as of April 22, 2016: (a) what is the total number of vehicles in the fleet; (b) what has been the total cost of (i) procuring vehicles for the fleet, (ii) the fleet as a whole; (c) what is the estimated total annual cost of salaries for drivers, including ministerial exempt staff and federal public servants whose primary responsibility consists of driving vehicles in the fleet; (d) what are the models, years and manufacturers of each vehicle in the fleet; and (e) what are the names and positions of each authorized user of a vehicle in the fleet?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 171—Mr. Robert Sopuck:

With regard to government expenditures on media monitoring: for every contract entered into or in force, on or since November 4, 2015, what search terms were required to be monitored?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 172—Mr. Robert Sopuck:

With regard to the use of government-issued credit cards by Ministerial exempt staff, for each Minister since November 4, 2015: (a) how many employees have been provided with a credit card; (b) how many Ministerial exempt staff failed to pay the amount owing within the required time frame; (c) for each case identified in (b), (i) what is the name of the Ministerial exempt staff member, (ii) what was the amount owing; (d) how many Ministerial exempt staff used government-issued credit cards for non-governmental business; (e) for each case identified in (d), (i) what is the name of the Ministerial exempt staff member, (ii) what specific transactions were made and for what amounts; (f) how much has the government had to pay to cover the delinquent accounts of Ministerial exempt staff; and (g) of the amount in (f) how much has the government recovered from the relevant Ministerial exempt staff members?

(Return tabled)

*Business of Supply***Question No. 176—Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With regard to government spending on indigenous affairs: (a) does the government have figures for departmental spending without the 2% cap on annual increases in funding for on-reserve programs and services since the cap was put in place, and if so, what is this amount of this spending, keeping pace with inflation and population growth, broken down by year and by (i) total, (ii) program; (b) based on calculations in (a), does the government have figures for the total amount of departmental spending for all previous years put together without the 2% cap, keeping pace with inflation and population growth for those years, broken down by (i) total, (ii) program; (c) what is the rate of growth in Health Canada's spending on Indigenous peoples for each of the past five years, broken down by (i) First Nations on reserve, (ii) First Nations off reserve, (iii) Inuit by province; (d) what is the required financial investment for the government to fully implement Jordan's Principle; and (e) as it relates to the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (i) when were the criteria for orthodontics created and what process is in place to update them to ensure they are in keeping with clinical standards, (ii) how do current orthodontic policies account for child development, (iii) what is the most current rate of denials for each level of appeals, broken down by type, such as orthodontics, (iv) does the same individual review appeal decisions from an earlier level of appeal, (v) how much has the government spent rejecting or approving these cases, broken down by case, (vi) how many personnel received financial bonuses for their work in the appeal process, (vii) what were the amounts of each of these bonuses, (viii) what was the total amount spent on these bonuses, (ix) what are the criteria for these bonuses, (x) what processes does Health Canada have in place to ensure its orthodontic pre-approval and appeal processes are accessible to persons speaking Indigenous languages, persons with disabilities and persons with low English or French literacy levels?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 178—Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:

With regard to gifts, hospitality rewards and benefits that must be declared by employees and managers with the Canada Revenue Agency since January 1, 2010: (a) how many statements have been filed with delegated managers; (b) what was the content of each of the statements in (a); (c) how many unauthorized gifts have been disclosed to delegated managers; and (d) what was the content of each of the disclosures in (c)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 179—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to housing provided by the Canadian Forces Housing Agency (CFHA), as of April 22, 2016: (a) for each location where housing is provided, how many units were assessed by the CFHA to be in (i) good condition, (ii) fair condition, (iii) poor condition; (b) for each location where housing is provided, (i) was there a wait list for housing, (ii) how long was the wait list, (iii) what types of housing were waitlisted, (iv) what was the average age of the housing units in the CFHA's portfolio; (c) for each location where housing is provided, how many complaints were made regarding housing quality and what were the issues raised; (d) how many housing units have warning labels or seals because of the potential presence of asbestos in vermiculite insulation; (e) how many units have warning labels for ungrounded electrical outlets; and (f) how many units have water lines that must be kept running from November to April to prevent freezing?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 181—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to funding for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, for each department and program in the last five years, up to April 22, 2016, how much was spent on: (a) operating costs, broken down by (i) salaries and benefits for government employees, (ii) salaries and fees for consultants hired by the government, (iii) other enumerated costs; and (b) transfers to First Nations, Inuit and Métis, broken down by (i) payments made to First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations, (ii) payments made to First Nations bands on-reserve, (iii) other enumerated transfer payments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 182—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to funding for First Nations students as of April 22, 2016: what is the average per student funding provided by the government for First Nations students attending band-operated schools through the contribution agreements for those

schools, not including (i) capital costs, (ii) money provided for First Nations students residing on reserve, but who attended provincial schools, (iii) funding provided through proposal-driven programs that are supplementary to the elementary and secondary education program, (iv) funding provided under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the Northeastern Quebec Agreement, the Mi'kmaq Kina'matnewey Education Agreement and the British Columbia First Nations Education Authority?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 184—Hon. Pierre Poilievre:

With regard to the 60 acres of Central Experimental Farm land that was assigned to the National Capital Commission in November 2014: (a) within the last 10 years, (i) what specifically has this portion of the farm been used for, (ii) what species of plants have been grown there, (iii) what experiments have been conducted there, (iv) what significant or successful research has come specifically as a result of this 60 acres of land; (b) has the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food conducted any studies in order to ascertain what the impact of this loss of land will be, in general, and on experimental research capabilities; (c) what has the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food done to date to mitigate the impact of losing this land; and (d) what does the Department plan to do in the future to mitigate the impact of losing this land?

(Return tabled)

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1020)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—INTERNAL TRADE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending June 23, 2016, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bills. In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bills be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC) moved:

That the House: (a) recognize that it is a constitutional right for Canadians to trade with Canadians; (b) re-affirm that the Fathers of Confederation expressed this constitutional right in Section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867 which reads: "All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces"; (c) recognize that the recent Comeau decision in New Brunswick creates a unique opportunity to seek constitutional clarity on Section 121 from the Supreme Court of Canada; and that therefore, the House call on the government to refer the Comeau decision and its evidence to the Supreme Court for constitutional clarification of Section 121.

Business of Supply

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honour to kick off our opposition day motion on a subject that is near and dear to me, which is the subject of interprovincial trade in this great country.

Let me first take a moment to provide some background on the subject and why this is an important debate for Canadians. First, let me take members back to 1867 and our Canadian Constitution. In our Canadian Constitution, section 121 states:

All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces.

To the credit of our country's founders, they not only had the foresight to understand the critical importance of internal trade to our Canadian economy, but even put it, in plain language, I might add, directly into our Constitution.

Unfortunately, over the years since 1867, many provinces, through regulatory regimes, and in some cases outright protectionism, have created barriers that hinder internal trade. In fact, it is easier for winemakers in Nova Scotia or British Columbia to sell their wine to Asia than to sell it to Ontario. This is in spite of the fact, as I often pointed out during the debate on my wine bill in the last Parliament, Bill C-311, that seven out of every 10 bottles of wine consumed in Canada are made outside of Canada. Yet provinces like Ontario refuse to get on board and support the free trade of Canadian wine.

Over time our federal predecessors realized that internal trade barriers were limiting our economic prosperity in terms of both jobs and gross domestic product growth. That is why, in 1995, which was in the era of Prime Minister Chrétien, Canada's first ministers, working with the federal government, signed the first agreement on internal trade. The stated purpose of this new agreement on internal trade was, "to foster improved interprovincial trade by addressing obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services and investments within Canada".

It was a historic, groundbreaking agreement for that time, and I will rightly credit the Liberals for the agreement occurring under their watch. I should take a step back to say that it was the Canada-U.S. agreement on free trade that caused these concerns to arise in the first place.

For the history buffs out there, of which I am one, some of the provincial premiers of the era who supported this agreement were Ralph Klein, Mike Harcourt, Gary Filmon, Frank McKenna, Clyde Wells, Jacques Parizeau, Roy Romano, and, as that was an election year in Ontario, both Bob Rae and Mike Harris.

These are prominent names, and these premiers represented the entire political spectrum, from the New Democratic Party to the Progressive Conservatives of the day.

From my work on internal trade, starting with Bill C-311 in 2011, I can say that internal trade is a very different subject for Canadians than international trade. While international trade deals are often divided between left and right on the political spectrum, when it comes to internal trade, it really comes down to right and wrong. From my experience, Canadians are hugely supportive of increased internal trade and think it is wrong that many Canadian producers can more easily access the markets of other countries than the markets of other Canadian provinces.

Let me provide an example of this that does not involve Canadian wine.

For the province of Saskatchewan, canola oil has become a significant driver of the export economy. Canola oil, which basically is a vegetable-based oil that has become an alternative for dairy products, has become known as Saskatchewan's other oil boom. Canola is considered to be the most profitable legal cash crop in our country and is part of a \$15 billion a year industry in Canada. There is only one problem. In Quebec, the government decided to place restrictions on the sale of certain types of canola-oil-based products, things as common as margarine, for example.

• (1025)

The Quebec government of the time imposed trade barriers that were considered by many to be protectionist, given that over 40% of Canada's dairy industry is supplied by Quebec producers. Ultimately, this is where the Agreement on Internal Trade comes in. Saskatchewan challenged Quebec through the Agreement on Internal Trade process back in 2013, and in 2015, after two years of very expensive legal proceedings in Saskatchewan, it finally won the case.

I think most would agree that in today's fast-moving economy, two years in regulatory limbo is a long time. Critics of the Agreement on Internal Trade frequently reference this process as far too slow moving and extremely expensive.

Here is the good news. Everyone, including all of the provinces that first signed on to the original Agreement on Internal Trade, also agree that this now 20-year-old agreement needs to be replaced. In fact, at the Council of the Federation conference in Prince Edward Island in August 2014, the premiers not only announced that they would conclude a new agreement on internal trade but announced a deadline of March 2016 to do so.

Why did they do so? They did so because Canada's premiers recognized that internal trade is valued at \$366 billion a year. That is roughly 20% of Canada's gross domestic product. These are huge numbers, and the best part is that eliminating interprovincial trade barriers would not add tons of new debt, nor would it increase the deficit budgets of governments. In fact, it is probably the most cost-effective way to increase jobs and help grow our Canadian economy. This is a point we all in this place can agree on.

What happened? We have to look to the deadline month of March 2016, the month when Canadian premiers, working with the federal government, should have been concluding an agreement on internal trade to see what happened.

We know that in March 2016, the new agreement on internal trade was derailed. We know that the Prime Minister summoned the premiers to a conference in Vancouver that month. We also know that this Vancouver meeting was not about internal trade but rather was the Prime Minister's attempt to force a national carbon pricing strategy on the premiers. That effort failed. Instead of a national agreement on a carbon pricing strategy, the only agreement we witnessed was an agreement to disagree and talk again at a future summit down the road.

Business of Supply

Where does that leave a new agreement on internal trade? Frankly, here in this place, we do not know. We have been told that we will see something possibly in July, but already details are leaking out that a new agreement on internal trade will have all kinds of exemptions, alcohol, again, being one of them. No doubt, in today's debate, the government will use a potential new agreement on internal trade as a reason to oppose this motion, and that is not good enough to give our Canadian economy the kick-start it needs.

Fortunately, there is another way. First, let us recognize why we have so many internal trade barriers to begin with. The reality is that in many cases, over time, various interest groups have effectively lobbied successive governments of all political stripes. The purpose of this lobbying was to enact regulatory red tape that would stifle competition, limit market access, and in some cases, create monopolies. In other situations, provincial governments have directly intervened in certain industries, largely for self-serving political considerations. I know that this is a shocking revelation.

Instead of it being a political debate, which is often influenced by lobbyists, what if this were strictly a legal question? What is the constitutional right of Canadian producers to access Canadians in other provincial markets? Ultimately, I contend that this is the question we should be asking, and that is why debating this motion today is so important for this place and for our national economy.

If we can convince the government to elevate the Comeau ruling to the Supreme Court for clarification, we will be creating an opportunity to grow our economy and create jobs through increased internal trade, because it would be a constitutional right instead of a political backroom deal. If we think about it, that is what we are debating today.

● (1030)

What is the Comeau decision for those who may be unfamiliar? In New Brunswick, a local resident, Mr. Gerard Comeau was charged for personally importing beer and some spirits across a provincial border from Quebec. Fortunately, a New Brunswick judge, after hearing evidence regarding the original intent of section 121, the free trade provision of our constitution that I mentioned earlier, found Mr. Comeau was not guilty. Sadly, the Province of New Brunswick has decided to file an appeal.

It is for that reason we created the "free the beer" campaign. We had some fun with our "free the beer" campaign, which has been widely supported by Canadians, but let us not lose sight of what "free the beer" really means. It means asking the Liberal government to elevate the Comeau case to the Supreme Court for constitutional clarification, and to do that now, rather than waiting on further delays.

This not only has the potential to free the beer and other forms of alcohol for Canadians, but more importantly, it would open up our internal economy for all Canadian producers of a whole host of different products. This obviously includes farmers and other agricultural producers.

Imagine if buying Canadian truly meant buying from all Canadian producers in all provinces, something that in many cases we cannot do now. I submit that needs to change.

I would like to share a few quotes from the chief executive officer of Moosehead Breweries Limited. Moosehead, as some will know, is Canada's oldest independent brewery and is located in New Brunswick. When asked by the CBC on how elevating the Comeau decision to the Supreme Court would benefit the industry, the Moosehead CEO was crystal clear in response. He said:

"The sooner there's some kind of decision, the better for everyone involved,"...

He said Moosehead can compete in an open market if both tax and non-tax barriers to trade are eliminated by all provinces.

"We sell beer in all 50 states in the United States with pretty open borders and hopefully we'll get to that point in Canada soon."

I like that last part, "hopefully we'll get to that point in Canada soon". I hope so, as well.

How soon? Today, our Liberal government could vote yes on the motion. If it does, it would send a message that the Liberal government is committed to eliminating trade barriers and wants to help grow our Canadian economy. If the House supports the motion, members will be sending a message that growing our economy through increased internal trade is something they support.

I know the Liberal government, in particular our Minister of Finance, loves to use the talking point "grow the economy". In fact, I found over 100 references to "grow the economy" from the finance minister alone. The motion would present an opportunity for the Liberal government to do exactly that, grow the economy through increased internal trade.

The best part is that there is little to no cost to taxpayers to remove interprovincial trade barriers, meaning the Liberals' second favourite talking point, "adding debt", or what the Minister of Finance refers to as "investing", is not required here. How about that? It is a debt-free way to help grow our Canadian economy. What do folks think about that?

Earlier today, the Standing Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce from the other place issued a report on the very subject of interprovincial trade. In fact, it is called "Tear Down These Walls: Dismantling Canada's Internal Trade Barriers".

Among other findings, this report concluded that internal trade barriers reduce Canada's gross domestic product by between \$50 billion and \$130 billion annually. Let us think about that for a moment. That is why among other recommendations this report also supports that the federal government pursue, through the Governor in Council, a reference of section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867, to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Business of Supply

The only question that remains is timing. When do we take action? Do we continue to wait for a new agreement on internal trade, as we have been anticipating, or do we recognize that the Comeau decision has created a unique opportunity to do so now. I think most would agree we need to take action now.

• (1035)

Canada could be a stronger country economically and it could be more prosperous, if we can truly harmonize our regulations to eliminate interprovincial trade barriers. Again, let us not forget that this need not be a political battle. This could well be a constitutional right for Canadians if only we dare ask.

With Canada soon celebrating our 150th birthday, the anniversary of Confederation, I can think of few better ways to celebrate from an economic perspective than strengthening our internal economy to create more access for Canadian producers.

Before I close, I would like to add a few points. Sometimes in this place motions are done for political or ideological reasons. Some motions are even crafted to appeal directly to certain interest groups or demographics. In this case, I believe that every member of this chamber has producers in their home ridings, be they farmers, small business owners, manufacturers, whoever. All of these people can benefit through supporting the motion before us.

In my view, anything we can do to help increase the accessibility of the Canadian marketplace to Canadian producers is not only helping to grow our Canadian economy, but it is also helping to grow a stronger, more united country. The Fathers of Confederation did not intend Canada to only be a political union. They intended and put it in section 121 that it is meant to be an economic union as well, yet for some reason, there are those who fear competition and increased consumer choice between provinces.

Internal trade barriers not only harm our Canadian economy, but they also stifle innovation and often give competitors outside our borders market access advantage because of our collective inaction. While we all support the notion of Canadians buying from Canadians, let us not forget that we must first remove the barriers so that Canadian-produced goods, products, and services can reach our local marketplace.

I ask all members of the House to support buying Canadian by supporting this motion to ensure we can remove barriers that stand in the way of Canadian producers. It is an opportunity that is before us. Let us grasp it together.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member and his efforts here today to deal with an important issue and have it discussed here in the chamber. It is important to his framework to explain or give reference to why the previous Conservative government did not act on this issue and why the strategy of a government not acting on it versus appealing to the Supreme Court seems to be the appropriate decision at this particular point in time.

• (1040)

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, it is a very good question and if he had asked that question a year ago, I would have said that an agreement on internal trade was the only way forward. However, the Comeau case and the evidence that was brought forward and was

established as evidence indicates that we do not need to manage trade in Canada. In fact, it is the constitutional right of every Canadian to be able to trade with other Canadians. As I said, “All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture...shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces.”

Having the constitutional issue settled at the Supreme Court will give us a road map that will allow us to be able to tackle these trade barriers at the same time, whether it be at the federal level or the provincial level. This is a great way for us as parliamentarians to come together and say again that we agree with the Fathers of Confederation that Canada should not just be united as a political union, but united as an economic one.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola for a very thoughtful and useful supply day motion to focus our attention on the perverse reality that our interprovincial trade barriers hurt this country's economy.

I was grateful in the 41st Parliament for the chance to work with the member in support of Free My Grapes. We can get rid of antiquated federal laws against the trade in wine between provinces, but until provinces are ready to reduce their own barriers, we are still hurting our own economy through a failure to work together in interprovincial trade. In the leaders' debate in the last election, I put this question to our former prime minister, who had promised in his Speech from the Throne some years ago to tackle interprovincial trade barriers, yet had not done so.

I commend the member. I am very likely to vote for the motion. I need to read the Comeau decision. I confess I have not read it. However, I ask this question to the member. Since the matter is already before the courts and the Government of New Brunswick is appealing, does the member believe that the court will be prepared to take the question immediately to the Supreme Court level, or do we have to wait while this works its way through the courts?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, in the last Parliament I appreciated the member's support for my Bill C-311. However, it also should be stated that the previous government had worked on the AIT, the agreement on internal trade, to add more classes to interprovincial mobility of labour. As well, in addition to wine, the government later adopted beer and spirits to have the same treatment as per my bill.

Business of Supply

In regard to the member's question, we have left this to be very open. Again, if the case can be referred directly to the Supreme Court, we are very supportive of that. That is, if a reference can be made drawing upon the evidence of the Comeau case because Judge LeBlanc said that the evidence he had heard about section 121 was actually new evidence supplied. That is the reason we are suggesting this new evidence would allow the Supreme Court to revisit an issue that it issued a result for in the Gold Seal case in 1921. That narrowed the application of section 121. This is the new evidence showing that particular application is incorrect, and again, gives us the unique opportunity today to free up our economy by freeing the beer.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his motion. His supply day motion is floated on the isolated pools of alcohol across our country, and the point has resonated with “free the beer” and with his private member's bill a year ago on interprovincial barriers to wine producers in different regions of the country.

However, the consequences of the motion would go far beyond wine and beer. I wonder if my colleague could speak to the benefits and consequences of returning to the original intent of our constitutional framers with regard to people, goods, services, and investment across the country.

• (1045)

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about is a legal question, not a political one. We all have views on different policies and politics, but this question needs to be settled by the Supreme Court. I know that the minister opposite wants to see an agreement on internal trade, but even if we have a good deal, good or bad, that comes forward, what would end up happening is that the constitutionality of it would be questioned.

The Comeau decision raises questions around the importation of intoxicating liquors and how that is structured, and a number of constitutional scholars have said that it may touch upon a number of different legislative statutes, both here federally as well as right across this country. Therefore, getting the clarity from the Supreme Court is getting the horse in front of the cart, rather than the other way around.

I would hope that members here would agree with me that any agreement on internal trade would be welcomed. However, if there are constitutional issues, we should have that settled first so that Canadian producers know what the rules are and they can expand and grow with certainty.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his presentation on trade and commerce within Canada. As past president of the Guelph Chamber of Commerce I am always interested in trade, especially trade among ourselves.

I wonder about the timing of the motion, with the Province of New Brunswick appealing this at the Supreme Court and the Senate weighing in. I wonder whether our constitutional and legal challenge is a more effective way than working together with the provinces to try to balance section 91.2 of the Constitution Act, where federal jurisdiction over trade and commerce exists and 92.13, where provincial jurisdiction over property exists that impacts our internal trade.

The question is whether now is the best time to make a constitutional and legal challenge versus working on commercial co-operation.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his question. I appreciate his work. I also did a lot of work with chambers of commerce in British Columbia. It is a great movement.

If we go ahead with the new agreement on internal trade without seeking constitutional clarity, what happens if that deal is unconstitutional? Let us get that clarity now. Let us make sure that we get a road map from the Supreme Court, very similar to the road map that was supplied to the last Parliament in regard to Senate reform. It labelled what is constitutional and what is the capacity of the federal as well as the provincial governments.

We can seek that same clarity now. We can start that process now, and rather than wasting time and money in lawyers all the way up to the Supreme Court, we can elevate that case now. We can see this evidence heard and get that road map, which would give Canadian producers and government alike the certainty to know our path forward. I hope the Supreme Court sees that evidence and finds the same evidence that Judge LeBlanc did in New Brunswick.

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the passion of the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. He speaks with a great deal of conviction. I am really glad to see he is bringing forward this very important debate to the House.

[*Translation*]

I thank the hon. opposition members for both raising this important issue and drawing attention to the work the government is doing to encourage growth, exports, and employment for the middle class.

[*English*]

The motion relates to a priority of all Canadians. I applaud this debate because it speaks to an issue. No matter which political background one represents, no matter where one lives in the country, it really speaks to all of us. It is about strengthening internal trade across Canada.

The hon. member moved that Canada refer a provincial court decision to the Supreme Court for constitutional clarification about the legal framework for allowing the movement of goods across provincial borders.

What the government is proposing instead and what we have been working on since the last election is a comprehensive and collaborative approach to growing our economy and spurring innovation within Canada. We believe that co-operation with all governments is the key to a stronger Canadian economy. That is part of the change that Canadians voted for in the last election.

In fact, just yesterday, I had a very successful meeting with my provincial and territorial counterparts on the need to work more closely together to strengthen innovation for a stronger Canadian economy. It is important to note that this is first time in 12 years such a meeting took place in my portfolio. Just imagine, it is 12 years since we have had a federal-provincial-territorial meeting to talk about innovation and economic development.

Business of Supply

We have fundamentally taken the cue from the Prime Minister, who has changed the culture and the tone, and has clearly indicated the importance of coordination and collaboration. This is so important because we have only one taxpayer, and what that taxpayer wants is for us to work together to find solutions to better improve quality of life and create jobs.

Internal trade, of course, including trade in wine, beer, and spirits, is an important part of Canada's economy, accounting for more than 20% of our GDP, so internal trade is absolutely significant for economic success going forward. It represents close to \$400 billion of our economy. It is also important to note that 40% of the exports from the provinces remain within Canada, so it is an excellent opportunity for provinces to be able to provide opportunities for jobs and helping companies scale up across the country.

A more open internal economy is a key to the domestic growth of Canadian companies and provides a launching pad for even greater success abroad. That is why the scale-up part is so important. If we provide the opportunity for companies in Canada to be able to transport their goods and services in a manner, from coast to coast that reduces and eliminates barriers, it enables them to grow here so they can become competitive when they go abroad.

Trade barriers make our market smaller, when in fact we want to do this and we want to encourage our companies to grow.

The member opposite mentioned the cost of internal trade. I have heard different numbers. I have heard \$3 billion. I have heard up to \$49 billion. The member today mentioned over \$100 billion, but the bottom line is, there is a cost, and I do agree with that. There is a cost to businesses that ultimately gets transferred to the consumer, and that is a problem.

That is why our government is actively engaged in a comprehensive negotiation with the provinces and territories to renew and modernize the agreement on internal trade, commonly referred to as AIT, in support of a stronger, more innovative economy.

It is not simply about reducing barriers. It is not simply about harmonizing regulations. It is also about creating an environment to drive innovation.

● (1050)

I would like to offer an update on our efforts to strengthen internal trade in close collaboration with the provinces and territories. However, let me point out, as the member opposite mentioned, that strengthening trade within Canada is a long-standing objective.

The original AIT was signed in 1994 under the leadership of Prime Minister Chrétien in partnership with the country's provincial and territorial leaders, and it came into force the following year. The AIT has considerable scope, covering not only the movement of goods, but also trade in certain services and investments, as well as the mobility of workers across Canada, which was part of the discussion earlier as well.

It contains rules that ensure equal treatment for all Canadian persons, goods, services, and investment; that prohibit measures restricting the movement of persons, goods, services, or investments across provincial or territorial boundaries; that ensure government

policies and practices do not create obstacles to trade; and that require transparency in government practices.

While the original AIT was an important and necessary initiative, today trade within Canada is not always free and open, and that is why we are having this debate. There are outright barriers and obstacles that are more often subtle, which is something we need to be mindful of, such as a difference in regulations and standards to provide that mentality of protectionism.

This is why we need to work collaboratively with our provincial and territorial partners, both on the obvious barriers that are being discussed today, and also on the subtle rules that impede trade. It is why it is so important that we sit down face to face and have these discussions in a much more comprehensive and meaningful way to be able to engage on all the issues around internal trade.

There have been some partial updates since the original AIT came into force. For example, labour mobility for regulated occupations has been improved, and monetary penalties have been introduced to ensure compliance with dispute resolution panels. Therefore, there has been some progress made.

However, since then, a strong consensus has emerged on the need to comprehensively renew AIT, and this has been discussed for quite some time. Therefore, from the moment that I was sworn in, I have been working hard to build relationships with many of my provincial and territorial counterparts. One of the first things I did was get on the phone to call my provincial and territorial counterparts and engage with them on the importance of growing the economy and looking at the agreement on internal trade to help drive that agenda. My officials, as well, have been working hard with their counterparts to identify and reduce barriers wherever possible.

Again, this is a two-pronged approach: one, at a political level where I am engaging with my counterparts; and, two, the extensive negotiations and discussions we have at the official level. We have been giving this issue the attention it deserves, and rightly so.

● (1055)

[*Translation*]

I agree with my provincial and territorial counterparts: the agreement on internal trade is an important starting point, but it is outdated. It is 20 years old and needs a major overhaul.

[*English*]

In particular, it is out of step with Canada's international trade agreements. As the member opposite mentioned, the North American Free Trade Agreement helped kick-start the negotiation of the original AIT in the early 1990s. I remember the debate and discussion. It was very clear that if we were going to do trade with the United States, then we had better get our house in order. It was absolutely important that we created opportunities not just abroad but domestically as well. That narrative, the political reality at that time, really helped kick-start the thinking around the AIT.

Business of Supply

Today, the negotiated Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement sets an even higher ambition that should be considered in our negotiation for a renewed domestic trade framework. This is an important reality. The context has changed, and the times have changed. The federal government worked closely with our provincial and territorial partners to negotiate CETA, and that ambition continues to be part of our discussions as we modernize our domestic trade rules.

We must recognize that we have set a new standard on international trade with these modern trade agreements. Therefore, we have a target internally in Canada to be able to, at minimum, match those modern internal trade agreements to provide equal opportunity for companies within Canada versus those companies from other jurisdictions.

An effective new agreement would also increase transparency and would adopt a structure that would be more consistent with our international approach. That is the absolute key part of this discussion. We want to ensure we set ourselves up for success that is consistent with our international obligations as well. It would include a transparent and systematic approach to working together to align regulations, not only now but in the future.

As our economy continues to evolve, as we deal with new issues, we are putting in process a framework to deal with potential barriers and regulations going forward, as well as how to deal with that. Therefore, not only will we have an ambitious target to ensure we meet national modernized agreements, but we will have a process that prevents any kind of additional challenges and problems going forward.

It would also open up procurement opportunities to suppliers across the country, consistent with the standards negotiated under CETA. This is important. Imagine a scenario where a European company has greater access to Canadian procurement than a Canadian company. That is why there is a sense of urgency to act on this. That is why it is a priority for this government. That is why I have been negotiating so extensively with my provincial and territorial counterparts.

The reason this government is so committed to the successful conclusion of these negotiations is the underlying economic importance of internal trade in Canada. We have been dealing with slow growth over the last decade. It is absolutely essential to deal with the economic challenges we will face in the future and to open up our markets.

According to Statistics Canada, which I have mentioned before and is important to note, \$400 billion, or 40% of the economy, is directly and indirectly connected to internal trade. This trade represents more than one-fifth the value of Canada's GDP and is diversified across all sectors. This is not only particular to one region or one sector; this has implications across the country, from coast to coast.

For businesses, it facilitates the growth of Canadian firms, encourages efficiency, and increases the incentive to improve productivity or make investments in new processes or products. In turn, this provides a platform for Canadian companies to scale their operations to compete and expand in both Canadian and interna-

tional markets. Again, we are really good at starting up companies, one of the best jurisdictions in the world, with 70,000 new companies. However, we have a fundamental challenge of scaling up. That is why this agreement on internal trade would allow us the opportunity to help companies scale up as well.

No doubt there is a benefit for consumers. It would lower costs and increase choice for goods and services. It would also make it easier for Canadian workers, which is very important as well, to take advantage of job opportunities across the country. As we harmonize regulations and reduce and eliminate barriers, it benefits consumers and creates more jobs, very consistent with our economic agenda, which was so well articulated by the Minister of Finance when he presented the budget in March.

Simply put, free and open internal trade is an essential component of Canada's economy and impacts the well-being of all Canadians.

The need for AIT renewal is absolutely clear. As I have indicated to my provincial and territorial counterparts, it will be undertaken by our government on a collaborative basis. We are not going to pit one region against the other or work against them. We are going to work together with a common objective and goal to deal with this issue head on.

This government is committed to a different approach in working with our provincial and territorial partners and we will continue to make true on that commitment. Canadians expect nothing less from us. We have received a mandate to do exactly that, which is work in an open, transparent, and collaborative manner to achieve meaningful results.

I am pleased to say that with every jurisdiction at the table taking part in these discussions, and we have had numerous of them, face to face, all of us together, bilaterally as well, there has been very clear consensus and recognition that having a strong internal Canadian market makes Canadian businesses more productive. All parties agreed that it would give Canada an advantage as our companies sought to sell goods and services in international markets and attract foreign investment.

● (1100)

While we have already made some good progress on this ambitious new agreement, and we have really moved the yardstick forward, I expect that when we are done, we will have a much more open market for our goods and services and investment in Canada. We will have more open government procurement, enhanced opportunities for Canadian businesses, and ensure taxpayers are getting the best value for their money. We will be ready to work together to address the regulatory differences across our country that create additional costs for businesses and consumers.

These are the clear outcomes and goals on which we are working. This is a major effort for all Canadian governments. We are taking the time to do it together, and that is the key part. We do not want any region or jurisdiction left out of the agreement. We want to ensure that everyone understands that we need to work together on this and we need to do it right. It is important that we ensure we get the right outcome.

Business of Supply

This is an important and welcome change on how things were done. Obviously, under the previous government, this was not the case. As I said, this is not a partisan issue, but frankly, the previous approach did not work. The Conservatives talked a good game on internal trade. They talked about it in their budget. They talked about it in the Speech from the Throne. They made many declarations. However, unfortunately, they were unable to man a comprehensive agreement on internal trade.

On this side of the House, we want to work with our provincial and territorial partners to reach an agreement the right way. The approach proposed by the member opposite in this motion is unfortunately slightly misguided. It only threatens to undermine the work we are doing with the provincial and territorial partners at the negotiation table.

Imagine this scenario. I am at the table working with my counterparts and then we launch this through the courts. What kind of signal does that send? We are working in good faith.

As most members are aware, the government has taken some tangible steps to address barriers to interprovincial trade of alcohol. In recent years, for example, the Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act has been amended to remove restrictions on individuals bringing wine, beer, and spirits for personal consumption from one province to another. A number of provinces have put in place a framework to allow consumers to take advantage of this federal liberalization.

In particular, certain provinces have introduced policies aligned for direct-to-consumer shipping of wine. These measures allow wineries from inside and outside the provinces to sell products to consumers without going through their respective liquor authorities.

Manitoba, for example, allows for direct-to-consumer shipping of wine without imposing any specific restrictions. British Columbia allows direct-to-consumer shipping of 100% Canadian VQA wine. Nova Scotia similarly allows for direct-to-consumer shipping 100% of Canadian VQA wine. On a bilateral basis, Saskatchewan and British Columbia have also entered into a memorandum of understanding, allowing for direct-to-consumer shipping of Canadian wine and craft spirits between the two jurisdictions.

It will take more efforts such as these on the part of provinces and territories to take full advantage of these federal liberalizations. We look forward to other provinces and territories following suit.

AIT renewal is a key part of our plan and position to ensure that Canada is not only growing, but is a leader when it comes to innovation. It offers an opportunity for governments to show our commitment to support our innovative Canadian firms and help them expand and prosper.

This is part of our overall objective of growing the economy and creating jobs, and this is a commitment that we made in the budget. We outlined significant commitments to research, science, clusters, and incubators. This process on agreement on internal trade is part of our overall holistic strategy to grow the economy.

It is also an invitation for us to all work together in support of a strong, more prosperous national economy. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity. I remain committed to working with my colleagues across Canada to build a stronger, more innovative economy.

● (1105)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister opposite for his service to our country. Does the minister believe Canadians have a constitutional right to trade with other Canadians?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, again, when we talk about this issue, the member has to understand that we have two different approaches to dealing with the same outcomes. He wants to do it through a legal framework. We want to work with our provincial and territorial counterparts to put forward a comprehensive agreement on internal trade. As I said in my remarks, this benefits businesses and consumers. It is good for companies in Canada to be able to scale up. It provides a framework for us to continue to also negotiate better international trade agreements and to allow our economy to grow in the future as well.

That is the fundamental difference here today. We need to work with our provincial and territorial counterparts rather than pursue this matter in the courts.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister a quick question about the ongoing negotiations, and I applaud those. What does the Comeau decision mean to those negotiations? Would the minister not agree that it would be good to clear that decision up before proceeding with the negotiations?

● (1110)

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, the Comeau decision is a very important development. When I work with my provincial and territorial counterparts, I talk about that, as well as a whole range of other issues. The bottom line is we are using that and other discussion points to clearly demonstrate our commitment to reduce barriers and harmonize regulations.

If we have a much a broader discussion overall when it comes to internal trade, that is the approach we need to have. I am very confident, as I work with my provincial and territorial counterparts, that we will be able to address this and many other issues.

We all understand the economic urgency is there. We are dealing with slow growth. We have challenges in our economy. People in different parts of the country cannot find employment.

As a government, we have a responsibility to grow the economy and help the middle class. We fundamentally believe that this approach on an agreement on internal trade, dealing with not only alcohol and beverages but a whole range of issues, will create opportunities for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Business of Supply

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would the minister talk a bit more about what the federal government, in its partnerships with provincial governments, can do to help start-up companies that are ready to scale. It seems to me that access to a national market will be helpful to start-up companies as they look for expanded markets and more customers to grow.

What specific things can the federal and provincial governments do together to help solve this scalability gap that seems to be plaguing our start-up companies?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, the fundamental issue that we are dealing with when it comes to small businesses is their inability to really scale up and grow. They have had that challenge for quite some time.

The government does have a role to play. It can create an environment for them to grow and succeed. One tool the government has in its toolbox is procurement. If we allow small companies, in particular, the ability to procure, to get their ideas, services, and goods validated by different levels of government, it puts them in a very strong position to grow and get more customers, because they have been validated by a Canadian government. It also strengthens their position to go abroad.

For example, I am a Canadian company and I have this really cool idea, and there is growth potential in my company. I go to markets abroad. They tell me that I have a great idea, a great solution, but they want to know if I have engaged my local authorities, my local government and are they supportive. If the answer is yes, that seal of approval will go a long way to helping those companies genuinely scale up, become more export-oriented and grow.

That is one example we are dealing with when it comes to the agreement on internal trade. That is one example I believe fundamentally helps companies grow in Canada. It is part of an innovation agenda going forward, which I will talk about later on today.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work my hon. colleague is doing to put together a framework for interprovincial trade across the country.

My question is this. You are putting all of this work and funding into developing this framework, but the AIT may be unconstitutional when it is all said and done. Would it not make a lot of sense to find some clarity on this issue now before you put all this effort, time, and money into the AIT framework?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order, please. I just want to remind the hon. members to speak through the Chair and not directly across the floor, not that it was done in an impolite manner.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite because he understands the urgency that exists to move forward with an agreement on internal trade. The issue really is this. How quickly can we act to create an environment where we can ultimately harmonize our regulations and reduce barriers to provide opportunities for our companies to grow and ultimately benefit our consumers?

I believe that the approach our government is taking, by working in collaboration with our provincial and territorial counterparts and working in a comprehensive manner, is the right approach and is a timely approach. I am confident that, if we pursue this agenda, it will benefit the economy in a more timely manner because it is urgent and it is needed. We want to grow the economy and create jobs and help the middle class, and that is why, in my view, this approach is the better course of action.

•(1115)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day in this discussion, this debate, what is necessary is the trust required to go ahead with the general Liberal approach. The minister is claiming that his negotiating strength with the provinces, trying to get them as a collective to work together, would be compromised to some degree versus that of going to the Supreme Court and getting an opinion on a piece of legislation that is more encompassing than this one particular matter. However, in my opinion, that would also give us and Parliament some worthwhile information.

The difficulty I am having with the government's position on this "trust me" file is that, my private member's bill, Bill C-221, with respect to single event sports betting, has all of the provinces in agreement that it allows the provinces to choose what they want to do and does not force them to do anything. Multiple ministers and provinces have asked for this. However, it requires one line in the Criminal Code to be eliminated. The Liberal government is opposed to that choice of the provinces, yet we are supposed to believe that, in this case, its path is true and clean, versus the action we can take here with this motion, which would merely give us information for the future should negotiations fail and not be comprehensive, and which might also lead toward the courts anyway.

Therefore, I ask the minister this with respect to that contradiction. When the provinces specifically write, lobby, and ask for something to be a choice for them versus that of getting an opinion, how can they have it both ways?

Hon. Navdeep Bains: Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite is very passionate about his private member's bill, and I believe there will be an opportunity to debate that bill extensively. We have discussed that bill in private as well. I know he means well and that he is concerned about his local region and the overall economy. However, fundamentally, this is what the discussion has been about today. It is not a matter of trust. Rather, it is about action.

We as a government have taken significant action to demonstrate that we have the ability to work with our provincial and territorial counterparts, not only with respect to an agreement on internal trade but on the climate change file and other matters as well. That is the kind of framework we want to have in this federation to move items forward. I am confident that the members opposite will be able to determine how comprehensive the agreement on internal trade is and where we can improve it.

Business of Supply

More importantly, it is not simply about having a comprehensive agreement, but it is about also about putting in place a process to make sure we prevent any type of additional barriers for companies that has an impact on consumers and on our productivity or competitiveness.

Therefore, I fundamentally believe that this approach is the right approach for the long term.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share my time with my esteemed colleague from Windsor West.

We are debating the opposition motion moved by the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, whose efforts are very similar to his work on behalf of the wine industry. This time, the motion pertains to beer in light of the case involving a New Brunswick man who was arrested for purchasing alcohol in Quebec and bringing it into New Brunswick. Obviously, this ruling caused a bit of an uproar in Quebec.

I would like to pick up on a comment made by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, for whom I have a great deal of respect. However, he added to the confusion on this issue when he said that the government has taken action.

That is not what the government is demonstrating at this time, either on this issue or many others. The member referred to the agreement on internal trade and the issue of the environment and climate change. I think he is confusing consultation with action.

In many cases, the government's current consultations are merely a stalling tactic to avoid taking action.

In this case, the minister is trying to reassure us by saying that negotiations are underway and that the government is facilitating negotiations between the provinces regarding the agreement on internal trade and the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers in Canada.

Obviously, there are non-tariff barriers in this case. These legislative barriers imposed by the provinces are inconsistent with the intent of section 121 of the Constitution, which, I would like to remind members, is included in the motion.

That section says:

121. All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces.

I agree with my Conservative colleagues when they say that this decision and the Government of New Brunswick's efforts to appeal this decision are inconsistent with the intent of this constitutional provision.

However, I think it is unfortunate that they are calling for an opinion application or a Supreme Court reference because I think this matter should be dealt with by the government.

Right now, the government is trying to reassure us by saying that consultations have taken place, that it is working with the provinces, and that it wants to eliminate these barriers. The problem is that we have no idea what kind of efforts are being made or what type of

negotiations are being conducted. As my colleague from Windsor West mentioned, we have to trust the government.

I would like to remind the House that, during the previous Parliament, the industry minister at the time, James Moore, spoke about this a lot. He said that it was a priority of the Conservative government at the time. However, it is clear that, although a few first steps were taken in the previous Parliament, we did not see much in the way of results.

A private member's bill was passed to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers for wine and the shipment of wine. This serves as a reminder to the House that there are two steps: first, legislation needs to be passed and, second, that legislation needs to be implemented. Legislators, including members of the House, often forget about the second step. When we enact new legislation, we need resources and a strategy in order to implement it.

That is why I will vote in favour of this motion. I support the spirit of the motion, and we agree on the Conservatives' interpretation of this section of the Constitution.

We do not necessarily agree that referring the matter to the Supreme Court is the way forward. The way forward would be for this government to take real action. It must prioritize the agreement on internal trade, which could help solve this impasse.

We took action on internal trade. We voted in favour of a bill introduced by the industry minister at the time, which shows that internal trade is important to us and that we agree on this issue.

That said, we must always be cautious with these types of issues, as we should be with international trade.

● (1120)

We can support the principle of the free movement of goods and services within Canada, just as we support the principle of international trade. However, we can oppose details in trade agreements and we can disagree with how provisions are implemented.

I want to be very clear: on this side of the House, we support the principle of internal trade and the main provisions of the agreement on internal trade. However, we must ensure that the agreement on internal trade does not become an excuse for us to do the bare minimum and weaken our regulations, workplace health and safety provisions, or standards for labour and for the quality of goods and services. In general, we support what has been proposed.

As members know, there are two ridings in Quebec that border New Brunswick. There is mine, which borders the western edge of New Brunswick. Edmundston is just an hour and a half from Rimouski. Then, there is Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia. There are two main roads on which New Brunswickers and Quebecers can travel freely. There are no border crossings because we have an economic union.

Business of Supply

In that case, what is the justification for provisions that prevent people from buying goods such as beer, wine, or other things in Quebec and bringing them back to New Brunswick? The opposite situation would be just as odd. Why prevent Quebeckers from going to New Brunswick and bringing certain types of goods back to Quebec when there is no customs provision, and rightly so?

I wonder why there are any provisions. During the last Parliament, my colleague from British Columbia raised a similar question about wine. Often these are economic issues.

According to the New Brunswick Liquor Corporation, lifting this ban would be economically unfavourable. When we discussed the issue of wine during the last Parliament, the Société des alcools du Québec was against this provision for similar reasons.

We have to be careful and ensure that the standards remain the same. When we talk about standards, we are also talking about import standards. During the last Parliament, one of the legitimate objections raised by the Société des alcools was the following: since British Columbia and Alberta had import conditions that are different from Quebec's, it would be easy to go through Alberta to flood the Quebec market with wine products and wine from outside Canada. Quebec has different import provisions.

That is the type of question that needs to be answered to satisfy the provinces. It is not that complicated to do so. If we want wine from British Columbia, beer from Quebec, or alcohol from Ontario to cross the border, we can use the internal trade agreement to limit these provisions to Canadian products and not to the import of foreign products. If products are currently being imported under lesser or different standards, then the agreement on internal trade could be beneficial.

In summary, I support the motion, but I do not believe that we need a Supreme Court reference to resolve this issue. The federal government must make this issue a priority. We also need much more transparency in the negotiations. At present, the government is asking us to take it at its word that it is taking action on the agreement on internal trade, even though we see absolutely nothing happening.

• (1125)

I urge the government to be much more proactive and transparent about the negotiations that are under way. Meanwhile, we will support the motion in principle. Therefore, I will be voting for the motion.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy listening to my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques. He puts his economics background to good use and it serves us well.

It is quite interesting that the NDP supports our motion. We are very pleased about that. That is proof that the right and the left can agree when they are guided by common sense.

The member mentioned earlier that the provincial authorities are saying that this could be quite profitable for them. The Société des alcools and the New Brunswick Liquor Corporation have already said this. Although we are talking about alcohol, we realize that this is a real cash cow for the provincial governments.

Earlier, my colleague, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, mentioned that he was in discussions with his provincial partners. We also know that in two weeks the finance ministers will meet in Vancouver to talk about pension funds.

Does the member agree that it would be a great thing if the provincial and federal finance ministers put the issue of alcohol and the interprovincial tariff-free trade of alcohol on the agenda?

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent for his question. I too have a great deal of respect for his work and what he has to say.

In response to his question, the issue of pension funds, particularly the Canada pension plan and by extension the Quebec pension plan, is complex. Our parties' positions on that do in fact run contrary to one another, because we would like pension funds to increase. We do not consider it merely a question of taxes, but more as an investment in our future and our security.

Therefore, regarding that question alone, we want to see it addressed and resolved. The Minister of Finance already had the opportunity to put some pressure on the provinces during the first round of negotiations, which took place in December, I think. It was agreed that both sides would study the issue for a year, even though it has already been under review for 10 years.

This issue needs to be addressed if there is time or if the opportunity arises, either during this finance ministers' meeting or during another possible meeting of the provincial ministers responsible for industry and trade, for example. This would actually improve on the transparency that is missing here. The government says that it is meeting with the provinces and that negotiations and discussions are taking place on the agreement on internal trade, but we have yet to see any results. There is no news about that. Calling a federal-provincial meeting on this issue, perhaps not with the finance ministers but with the provincial and territorial trade ministers, could help move this file forward in a positive way.

• (1130)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am somewhat disappointed that the New Democrats' approach seems to endorse the Conservatives' attitude that what is best is to advance it to the Supreme Court. I am talking about the Comeau decision.

We are trying to build stronger, healthier relationships with the provinces, working in collaboration with the provinces. We did not see this type of effort in the previous administration. In fact, the previous administration did not even have first ministers meetings, with the prime minister sitting down with the provinces to promote better internal trade and to deal with the issues Canadians want us to deal with.

Business of Supply

I understand that the New Democrats support taking the issue to the Supreme Court as opposed to working with the provinces. Am I then to believe that the NDP would not support the first ministers, including the Prime Minister, getting together to deal with issues of internal trade?

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, it might be nice if members listened to the speeches before asking questions. In my speech, I specifically said that I am not keen on calling for a referral. My support and my vote in favour of this motion are based on the principle in section 121, the free trade principle.

The member says that unlike the Conservatives, the Liberals are taking action on this file, but we see no evidence of that. We have to take his word for it. That is what I said in my speech.

If the Liberal government is really interested in going in that direction, my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent came up with an interesting proposal. He suggested holding a meeting of federal and provincial ministers responsible for trade to discuss the agreement on internal trade. All we have now are closed-door meetings, and the government is trying to convince us that it is doing something. The previous government also tried to convince us that it was doing something. At least a bill was discussed, debated, and passed in committee. We have seen nothing at all from the Liberals. It is nice that they want us to trust them and take their word for it, but we would like some evidence that something is happening on this file.

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for a great intervention on the issue, because a lot of what we do now with regard to the motion will be in the interest of moving interprovincial trade forward. Therefore, we have to ask if the motion actually accomplishes that goal. I will get to that a little later.

Many Canadians are very much in favour of regular trade among Canadians. We have witnessed a wonderful phenomenon now taking place with small business development in our country that is key to neighbourhoods and communities. I see that type of energy and robust innovation being applied beyond communities and provinces to other provinces.

Locally, we have a new cycling manufacturing industry that is now branching out in Canada and to other places across North America, and even internationally.

The Windsor—Essex region has also grown from having some of the earliest wineries in Canada. A number of them, including Colio, Pelee Island, and others, have led us to be one of the greater wine regions in Canada. I believe that at last count there were 19 wineries in the Windsor—Essex region, predominantly in the Essex—Chatham area. It has become a tourism attraction and a good opportunity for the horticultural industry. It is also a flag bearer for Canadian content, which is being pushed beyond our region and beyond our country.

We see these things happening. That is one of the reasons I have tabled a private member's bill on lowering the taxation of beer produced by microbreweries to allow them to create and develop their businesses, because often they are small ventures. I proposed a

tiering system in the bill, but I will not get into the details. What is important to note about the craft brewing industry is that it has rehabilitated old neighbourhood buildings or facilities that were underutilized. Brewers have often revitalized historic landmarks, which has led to greater community development. I think many members have witnessed this in their communities.

I know that a lot of younger people have gotten on the ground floor with these innovations and exports.

The member has a record of having pushed for a number of issues related to this, and successfully so. The mass production and distribution of spirits, wines, and beers beyond local markets is a relatively new phenomenon. Over the last 100 to 200 years, we saw more mass production and distribution than ever before, especially in the last 50 to 60 years. The key elements of trade along these corridors were there for many decades. Now we see a bit of a rejuvenation.

Does the motion today lead to an improvement in the convoluted situation with regard to interprovincial trade? It focuses on wine at the moment, but at the same time, it will get us an opinion on other types of trade that could happen within our country.

As we move to more online purchasing as consumers, we have barriers that are artificial.

• (1135)

Just yesterday, the New Democrats celebrated with the government and the Conservatives the passing of the Marrakesh Treaty on barriers to persons with disabilities in accessing larger print and alternative-to-print books. We are one of the leading nations in this effort. It is very much a non-partisan effort and is one step in the process. It was basically the system that created the barriers we are tearing down now.

This is similar. We created these barriers in the past that are not relevant to our economic well-being and success in the future.

We have seen numerous efforts on the government side and even by opposition members on various political sides to try to move provincial trade to the forefront and get this addressed. We are back to why the member has put this motion forward. Is it the best vehicle for this? Perhaps not, but at the end of the day, when I look at the motion and the intent of the member, I have to say that this would actually be a net benefit for Parliament and for Canadians.

I want to read the reasons in the motion, because there are some key elements that need to be explained. It might even help the minister in trade discussions. As my colleague mentioned, many of these discussions have been held without any type of accountability, because they were held behind closed doors. We are simply supposed to trust that. That is something we cannot do. I think we would not be following through on our parliamentary responsibility as opposition members.

Business of Supply

The member talked about the constitutional right of Canadians to trade with Canadians. That is an interesting discussion, because basically, the provincial divide trumps, not Donald Trump, thank goodness, the rights of Canadians. I do not think that is right. I have often said, when I have argued against some of the U.S. notions of Canadians from abroad being threats, that a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian. Whether people have immigrated as children or just recently, they have been vetted through our process and they are now equal among us. The same thing is true with that suggestion.

The Constitution Act is interesting, because it says, “All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces”.

I am not a lawyer. I know, though, that the words “shall” and “will” are interpretative words in law that become quite complicated. In fact, I got a motion passed, in agreement with the Conservative government at that time, because we had a substitution in that very debate of “shall” and “will”. In fact, it was a very special occasion that required Parliament to briefly resume, and then we adjourned Parliament for the summer. It was on the International Bridges and Tunnels Act. My former colleague, Joe Comartin, who is a lawyer, played a pivotal role in that, and the differentiation between “shall” and “will” and the interpretation of “strength of law” was in that.

We also have the recent court case on the constitutional clarification of section 121. It could be applied to other types of trade than we are talking about right now.

My job here is to advance Canadians and to make sure that the government is held to account. It does not have to be done in a hostile way. I understand the government's interpretation. I use the example of my private member's bill, Bill C-221, the single event sports betting bill. Unlike the minister saying that it is a regional thing, this is actually a Canada-wide thing that gives provinces a choice.

For that reason, I will support this motion, because it advances the cause of domestic trade for Canadians.

• (1140)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question for the member is with respect to the whole idea of government incentives, programs, and procurement. Does the member have any thoughts with regard to how these should be taken into consideration during this particular debate? Does he have a personal opinion on these issues that he would like to share with us?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, with respect to programs and incentives, we could look at the wine industry. Some studies have been done with regard to whether wine is high in pesticides. Some studies have shown that some international wines that come into Canada contain metal. The LCBO has successfully tested and screened for this. Perhaps there could be some type of motivation. Canada's best advantage is its food supply and other types of goods and services. Quality and security will become increasingly important as marketable skills.

With respect to food and wine, Canada's high standards are an asset. Perhaps a federal program or support of some kind to ensure that would be wonderful for us, especially with respect to our exports both domestically and internationally.

• (1145)

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government put forward a budget earlier this year that outlined its plan to grow the middle class. The Liberals spoke of this being of high importance to them.

Should this trade agreement be granted through the court, could my colleague tell me how that would go about growing the middle class and expanding that part of our society? How would it be good for young families and growing families in Canadian society?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, obviously one of the benefits is that it would support a lot of different local and regional commerce that could then expand into other regions where there is support.

A lot of Canadians can identify with different areas of the country and the wine or other exports that come from those areas. They develop an affiliation for a certain area in the country through trade, travel, tourism, and so forth.

That helps, because at the end of the day when we look at all of the work that is being done here, the vast majority of it is seen through the lens of proper rights, accountability, and most importantly, value-added work. All one needs to do is take a tour of a winery or a brewery and see the value-added work. People use their education and resources to achieve those goals. That will help in general.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to speak to this debate. I want to inform you right away that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte. It is a long constituency name, but he is just one MP.

The motion moved by my colleague today essentially refers to free trade, to Canadians' freedom of choice, to the fact that we are in favour of international free trade, and we should have the same principle of free trade between the provinces and allow Canadian taxpayers to get more for their money. We must respect their choices and decisions when it comes to consumer products.

Business of Supply

Let us go over the events. In October 2012, a man from Tracadie, New Brunswick, did some shopping not far from home in Quebec. He bought 14 cases of beer and three bottles of alcohol and then had to cross the border. When he was returning home to New Brunswick, he was arrested because New Brunswick citizens are not allowed to buy alcohol in Quebec. He took the case to court, and a few months ago, Justice Ronald LeBlanc sided with him in an historic ruling. This was the first time the court had to rule on such a situation. Justice LeBlanc based his arguments on an historic fact. The Canadian Constitution of 1867, specifically section 121, says, "All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces."

In other words, what that meant was that goods produced in a province could be bought by citizens of another province without committing an offence. That rightly speaks to the very essence of the foundation of our country 150 years ago. We should remember that our country was not created by a central state that established provinces, but by provinces that came together to create a central state. The intent was to pool the efforts, qualities, production, citizens, in short everything that was good about our country, under one state and not have a state that created provinces. This philosophy should drive this debate, and also inspire us when, next year, we have the privilege of celebrating our country's 150th anniversary.

What we learn from this situation is that we must live according to the principles we believe in. We are a country that believes in free trade. We are a country that benefits from trade with countries around the world. I am proud to remind members that our government, under the leadership of the right hon. member for Calgary Heritage signed free trade agreements with 46 foreign countries. That is proof that we are in favour of free trade around the world. We must allow free trade among our provinces and respect consumers' choices.

That is why we believe this debate is a matter of fairness. Free trade is good for taxpayers and good for the Canadian economy. This may surprise a lot of people, but there are still tariff barriers between the provinces that do not allow for the flow of transportation, trade, and workers, even though these should all be allowed, pursuant to section 121 of the Canadian Constitution. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, tariff barriers cost the Canadian economy \$15 billion. That is a lot of money. One cannot support international free trade and at the same time not support free trade within the country.

This also has an impact on the GDP. In a recent study, the Conference Board of Canada said that we could increase Canada's GDP by \$4.8 billion by eliminating the many tariff barriers between the provinces. That is money we cannot do without.

As for the regional impact of tariff barriers, once again, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has said that tariff barriers cost the Atlantic provinces an estimated \$1 billion, and God knows that these provinces could use an economic boost.

• (1150)

When we look at Canada's economic landscape from 1981 to 2014, we see that international trade grew by 6%, which is very good. However, trade between the provinces grew by only 4%. That

shows that tariff barriers between the provinces are hindering economic development.

It is therefore clear that the provinces need to come to an agreement to open the market and eliminate tariff barriers, which, as the statistics have shown, are seriously undermining our economy. A more open approach would bring Canada greater economic prosperity.

We are proposing that the Supreme Court rule on this issue. If we allow matters to take their course, since of course we need to respect the legal framework, there will be an appeal that is either won or dismissed and this matter will end up before the Supreme Court.

Let us take this matter to the Supreme Court immediately to find out what it thinks, and then act in accordance with its ruling. As Justice Leblanc said in his decision, we believe that section 121, which is central to the founding of Canada, allows for the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers in certain sectors in Canada.

The finance ministers are going to meet in Vancouver in 10 days to talk about pension plans in Canada, among other things. We believe that, although the issue raised today has a lot to do with trade and economic development, it basically falls under the responsibility of the finance ministers.

There is no denying that alcohol is a cash cow for the provinces. It generates economic spinoffs and taxes. That is the real issue to consider. No one is opposed to the principle of tariff barriers. However, when it comes time to put a value on them and allow Quebecers to buy liquor in Ontario, that means less taxes for Quebec.

That is why people are a bit reluctant and we understand that. It is a legitimate reaction. However, we cannot be in favour of global free trade and against interprovincial free trade. We need to be logical and consistent.

Since the finance ministers, including the current Minister of Finance, are meeting in Vancouver in 10 days, we think it would be a great idea for them to address this issue. The provincial ministers and the federal minister should look at ways of removing these barriers, allowing a better transfer of products, and boosting economic growth. Of course all the provinces are looking out for themselves, but they should take a hard look at the facts, especially since a court ruling contradicts their own interpretation of the matter.

There was the case of Gérard Comeau from Tracadie. However, since I am from Quebec City, I should remind hon. members that in Quebec City, there is a particularly active radio station that organizes trips sometimes. People leave from Quebec City by bus to travel here to Ottawa. They go to the LCBOs, where they drink merrily and do some shopping. Then, that becomes the talk on the radio for a week.

Business of Supply

It is not exactly legal, but the police are not waiting for them at the exit either. When they get to Hawkesbury, there are no police waiting for them, since that would cause an uproar. However, this illustrates that Canadians, and particularly the people from Quebec City whom I was talking about, have an appetite for eliminating trade barriers.

People want to get their money's worth. They want to buy the goods they want in their home province without being labelled as criminals for buying them in another province too. We are Canadian from coast to coast, and we are very proud of that. We should fully acknowledge that reality and that pride in the way we trade and purchase goods.

That is why I will vote in favour of this motion, of course. I am very pleased that the NDP is supporting it too. We heard from the minister earlier. We are disappointed in his noncommittal attitude. Still, it is never too late to do the right thing. We hope that the House of Commons will unanimously support our motion to allow the free trade of goods, including alcohol, Canada-wide.

• (1155)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for many years the member served in the Quebec legislature, and I am sure he can appreciate just how important it is that Ottawa, our national government, works in consultation with provinces. In fact, not to do so would be highly irresponsible.

One of the things we have seen with this new administration, since it was elected in October, is that there has been a great deal of effort from the Prime Minister's Office and all the different ministers to have an outreach to our provincial, territorial, and indigenous counterparts to say that we want to work collectively at changing the systems. Internal trade is part of those systems.

I am wondering if the member, with his years of experience at the provincial level in Quebec, can comment on how important it is that Ottawa work in co-operation with the provinces to get rid of some of the barriers to trade that are in place today?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my hon. colleague's presence here in the House. We agree with that. I said that a few minutes ago. I talked about the meeting we will have with the finance ministers of each province and the federal minister to talk about this issue, so I do agree with him. This is why, during 10 years, the Conservative government always respected the provincial powers. In every decision it made, it was always respectful to the provinces.

The hon. colleague talked about the new way of doing things. I must remind him that, just a few weeks ago, a very important minister in Quebec sent a letter to the government saying it was not respectful of the power of the provinces about the Senate. Who wrote the letter? It was Jean-Marc Fournier, former adviser to the leader of the Liberal Party.

• (1200)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary does have a point with regard to there being greater interest in engaging provincial allies; but at the same time, I do not understand why this is a detriment to the minister when he

goes to negotiate, because it is a motion in the House of Commons. The member's former leader, the former prime minister who still is here today, noted when he was in opposition that motions should be lived up to and acted upon because the spirit is of the House. It became quite a debating point when motions were seen as more relevant.

We have seen motions on climate change and on everything from housing to Ed Broadbent's motion to end child poverty and one of the motions that I co-sponsored with regard a seniors' charter of rights. They never were enacted, so the House has not lived up to those things. I would ask the member to expand his argument because I do not think this is hostile to the minister when he goes to negotiate. I think it is complementary, because it can show the provinces that all of Parliament is serious about this issue of wanting to reduce interprovincial barriers.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague, but the point is that we have a court decision today, which was not the case a year ago. As my colleague said, we do not have the same speech today because there is a new decision of the court in New Brunswick. Judge Ronald LeBlanc was clear that this was based on the Constitution. With this new element, we shall proceed in respect of that decision.

This is why our motion today called the shot to the Supreme Court to be sure that at the end of the day we will know exactly what the Supreme Court will have to say about the constitutional rules and especially the fact that, in 1867 when this country was born, it was a very important element in our Constitution to have free trade between provinces. Let me remind members that our country was not created by a federal state that created provinces, but for provinces who came together to create this great country of Canada.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honour to stand today and speak to the opposition day motion tabled by the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola regarding the creation of free trade between provinces across Canada.

I believe we are at a historic crossroads for the Canadian economy, one that can either tear down barriers and create new business and economic unions in Canada, or one that will forever destine our country to hamper economic growth in Canada by making it easier for Canadian companies to transact and partner with foreign entities than it is to partner with fellow Canadian companies.

Obviously this debate is being spurred on and highlighted by the recent decision in New Brunswick, known as the Comeau decision. Mr. Comeau was prosecuted for seeking to move purchased goods from one province to another. This single decision has propelled the case for economic growth in Canada by reducing provincial trade barriers and tightening the economic union that stands as the foundation of our federation.

The interprovincial relationship that exists today is costing the Canadian economy upwards of \$15 billion annually, and as many as 78,000 jobs would be created in British Columbia and Alberta, without even including the rest of the country, if these trade barriers were torn down.

Business of Supply

Today there are many regulatory issues that exist between provincial borders, which act as barriers to expansion, barriers for business to create jobs, deliver goods, and use Canadian products that have been imagined in Canada, patented in Canada, made in Canada, but oftentimes not sold barrier free in Canada due to these trade barriers that exist.

These barriers need to be torn down in favour of uniformity across Canada to spur economic growth. Whether it is the Canadian Federation of Independent Business or the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the only uniformity that exists on the subject is that non-profit business organizations know how detrimental trade barriers are to our economy.

As we look back over the last few weeks with the Comeau decision behind us, we see there are so many areas that require internal Canadian co-operation, not just to create jobs or help Canadian businesses compete, but to build a stronger environment for Canadians to buy goods and services.

Perhaps one of the largest barriers that exists today is in the financial services industry, or banking industry. This is an industry that has a very large impact on the lives of Canadians with regard to the investment of savings by Canadians in this country and the professional regulations that govern those providing investment advice.

In this day and age, where there is a free flow of people throughout the country, and a free flow of personal financial resources throughout the country, why is there a difference in the professional designations, resources, and processes that are needed to provide that investment advice?

The Canadian banking industry is recognized as one of the strongest and most robust in the world, yet it is somewhat hampered by provincial borders that dictate differing regulations and rules. What is worse is that, every day that the inequity and non-uniform regulatory structure lives on, there are more and more barriers created that hurt the finances of everyday Canadians.

As we stand on the growing wave of the fourth industrial revolution and the emergence over the last few years of the new economy or sharing economy, our world is literally changing daily. This change is transpiring in many ways, throughout many sectors, and each of them has massive consequences for Canadians.

Not only are these innovations affecting Canadians, but because of the differing regulatory regimes in different provincial jurisdictions, Canadians are affected by them differently across the country. It is, therefore, very difficult for this Parliament to react appropriately to the innovations that are occurring, as each conversation with each provincial government is different.

In the case of the banking industry or financial services industry, the world is being turned upside down. Daily, new websites are being launched to match investors with possible investment opportunities. The opportunities are endless.

Startup businesses that have always lacked access to capital are suddenly finding vehicles to fund their businesses through the emergence of equity crowdfunding sites. Businesses like those that

are members of Startup Canada depend on the emergence of this new, innovative, investor-business relationship.

Industries that have traditionally had very difficult times securing capital to expand or proceed with projects that create jobs for hard-working Canadians suddenly have new avenues to solicit funding to make these projects a reality.

• (1205)

Industries like mining are finally able to find resources that are not dependent on financial service providers that choose when to turn on and off the taps. When another capital crunch occurs, resulting in many businesses not having access to the investment needed to maintain their position or grow their business, suddenly they have an opportunity to succeed rather than just being told no by five big banks and having to give up. The ramifications of this technological advancement on our society are yet unmeasured and will become clearer over the coming years. However, one thing that does stand clear today is that freedom to choose investment products, with increased competition, will dramatically increase value for Canadian consumers and for Canadian citizens.

The problem is that there is not a uniform pan-Canadian approach to these technologies. Provincial securities commissions have developed an independent thinking on the amount an individual can invest. Yes, provincial regulators have developed a maximum that each individual can invest in a business as well as how much each of us can invest in total for any given year. Not only is the amount that an individual invests regulated, but so is the amount that a business can raise through equity crowdfunding. They regulate the amount of money a business can raise to fund the creation of new jobs for hard-working Canadian.

What is worse than the inhibition of investment in Canadian business and Canadian jobs by Canadian citizens is that the standards are not uniform. In Ontario, the standards are different from those in Quebec and those in western Canada. Not only do these barriers inhibit the expansion of business and creation of jobs, but they create a business environment that is not stable and steady across this country.

I have spoken to financial services, and indeed there are many other areas that have similar issues with regard to an unsteady investment environment. When a stable business environment does not exist, this becomes not just a barrier to trade but a barrier to external investment in our country. It becomes a barrier to expanding our economy internationally because the provision of products and provision of services are not uniformly accepted within our provincial jurisdictions. The security regulators today stand as a barrier to interprovincial trade, and we must continue to call on these barriers to be struck down and uniform regulations adopted to allow freer interprovincial trade.

Business of Supply

I have reflected on the ramifications of this decision in our society. I have spoken at length on the inhibiting of business to expand and be successful. However, what we must remember is that, while it is business organizations, media outlets, think tanks, and others who are loudly calling for the reduction and elimination of trade barriers, it is average Canadians who would be the victors of progress in this area. Canadians would reap the benefits through more jobs, through more investment, through increased competition, through stronger provincial government ties, through increased buying power, and certainly through a stronger Canadian identity.

This must not be lost in this debate. It is Canadian citizens who are losing through the existence of interprovincial trade barriers, and Canadian citizens who would reap the incredible benefits if the current Liberal government chose to liberate our economy from undue, unfounded, and unfair trade barriers.

We joke about freeing the beer or freeing the wine or freeing this product or that one. What we are talking about is freeing Canadians from undue red tape and regulations. How can we tackle the new financial and digital products of the future if we cannot even see agricultural products, like beer, wine, or spirits, move freely across provincial boundaries without people taking their pound of flesh? That only increases barriers to growth and stifles innovation. That is why I am supporting this motion today. If we can free the beer, we are one step closer to a more effective and efficient economy.

● (1210)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech in support of freer trade across provinces. I enjoy working with him on the industry committee. He brings great passion for start-ups and introduces some things around new technologies to our discussions at that committee and here this morning.

I want to ask this for the hon. member. With this motion on the floor, how does he see that progressing the complex relationships that are developing? Might those relationships be better addressed by having province-to-province and province-to-federal government discussions, rather than trying to legislate an agreement?

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Mr. Speaker, my party is proposing that we continue to go down that road. When we were in government, we moved heavily on this and worked very hard on it. We hope the current government continues along that line. We have to work with our provincial counterparts and, in some jurisdictions, even municipal counterparts.

However, at the same time, leadership needs to be provided to ensure Canadians get the best value for their dollar when they purchase goods. We want to ensure consumers have the best services at the best prices.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to ask how this could affect negotiations. I believe the government's position right now is more of a knee-jerk reaction versus a strengthened position, an expression that we in Parliament are interested in increasing trade among all provinces. That is leadership. I do not think it is hostile to pin the minister down during these negotiations. I want to emphasize that, because it is complementary.

The member talked a lot about some of the digital aspects in the movement of currency, whereas his previous colleague spoke about a bus crossing a border, picking up alcohol, going back across the border, getting checked, and having the same oversight. That shows the very important nature of why we need to get our heads around this. There are different formats of trade and there needs to be accountability for that trade.

● (1215)

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Mr. Speaker, I was trying to portray the fact that the ramifications of interprovincial trade barriers were growing everyday, because our economy was changing and growing and there were many new aspects that we had not seen in many years. Therefore, the longer we wait to take action, the longer we wait to work with the provinces to come up with harmonization or uniform regulations, the deeper we go into issues we have to somehow come back from.

It is imperative for us to we start now and to move quickly. Obviously, the member who moved the motion today believes that as well and has moved very quickly on it.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we were talking about liquor moving from province to province. The black market in our country is enormous. What I mean by black market is that people leave my province of Saskatchewan with their pick-up trucks and go to Alberta. Even though the beer is produced in Saskatoon, it is cheaper in the next province. People can drive over with their trucks, fill them up, go back to their province, and as long as they do not get checked, they have made great savings. It is happening every weekend.

The former government did such a great job with opening trade with other countries, so why not with other jurisdictions like the provinces? This is long overdue.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall: Mr. Speaker, the former government had a very successful record, not just in the last 10 years but the last 30 years, in free trade with jurisdictions outside of Canada. It is important that we start to move this relationship forward internally. We do not want an unfair trade relationship between a company in Canada trying to partner with another company in Canada versus partnering outside of Canada with companies around the world. It just would not make a lot of sense and, we need to deal with that quickly.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to talk about another important issue, one about which I believe Canadians in all regions of our country would be concerned, and that is the issue of trade. Whether internal trade or external trade, it delivers the type of lifestyle we have known over the years and have come to expect going forward.

Business of Supply

I want to begin my comments by talking about this whole change in attitude, which I believe has been significant. We need to realize that this is about Canada's middle class. It is about the creation of jobs. It is about consumers wanting more choice and seeing costs going down where they can. It is about allowing businesses to expand, thereby creating jobs. It is about mobility. We want employees to feel they have choices as to whether they want to live in my home province of Manitoba, or in Nova Scotia, or in British Columbia, or anywhere in between or up north.

This is a very important debate. I disagree with the motion and will vote against it. However, this is not to underplay the importance of this debate. Our Prime Minister and the ministers of this government have been fairly clear from the outset. This goes back to shortly after the election when the cabinet was put in place and instructions were given by the Prime Minister. We are entering a new era, one in which we recognize the valuable contributions that others have to play in making good, sound government policy.

I say that specifically with reference to the need for consultation and working with the different stakeholders. The greatest way to achieve interprovincial trade and take down barriers is by working with the different stakeholders, including our provinces, territories and our indigenous people, businesses, labour groups and others that have a vested interest in this very important issue.

I believe in my soul that trade is absolutely critical. A number of Conservatives have talked about external trade. We even had one member reference to 43 agreements in the last number of years under the Conservative Party. That is a bit misleading in the sense that one of those agreements included 28 countries, and that agreement was kind of going off the track. However, we were able to get it back on track when our minister went to Europe to build that consensus. Who knows what will ultimately happen with the trans-Pacific partnership. However, our government has made a commitment to work and consult, and we will do that and see what happens on that front.

The point is that external trade is of critical importance to all of us. We have a very progressive and proactive government that has the capability to do so much more on the international scene. I look forward to where we might go in the years ahead.

However, when we talk about internal trade, I will go back to the instructions that were given by the Prime Minister's Office with respect to working with our provincial, territorial and indigenous counterparts to make a difference.

Let us look at the Conservative motion.

● (1220)

The Conservatives seem to want to focus their attention strictly on the court ruling on Comeau, about the purchasing of a considerable amount of alcoholic beverages. It is something I personally do not necessarily partake in. I am told I already talk too much, and if I engaged in that, I might not stop talking for some time. However, this incident is about a consumer who purchased alcohol in one province and brought it back to his province, and it ended up in court. I understand the purchase was for personal consumption. The case is now being appealed. Based on that appeal, the Conservative Party has brought forward this motion.

I will not read the entire motion, but I will focus on what the Conservatives are asking us to do, which is to take the issue to the Supreme Court of Canada for an interpretation. They are basing this on part (b) of their motion, which states:

(b) re-affirm that the Fathers of Confederation expressed this constitutional right in Section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867 which reads: "All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces";

If we look at the Constitution Act of 1867, section 91(2) both supports and takes away from the argument that the sponsor of the motion has put forward. The Constitution Act of 1867, under section 91(2), gives the federal government jurisdiction over the regulation of trade and commerce, which includes the power to legislate with respect to interprovincial trade and commerce.

However, we need to also look at section 92(13), which gives the province jurisdiction over property and civil rights, and regulations which often impact intra-provincial and interprovincial trade, and other areas that are not exclusively assigned by the Constitution to one level of government.

It is the issue of the division of power that has to be taken into consideration. It has historically been seen to require a collaborative approach to government in addressing many aspects of interprovincial trade and commerce. In fact, the Council of the Federation had announced its intention to comprehensively renew the Agreement on Internal Trade, with an initial focus on government procurement, goods, services, investments, technical barriers to trade, and regulatory co-operation.

These are all very important aspects of the Constitution, even going beyond the Constitution, that we have to take into consideration when we talk about public policy. This is why I had indicated this earlier in my question for the New Democrats. When we look at what is being requested of us through this motion, I do not believe it is appropriate for us, at least at this point in time, to make reference to the issue going to the Supreme Court of Canada. In fact, the Council of the Federation, the premiers, territories, and others have expressed intentions to do what they can to modernize it.

I appreciate modernizing the Agreement on Internal Trade. I appreciate the fact that the member across the way did provide us a bit of a historical perspective. He made reference to the Constitution, but he also made reference to a very significant event, which was the 1995 Agreement on Internal Trade. This is what we have been talking about so far today.

Business of Supply

●(1225)

I was elected to the Manitoba legislature in the 1980s and went through the 1990s. I was very much a part of the discussion on the free trade agreement. I can appreciate why we had this push for an internal trade agreement, which really might have started toward the late 1980s, because whether it was through technology or the issue of trade at the time, there was a heightened sense of public awareness through the media. I can recall the debate that went on. It was something to the effect of how it was that we could have freer trade with America but have more trade barriers within our own country. People were generally concerned about it.

I remember the news stories a few years earlier about a local bus manufacturing company, New Flyer Industries, which is still here today. It was not able to compete in another provincial jurisdiction, yet most of its contracts were actually going to the United States. I do not think that point, along with many others, was lost when we were having the whole trade debate during the late 1980s and early 1990s. For the common person, including me, it was hard to understand why we did not see a more proactive and progressive approach in trying to deal with those interprovincial trade barriers.

They are still there today. The former Conservative speaker seemed to give the impression that in fact those barriers are growing. I do not know if I concur with that. I would like to think that is not the case. I suggest the member should examine this, whether through a standing committee or by writing to the ministers and highlighting the areas of that growth he believes might be taking place, or other means. I would like to think those barriers are coming down more and more. In the minds of many it could never be fast enough, but we need to recognize it.

I was a provincial politician for many years. One of the Conservative members across the way spoke on the issue. Excuse me for not knowing the riding offhand, but he was also a member of the Quebec legislature for many years. We understand. When one has had the opportunity to serve in a provincial legislature, one develops a fairly good understanding of why these barriers are in place today. There are provincial and territorial entities that have a vested interest in trying to ensure that the regions they represent are being taken care of, and sometimes we might go a little too far in terms of the protective measures.

I will use a budgetary measure as an example, because it is very easy for people to understand this one. I recall a provincial budget that came out where we wanted to promote to people to purchase hybrid cars. We wanted to reduce fossil fuels, so the government said it would give a \$2,000 tax break if they purchased a hybrid car. Interesting enough, there were some limitations on that. They had to purchase the car in the province of Manitoba.

●(1230)

I will use the Toyota Prius as an example because at the time I raised the issue. I said that the consumer was not really getting a break because a better deal could be had on the car in Edmonton than in the city of Winnipeg, even with the \$2,000 tax credit. Many people have taken advantage of that, but from a consumer's point of view this was found to not make sense. From a provincial perspective on something of that nature or a regulatory nature, it

does have a negative impact, a negative perception, and a negative reality.

What can we do? The Red Seal program is an excellent example, where many workers through an interprovincial standards program are able to have more mobility. This applies to cooks, electricians, welders, roofers, many different professions. We are seeing more movement in that direction in terms of getting individuals certified. Mobility is an important issue when we are talking about interprovincial barriers.

Regulations are critical. Harmonizing regulations has the potential to generate millions in extra economic activity for our country and all of us will benefit under that. Harmonizing regulations would allow businesses in all regions of our country to expand. Dealing with those regulations and finding commonality and promoting and incorporating, that alone can add phenomenal value to Canada's economy. By doing that we are strengthening our economy. By strengthening our economy and with good, sound government policy, we are enhancing Canada's middle class and we all win. Consumers will benefit.

Whether it is a reduction in consumer price or an increase in consumer choice, there is a great deal in terms of benefit. We should look at ways to allow the better movement of goods, services, and investments. We need to look at ways to encourage labour mobilization. We need to take down barriers and allow a free flow of merchandise while at the same time recognizing that the best way to achieve this is not necessarily by taking it through the courts but by working collaboratively with our provincial, territorial, and indigenous counterparts. That is the best way to achieve what the opposition motion wants to achieve.

If both New Democrats and Conservatives would recognize the value of consultation and co-operation with the stakeholders I just listed and became a part of this government's plan to marginalize the problems with internal provincial trade, then all of Canada would benefit in every way.

As much as we want to talk about international trade, there is so much more that we could do about internal trade barriers between the provinces and territories.

●(1235)

If we continue the course that the minister talked about earlier today, that this government has talked about in terms of working in co-operation, then we will in fact have the desired outcome of having reduced the number of barriers that are there, and all Canadians will benefit by that.

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for an excellent and informative presentation.

Being someone from New Brunswick, looking at the need for interprovincial trade is a paramount issue, as well as being a trading province internationally. Looking at the proximity of New Brunswick to our American partners, for many businesses in the southern end, in my end, of the province, it is a faster drive and easier transit to the American market, although we do look interprovincially at opportunities.

Business of Supply

I have been preparing businesses over the last 25 years for international trade. Certainly, we look at opportunities for export readiness with businesses, through education, through training. We know that 75% of first-time exporters are not exporting in their second year because they were not prepared. They did not know what they needed to know to be successful, to get into that market, to maintain themselves in that market, and also to find emerging opportunities.

Looking at opportunities interprovincially and the need for co-operation, if we had a framework similar to getting companies export-ready and preparing them for what they needed to know, if we had that opportunity provincially, looking at preparing provincial governments, territories, and businesses for interprovincial trade, how might we be more successful in maintaining and improving the opportunities for the middle class?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has it right in terms of just how important it is that we see that higher sense of co-operation and provide incentives where we can to promote that growth, not only so that it goes beyond the borders of Canada but within Canada.

Let me just highlight how important it is. Currently, interprovincial trade accounts for \$373 billion. That is 20% of Canada's GDP and 40% of provincial exports. If we can continue to encourage the Council of the Federation, our first ministers, our territories, our indigenous people to work with the federal government in a co-operative, collaborative approach, we have good reason to believe that we would see significant gains on what is already a very important part of the Canadian economy and who we are as a society.

• (1240)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech of my friend across the way with interest. There seems to be a false narrative that he and other members of the Liberal caucus seem to be promoting, not all, to be fair, but it was the Minister of Industry under the previous government who actually launched the renewed AIT. Fifteen of the 17 rounds that have been held on this were held under the previous government.

To say that there is a new approach and somehow the Liberals will solve what we never even touched is completely false. However, I did not hear once the member address this. He spoke about different levels, section 91 versus 92 in the Constitution.

Does the member not believe that the Supreme Court of Canada is uniquely enabled to rule on the constitutionality of both federal and provincial statutes and is the ultimate arbiter? He also neglected to mention that in terms of the original Gold Seal case in 1921 that narrowed the application of section 121, which allowed all these trade barriers and allowed the protectionism that he cited in his speech to come in, the Supreme Court was the body that originally narrowed the application. Therefore, they are the only body that can restore section 121. Does he support that?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I believe that, collectively, we are uniquely able to accomplish so much more. At the end of the day, we need to take responsibility for doing so.

The member made reference to the AIT and the fact that 15 of 17 meetings were held under the previous Conservative government. The AIT was a creation of Jean Chrétien back in 1995. That is when the Prime Minister at the time called all the first ministers from the different provinces to come together and achieve this agreement.

They met, 15 of the last 17 times, because they happened to be in government during those 15 of the 17 times. Not once did the Prime Minister see fit to go, participate, and show that willingness to work as a confederation to try to resolve an important issue to Canadians.

That is a different approach and in the eight, nine months, we have seen our minister and our Prime Minister reach out on this very important issue. We have done more in the last nine months than the previous government did in 10 years.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, by way of information, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that barriers to internal trade cost our economy around \$14 billion a year.

The Liberals also cancelled plans to reduce the small business tax rate from 11% to 9%, which will cost the public purse about \$2.2 billion. Small businesses will pay the price. The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development said that internal trade was a priority and that he was in talks, but we have seen no results and no evidence.

Can my Liberal colleague update us on those talks? What progress does the government have to report?

• (1245)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question in reference to small business.

I can assure the member that the most important thing a small business wants today is a customer. What we have seen in the last budget, that we just voted on last night, is a budget that puts literally hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars into the pockets of Canadians.

That is going to create more customers, whether it is the nine million-plus in the middle class who are getting the tax break, or the hundreds of thousands of children who are going to be lifted out of poverty through the Canada child benefit program.

With respect to the latter part of the question, I can assure the member that on these discussions, we have a minister who is very proactive on the file and a government that is genuinely concerned about dealing with internal trade barriers. This goes right to the Prime Minister's Office. We have witnessed that, and it is unlike what we saw in the previous 10 years.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, going back to the hon. member across the way, he is trying to paint this narrative that somehow the Liberals are doing things differently.

Business of Supply

First of all, what they did differently was there no mention of internal trade in the throne speech, there was no mention of internal trade in any mandate letter, and the Prime Minister, the intergovernmental affairs minister himself, spent zero political capital.

In fact, as I said in my speech this morning, the premiers were supposed to come together in March on a new agreement on internal trade, and instead the Prime Minister decided to talk about carbon pricing, which was extremely divisive.

For this gentleman to be saying that Conservatives do not care about trade is, first of all, wrong.

I am going to ask the member a simple question. Does he believe that it is a constitutional right for a Canadian to trade with a Canadian? That is my question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do believe that there is an obligation for the Government of Canada to do whatever is possible to try to enhance trade between our provinces.

This is something Canadians want to see, and this is something the government is working progressively at being able to achieve. We are doing it in a better way than the former government chose. We believe this is best achieved by working in a collaborative approach with our provinces, territories, and indigenous peoples in order to be able to take down the many different barriers that are there, so that all of Canadian society can benefit.

It is not going to happen overnight. It does take time to make it happen.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the motion brought forward by the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. I will be sharing my time with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

I thank the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola for his continued efforts to promote economic vibrancy through interprovincial trade across our great nation. I am motivated to speak in support of the motion because I find myself asking the same question that many Canadians are asking. Why not? Why would we delay action that would free Canadians to offer their goods to fellow Canadians right across our nation?

I understand that the previous government committed to working with the provinces and the territories to do away with restrictions that limit interprovincial trade. However, now we have an indication that we should be referring to the Supreme Court so that developing and future legislation and regulations do not cause extended delays in freeing the sale of goods across provincial lines.

Let us be clear here. What we are talking about is the court clarification of free trade among the provinces and territories. The recent decision handed down by the Supreme Court of New Brunswick confirmed that section 121 of the Canadian Constitution says:

All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces.

It seems pretty clear that the Constitution provides for free trade across provincial boundaries. Although this court decision and

campaign has been dubbed “free the beer”, it is about much more than beer.

Our Fathers of Confederation had the vision and foresight when composing our Canadian Constitution to include this section, this concept, and this liberty. Their vision in forming a nation for all members, constituents of the nation, would be free to trade with each other, to build commerce, and to benefit from the co-operative trade was a vision far beyond its time.

Then in 1921, the Gold Seal decision said that this vision, this liberty of section 121, only meant that interprovincial free trade could occur without any tax or duty imposed as a condition of their admission. The Gold Seal decision somehow became the basis of constricting powers, allowing a patchwork of restrictions to grow over time. Somehow as provinces and a country, we have lost the clear vision of free trade across our federation the way our founders envisioned it.

Now the stage is set to make things right. In 2012, Mr. Gerard Comeau, the defendant in the recent court decision, made some decisions. He first decided to take a drive to Quebec and purchase some spirits and beer. I suspect he was not the first New Brunswicker to do so. Upon returning to his home province of New Brunswick, where the provincial liquor act restricts interprovincial importation to one bottle of spirits or wine, or 12 pints of beer, he was stopped and charged with importation charges. Why? His property was not stolen, no, he had paid for it in Canada, which means he had also paid taxes, federal and provincial, for the goods.

Then when Mr. Comeau decided to challenge the charges laid against him and take the case to court and put his trust in the Constitution of Canada, he sparked a reaction that has raised the profile of section 121 of the Constitution. Again, it states:

All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces.

That is what section 121 states. I do not know how that statement could be any more clear, but obviously it has become clouded, manipulated, and misinterpreted over the last 149 years.

● (1250)

Here we are today as our nation looks on, wondering if we might have the wherewithal to uphold the intent, the spirit, and the liberty afforded to us by our forefathers, the liberty to move goods across provincial lines freely.

Why would the current government risk stalling the process of removing restrictions by not seeking clarity of the Supreme Court so that whatever agreements are reached between the provinces would stand far less risk of being challenged and delayed in their implementation? Does the current government doubt that the notion of individual liberty set out in section 121 of the Constitution is inappropriate? If so, then it should take a look at how much beer, wine, and liquor moves across the river behind this place on the Hill on a daily basis, especially on a Friday.

Business of Supply

In all seriousness, let us trust Canadians to hold section 121 of the Constitution as they wish. There have been successes in restoring the spirit of section 121, and we ought to carry that momentum forward. The Agreement on Internal Trade came into force in 1995, as an intergovernmental trade agreement signed by the Canadian first ministers, and is aimed at reducing and eliminating barriers for free movement of persons, goods, services, and investment within Canada. This is essential for an open, efficient, and stable economic market.

Twenty-one years after the introduction of the Agreement on Internal Trade, we need to move forward again with bolstering interprovincial trade. There are provinces that have taken significant steps in this direction, and continue to facilitate interprovincial trade because it yields mutual benefits, because it works.

One example of initiative and leadership at the provincial level in driving interprovincial trade is the New West Partnership Trade Agreement, the NWPTA, which was agreed to by the governments of British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. The NWPTA came into effect in 2010 and has been fully implemented since 2013. The NWPTA represents Canada's largest barrier-free interprovincial market. This agreement is an extension of the pre-existing Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement between British Columbia and Alberta in 2006. In the NWPTA, B.C., Alberta, and Saskatchewan became the first jurisdictions in Canada to commit to full harmonization of the rules affecting trade, investment, and labour mobility. This removed barriers to free movement of goods, services, investment, and people between the three provinces. These agreements were hammered out by provincial leaders for the benefit of their constituents.

I believe that we too, as federal legislators, can seize the opportunity to bolster our national economy by leading all the provinces and territories to agreements that remove restrictions on trade or the mobility of investment and labour. Canadian businesses, investors, and workers deserve to be treated the same across Canada. The federal government has an opportunity to provide leadership in establishing such an agreement to open doors of the provinces and territories.

Some may say this is not possible: that the provinces and territories need to be insulated from one another; that disputes would eclipse any possible benefits of co-operation. I disagree. I believe that a strong economic union means a stronger Canada. I believe that opening doors for the provinces and territories to one another would spur mutual benefit and broader opportunities now and in the future. As I mentioned earlier, this is much more than free beer; it is a much larger issue than that.

Let us make it clear again that the hands that trade or choose goods across provincial boundaries should not be changed by the restrictive status quo. Our Constitution was drafted by recognizing interprovincial trade and the value it brought to Canadian economic growth and Canadian buyers of goods.

• (1255)

While we have this in our sights again, let us not lose sight of it for partisan reasons. Let us move this forward for the benefit of Canadians, like Mr. Comeau, who want to purchase Canadian goods in other Canadian provinces.

As our fellow Canadians look on with intent at the proceedings here today, let us all be mindful of our duty to protect, and if need be restore the liberties provided in section 121 of our Constitution.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as probably one of the only members sitting in the House today who was a signator and party to the negotiations that led up to the 1995 AIT, I would like my colleague to comment on why he thinks using the courts would be better than a negotiation process. After all, we are dealing with 10 sovereign provinces within the Canadian federation that handle issues like this.

I would like him to expand a bit more on why he and the opposition feel that the court is the only way to go to resolve trade barriers within the country, when negotiations have worked in the past.

• (1300)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I believe that referral to the Supreme Court of Canada for clarification and negotiations with the provinces should go hand in hand. To move negotiations forward and come to an agreement without seeking clarity from the court on whether the negotiations and agreements are constitutional would simply be wasting time. We could send this decision to the Supreme Court, ask for a referral on it, and get the court's opinion so that future legislation could be drafted in compliance with the Constitution.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am finding this debate very interesting. I know that we were going to have it earlier, under a slightly different subject area, and I was looking forward to participating. Now it is more confined to simply a referral to the court.

I am a little puzzled by the decision of the Conservatives to go in this direction. As I am sure those who are from B.C., Alberta, and Saskatchewan are aware, we already have the New West Partnership Trade Agreement, and Manitoba is saying that maybe it would like to be part of it. We have had discussions about TILMA before.

Even the provinces themselves are wanting to exclude certain areas from the opening up of trade. They want to exclude water-related areas, the management and conservation of forests and fish, the promotion of renewables, and the management and conservation of energy and mineral resources.

Therefore, even if there were a reference to the court and it upheld the decision in New Brunswick, is it not necessary, in fact, to open up this dialogue, not just to the premiers of the provinces and territories but also to the Canadian public and workers, on what the implications of such decisions might be for the regulation of critical areas like child welfare, the environment, and health?

Business of Supply

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, I am not clear that there was a question there, but as I stated, the directive from this motion would be to refer this matter to the Supreme Court, the highest court in the land, to get a referral on how the negotiations and legislation should be moved forward so that we do not end up with court battles over the constitutional correctness of future negotiations and those that may be taking place right now.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap for his contribution today. I am very happy that he is a member in this place, and as a fellow British Columbian, I am happy to have him speak to this issue.

He spoke about the Gold Seal case and how, originally, that court decision narrowed the application of section 121. He also spoke about the Comeau case actually bringing new evidence to bear, saying that section 121 should be restored to its original meaning, which would call into question myriad legislative frameworks and agreements, including the Agreement on Internal Trade.

Does the member agree that when we have questions on constitutionality, the Supreme Court is the only vehicle to answer or respond to the original concern that the current interpretation of section 121 is improper?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Mr. Speaker, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola is very well versed on this. He certainly knows the fine points of the Gold Seal decision and the Comeau case. The fact that the Comeau case brought new evidence forward and directed the decision around section 121 of the Constitution is why it has become important that we refer to the Supreme Court, as the highest ruler in the country on constitutional issues. It is so we can move forward in negotiations with the certainty that those negotiations will not be challenged in the future.

• (1305)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am excited to be joining this debate, as I get to use both court decisions and John Maynard Keynes in support of a Conservative argument. I am glad to see that my friend the parliamentary secretary is here. I am sure that he is a big fan of both and will enjoy hearing this Conservative argument, which references the wisdom of the courts and of John Maynard Keynes.

I want to thank my colleague from Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola for bringing forward this important motion and for all the work he has done on this issue.

What we are talking about today is internal trade. We are bringing forward a motion that encourages the government to make a reference to the Supreme Court, or to elevate a particular case to the Supreme Court, which will provide us with some clarity on what the constitutional requirements are in terms of internal trade. Our party has been clear throughout this process that we are strongly supportive of more open trade generally and in particular of more open trade within Canada between Canadians in different parts of the country.

In my remarks today I would like to start by talking more generally about why I favour policies of open trade. Then I will talk about internal trade specifically in the context here. Finally, I want to move beyond the economic discussion to talk about the social and

cultural benefits of trade, because often when we talk about trade, we see the benefits economically in terms of economic growth and prosperity. However, there are important social and cultural reasons to favour greater internal trade. I think it is positive in terms of creating greater harmony within our country and between different countries. I will talk more about that later on.

First, fundamentally, why do we believe in the importance of trade policy? I think sometimes when this issue is discussed the language can be a bit confusing to people. When we talk about negotiating free trade agreements with other countries and within Canada, we are not talking about the government negotiating to trade. We are not talking about the government saying, “We will trade this much of these particular goods with you for a certain amount of other goods.” It is not up to governments to specifically negotiate trades. When we talk about trade deals, they are agreements to remove barriers to allow private individuals and private actors within those jurisdictions to make voluntary trades themselves. It is not principally about trade. It is about the freedom of individuals to trade. This illustrates its importance.

Many of the counterarguments against trade I think misunderstand the freedom component. We hear people say, “Trade is well and good, but is the trade fair?” The response is simply that if the trade is not fair, the private individuals involved in making that trade need not participate. We are not talking about forcing people to make an exchange. We are talking about removing barriers to allow a voluntary exchange between individual actors who would invariably regard those exchanges as mutually beneficial.

Therefore, at a basic logical level, we can see that this invariably creates benefits, because if the individual actors previously prevented from engaging in voluntary exchange are now able to make exchanges and see that a trade arrangement is in both of their interests, then almost certainly it is. I think people are better judges of their own economic interests than an external agency like the state. Therefore, the state removing barriers to free economic exchange, giving individuals the ability to exchange without state intervention, enhances their freedom and allows them to pursue their own well-being and their own conception of the good life without unnecessary state restrictions. Almost by definition, the freedom to trade is good.

There are some exceptional circumstances where economists will talk about the concept of externalities, where the exchange between two private individuals might have a negative or a positive effect on a non-consenting third party. However, in the absence of these externalities, it always makes sense for governments to remove barriers to free and voluntary exchange between individuals in different jurisdictions.

There is a basic principle of individual freedom here that applies just as much to an individual's right to buy certain kinds of goods as it does to that person's finding the good life with respect to social or other kinds of private activities.

Business of Supply

● (1310)

In addition to being consistent with the principles of individual freedom, trade helps to create collective wealth. It helps to facilitate specialization. It allows individuals or communities to become focused on certain activities that may fit certain natural competencies—obviously we do not grow a lot of bananas or coffee here in Canada—and it allows others to focus on other things and to then make exchanges. Having both specialized in certain areas leads to enhanced efficiencies, and there is a collective economic benefit in that voluntary exchange.

This is the basic logic of trade agreements, and it should, in some ways, be fairly elementary. There are still members of the House, not just in the NDP but in the government, who demonstrate significant skepticism about the value of trade deals, at least of certain kinds of trade deals. Going over that basic groundwork on the importance of allowing voluntary exchange and how it is conducive to the growth of wealth is important.

We are talking specifically about allowing voluntary exchange within Canada. The recent Comeau court case recognized that individuals should be able to go across provincial borders and trade without undue and unnecessary restrictions. We are saying that the government should get clarity from the Supreme Court. We should negotiate, as well, to remove trade barriers. We should work with the provinces and continue the work the previous government did on this, but we need some clarity from the Supreme Court in terms of what actually is required by section 121 of the Constitution.

In terms of the economic impact of internal trade, estimates produced by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business say that barriers to internal trade cost the Canadian economy nearly \$15 billion per year. Another estimate, from the Conference Board of Canada, says that the removal of trade barriers would add close to \$5 billion to real GDP and would create close to 80,000 jobs in B.C. and Alberta alone, and much more, I am sure, across the country.

The same arguments that apply to international trade very much apply with respect to internal trade. We need to realize the economic benefits, in terms of efficiency and the growth of our collective wealth, that come with increased trade. However, we also need to respect the freedom of individuals who might want to buy wine from B.C., even if they do not live there, or to buy other goods or partake of services that are available in other provinces that may be different from what is available in their own province. This is sensible. This is consistent with freedom and is conducive to the growth of wealth and well-being.

I want to talk quickly about the social and cultural impact of trade. Trade is not just about economic exchange. It is about allowing commerce between people in different regions of this country and between people in different countries and that commerce creating greater community between people and leading to increased cultural sharing and understanding. The ability to buy goods that come from other provinces or other countries allows people, in a sense, to access parts of that distinct culture or community and to learn and build community with the people involved.

Generally speaking, trade has been recognized as a way of enhancing community at an international level and even of reducing

conflict. In Canada, we could understand internal trade as an important way in which we build national unity, in which we enhance our national cohesiveness. That speaks to the importance of doing this.

I want to mention the great economist John Maynard Keynes, because he was outspoken in the context of the First World War settlement. He was not supportive of the Versailles agreement, which he described as a Carthaginian peace. It was far too harsh and was reminiscent of the Roman treatment of Carthage during and after the Punic Wars, when it was really more about punishing the former enemy than about creating a durable peace. He advocated instead for a policy of free trade in Europe. He thought that if after the First World War countries worked together for free trade, there would of course be an economic benefit, but the social, cultural, and international cohesion that would result from prospering together, from becoming more interdependent economically, would be an important check against the possibility of future hostilities arising.

This was a visionary idea from John Maynard Keynes and one that was very much ahead of its time. He understood the economic benefits of trade, and the respect for individual freedom, but also the social and cultural benefits.

We can harness that insight in the Canadian context as well and use internal trade as a tool for national unity as well as economic growth.

● (1315)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friend from the Prairies spoke eloquently about the freedom of trade.

We focused primarily on beer and liquor in much of this debate. I wonder if the member would like to reflect on the managed trade, which is what real free trade is. It is managed trade. It is not free. There are rules and regulations to virtually every trade agreement. That is why they are so thick.

However, one of the most interesting pieces of interprovincial-managed trade, to the exclusion of other provinces, is the trade agreements around milk in the prairie provinces; the fact that, if they are selling milk from Quebec, they cannot actually sell into the prairie provinces without significant trade barriers being put in place. I wonder if his party is advocating the end of the milk quotas and the management of the milk trade in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia? Is that is the position that he advocates and his party now advocates?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it is not all about alcohol, although that is of course part of it.

I trust that the member meant to take all the fun out of it by talking about managed trade.

Business of Supply

There has to be some degree of pro-competitive regulation in every marketplace. We know that, in order to prevent the emergence of monopolies, there has to be some element of pro-competitive regulation. However, I would not agree that the purpose of trade agreements is to sort of micromanage trade relations. It is simply to establish that kind of basic, fair groundwork.

In terms of issues around the milk quotas and these sorts of things, I think this is a discussion we have had before, and that is somewhat of a separate conversation. I certainly would not endorse all of the policies undertaken by the current Alberta provincial government. I think the point is very much that we need to have some degree of regulation, yes, but regulation that encourages competition. That has been the groundwork of our trade agreements, and that should be the way we manage internal trade, as well.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, although I agree that we need to work on internal trade issues, I find it a little unfortunate that the Conservatives are proposing to refer this matter to the Supreme Court. For years, the Conservatives stalled on this, despite the many proposals brought to the table.

Does my colleague have any ideas on the right strategy to be pursued? The challenges will be around harmonizing the regulatory regimes regarding the distribution of alcohol in Canada. A number of provinces will probably want to discuss it, but the negotiations are no simple matter. Does my colleague have any suggestions for the House today regarding how to overcome those challenges?

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I think we are quite clear in the motion, in terms of what we are proposing; that is, first and foremost, to get some clarity in response to the Comeau case, to get some clarity about what our constitutional requirements are. That arises from the specific court decision. It is something we have to respond to, and I think getting clarity for Canadians for Canadian business right away on that is very important.

More broadly, I would disagree very much with the premise of the question. The member may not be aware of all the work that was done under the previous government, with respect to internal trade, but our government held regular meetings, was moving forward, was working with the provinces to try to negotiate sort of the next generation agreement on internal trade that would respond to the new and emerging situation in our economy today. It is not an either/or. We do not have to choose between working through negotiated mechanisms and referring this to the court.

It is important for us to get clarity around what our constitutional requirements are, but it is also important for us to continue that negotiating track that was started and pushed forward under the previous government. We need to continue that, as well.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Eglinton—Lawrence. I appreciate the motion that has been put forward by the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola and the ensuing discussion that we are having today on internal trade.

It reflects the concern that we all share for middle-class Canadians. We agree that middle-class Canadians need to work in an environment where good internal trade is important for growth of the economy and growth of their careers.

My concern is the approach that this motion is suggesting, but also what is being excluded from this motion. The motion does not include labour as a key element of building our economy and the difficulties experienced by those whose work requires them to go across multiple provinces.

That is why our government is working actively with provincial and territorial counterparts to address the barriers to Canada's internal trade. There is good will and commitment to get this job done. We look forward to achieving a renewed agreement in the near future, as was mentioned by our minister this morning.

I am happy to participate in today's debate because it allows me to speak to an important issue related to internal trade, and that is labour mobility. We believe that Canadians should be able to work anywhere they want in Canada. That is why we are making it easier for people to move and work. We want to give Canadians the freedom to work wherever there is an opportunity in Canada.

We are working to open doors for Canadian workers. We want to save them time and money, and we are supporting them in different ways. Our government has programs that help Canadians locate jobs and learn more about specific provincial and territorial requirements for their professions. Some of our programs even help workers pay for moving expenses, and we all know that moving can be expensive.

One of the challenges we face is that some occupations are regulated differently in some provinces and territories. Accountants, architects, carpenters, lawyers, electricians, and welders are just a few opportunities. As a certified engineering technologist based in Manitoba, I was working across Canada using my certification as credentials when automating equipment. However, upon moving to Ontario, I was required to recertify.

Providing easy access to employment opportunities is also an opportunity that has to be addressed. To help Canadians navigate the job market, we have helpful online tools and services available from our job bank website. These provide Canadians with valuable information about occupations across Canada and by region, including job opportunities, requirements, wages, educational programs, and employment outlooks. Users who are often excluded from working within their profession due to local regulations can also access job market trends and news reports. These tools allow Canadians to explore careers and find out whether their chosen occupation is regulated in the province or territory where they need to work but often the barriers are not indicated.

In 2015, the Government of Canada also launched a new labour mobility portal that provides comprehensive information to Canadians who wish to move to obtain employment. Anyone can explore these possibilities, including skilled trades workers, who also need our support.

Business of Supply

In Canada, a mobile certified skilled trades workforce with up-to-date skills is critical. That is why we are working with provinces and territories to support the interprovincial standards red seal program. This program makes it easier for tradespeople to have their skills recognized across Canada, and to move to other provinces or territories to work. The red seal program is recognized as Canada's standard of excellence for the skilled trades.

To further support the mobility of apprentices, we are working with the provinces and territories as well as industry to harmonize apprenticeship training in red seal trades across the country. This will make it easier for apprentices to move to another province or territory, while pursuing their training.

Often there are ratios that do not act in our favour and, in fact, compete for jobs across the country, where British Columbia has a different standard from Ontario and can draw workers from Ontario.

• (1320)

Let us talk about apprenticeship training for a moment. Apprentices rely on a dynamic training system that includes on-the-job learning and in-class technical training. This training is provided by colleges, polytechnics, union-based training centres, and other training providers.

To strengthen the role of union-based training providers, we will provide \$85.4 million over five years to develop a new framework. This framework will incorporate greater union involvement in training, support innovative approaches, and enhance partnerships with stakeholders and employers. In addition, the government offers a number of supports to help apprentices complete their training. This includes apprenticeship grants and the Canada apprentice loan.

We owe it to hard-working Canadians to provide supports that allow them to build and grow their careers, and I am proud that our government has measures in place like these to help them, but there is more. I could not talk about labour mobility without mentioning the Agreement on Internal Trade.

Canadians want to work. They do not want to be held up by differing standards from one province or territory to the next. This is not something they should have to worry about. A dentist qualified to work in one province or territory is as capable of doing a good job in another province or territory. Under chapter seven of the Agreement on Internal Trade, once someone is certified in one province or territory, that certification will be recognized by all other provinces and territories that also regulate that occupation.

The Agreement on Internal Trade is the result of a great partnership with provinces and territories, one that we want to continue to build. Through this agreement we promote the free movement of goods, services, investments, and labour within Canada. The goal is to make the domestic market open, efficient, and stable. We are working actively with provincial and territorial counterparts to address the barriers to Canada's internal trade. This partnership with provinces and territories is essential to delivering real, positive change as we work together to foster a strong and more innovative economy.

Another example of that collaboration is the recent release of a best practice checklist by the forum of labour market ministers. This checklist, designed for regulators, outlines guiding principles and

best practices for requesting information from certified workers to certify them in another province or territory. Each province and territory is unique. Each of them has its own demographic and economic situation, but we can all learn from each other and find common ground. By working together, we will maintain a competitive workforce for our country.

Our government is growing our economy, strengthening the middle class, and helping those who are working hard to join it. I am sure that everyone in this House wants what is best for hard-working, middle-class Canadians, but we are looking at different approaches. We are looking at legislation and Supreme Court challenges versus working together in a collaborative way.

Let us continue to give them opportunities by working collaboratively, and I am sure we will achieve real and positive results.

• (1325)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Guelph for his speech and contribution today. I understand that a motion will not suit everyone's unique taste, but he has actually expressed an interest by saying that if there were the inclusion of labour mobility, he would be more apt to support this.

In a report that was tabled yesterday in the other place, "Tear Down These Walls: Dismantling Canada's Internal Trade Barriers", it actually talks about a reference to the Supreme Court, and it says that any such reference should focus on two questions: whether sections 91 and 92 must be read into the context of section 121 and whether section 121 applies to internal trade and services.

I think that is an excellent question. If the member is really serious about supporting labour mobility, he or a member of his party could put forward a potential amendment. I would be happy to discuss it with him, and maybe we could find some resolve to bring these issues to the Supreme Court within that context.

I would like the hon. member to respond to that.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member, not only for his question but for bringing this forward today for discussion.

We are talking about two different approaches. We could continue to go down the rabbit hole of Supreme Court challenges, constitutional adjustments, and connections between sections of the constitution, or continue the good work our minister is doing in his department in delivering a collaborative result for all Canadians.

• (1330)

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member wanted to elaborate on how he sees more value in the process under way now than in the process that is contemplated in this motion.

Business of Supply

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, in my speech I did indicate that the collaborative approach is the approach that I am favouring and that our government is favouring. I am concerned that we would make a move that might undermine existing discussions that are under way. There is a saying that when all one has is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. We are hitting a problem right now with a hammer that really is not a nail.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the member how sending this question to the Supreme Court, asking for more certainty around it, would exclude a program of collaboration and negotiation with the provinces and other interests.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to hear from the Okanagan Valley on both sides. I am starting to think of wine all of a sudden. If only we could get that wine in Ontario, we would be in a different position than we are today.

I do not think that having a collaborative discussion with the provinces and all of the ministers across Canada excludes working with the Supreme Court. I am sure that part of the ministers' discussions will be to ensure that whatever is being discussed will meet any Supreme Court requirements.

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak on the motion from the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. I am honoured to speak against the motion today, as we have heard from other colleagues of mine from this side of the House.

Internal trade is an important priority for the government. It is a key platform for long sustainable economic growth. As the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development said earlier today, our government is working actively with provincial and territorial counterparts to address the barriers to Canada's internal trade. Our government believes that we need to continue to be focused on collaborating with our partners to achieve an agreement as opposed to antagonizing them.

I would like to focus my time by bringing to attention the very important issue within internal trade, and that is what our government is doing to lower trade barriers internationally, including the involvement of the provinces and territories.

As outlined in the mandate letter of the Minister of International Trade, the government is developing a new Canadian trade and investment strategy with a focus on working actively with Canadian companies to help them grow. This strategy will include a strengthened "investment in Canada" office to support Canadian jurisdictions in attracting foreign direct investment; plans to help Canadian businesses take advantage of international trade agreements; a targeted strategy to promote trade and investment with emerging markets, with particular attention to China and India; and improved support for Canadian companies looking to export and Canadian communities looking to attract investment.

Canada has always relied heavily on international trade and investment for its economic well-being. We are a large country with a relatively small population and a high standard of living. We produce more in terms of goods and services than our population consumes. As such, we sell our goods and services internationally. This is one factor that contributes to maintaining a strong economy.

Exports of Canadian goods and services in 2014 were just under one-third of our GDP, and one in five Canadian jobs is related to exports.

In order to provide international trade opportunities for Canadian businesses, we work to maintain and increase access to international markets. Against a backdrop of slowing global economic growth, it is important for Canada to continue to expand our trade network and to strengthen our competitive position.

Companies in Canada have improved access to markets through a network of FTAs, air transport agreements, and foreign investment promotion and protection agreements. With our international trade policy initiatives, Canada seeks to maintain a level playing field with our competitors, and to open new markets for Canadian goods and services through a range of trade policy tools, some of which include multilateral negotiations at the WTO, and bilateral and regional trade and investment agreements.

Canada is competing from a position of strength due to factors such as our strong economic fundamentals, our envious position as one of the most attractive countries for investment and doing business, and the extensive trade agreements Canada has negotiated with key trading partners in recent years.

Canada's trade is heavily weighted to traditional partners. We know that our relationship with the U.S. remains essential. However, despite the recent strong economic performance of the U.S., emerging markets as a whole are growing faster and are expected to see continued growth in the long run. This is why we are working to bring our recently concluded agreements with the Ukraine and the European Union into force, and to ratify updates that we have made to our FTAs with Chile and Israel.

Canada is also actively consulting Canadians on the trans-Pacific partnership, as members will have recently heard. Furthermore, the Government of Canada is looking at opportunities to enhance trade relationships with emerging and established markets, including China and India.

While the negotiation of international trade agreements is an exclusive federal responsibility under Canada's Constitution, provinces and territories are important partners in developing and delivering on Canada's international trade negotiations agenda.

Business of Supply

The Minister of International Trade was mandated specifically to work with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development to engage with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to ensure our strategies, to the greatest extent possible, are aligned to strengthen the overall Canadian brand and to reduce complexity and administrative burdens for foreign investors and Canadian companies engaged in international trade.

• (1335)

In this regard, the federal government closely collaborates and consults with provinces and territories through a variety of effective federal-provincial-territorial consultative mechanisms, some of which include FPT meetings of ministers responsible for international trade; FPT meetings of deputy ministers responsible for international trade; long-standing working-level, issues-based meetings of the FPT committee on trade, also known as C-trade; ongoing consultations and exchanges of information through a dedicated FPT website; regular meetings and teleconferences with the provincial and territorial heads of delegation consultative group dedicated to softwood lumber issues; ad hoc FPT consultations to address specific issues as required; invitations for provinces and territories to attend real-time briefing sessions with the chief negotiator and lead negotiators during certain negotiating rounds; and FPT international business development networks to discuss issues related to trade promotion, including the promotion of concluded FTAs and how to best position Canadian exporters and investors to take advantage of the benefits of FTAs.

Regular dialogue with provinces and territories ensures that the broadest national perspective on priorities and interests is reflected in Canada's international trade agreements and provides Canada's international trade negotiators with timely, well-informed input on areas of key provincial-territorial interest and sensitivity in various negotiations.

In the case of the negotiation of the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic trade agreement, or CETA, more direct, and provincial and territorial involvement in the negotiation process was unique and unprecedented, due to the specific circumstances of the negotiation. In particular, provinces and territories were expected to make binding commitments in areas that fall under their jurisdiction, such as the sub-federal government procurement, which is unique to CETA. For this reason, provinces and territories were closely involved in the negotiation process.

Following the conclusion of trade negotiations, provinces and territories remain key partners in promoting the benefits of concluded agreements and ensuring Canadian companies are aware of new market access opportunities.

Provinces and territories also play a significant role in the softwood lumber trade file with the United States, given that forest management practices, timber pricing methodologies, and forestry programs administered at the provincial level are at the heart of the issue.

The federal government consults extensively with provinces and territories when developing and implementing strategies related to negotiations, as well as litigation where necessary, as well as in the implementation of any agreement relating to softwood lumber. Consultative mechanisms, such as the softwood lumber heads of

delegation consultative group, are in place to promote collaboration and ensure regular engagement among federal, provincial, and territorial governments. Provinces and territories are also involved in defending Canada's interests when one of their measures or a joint federal-provincial measure is challenged under NAFTA's chapter 11. In some circumstances, they contribute financially to the associated legal costs.

Global trade has evolved. Barriers to internal trade can impact our ability to take advantage of the benefits of international free trade agreements. The more Canada signs international agreements, such as CETA, the more important it becomes for our internal market to be as open and efficient as possible. Undertaking domestic reforms to our internal market will in turn enhance Canadian competitiveness on the world stage.

We agree the current Agreement on Internal Trade needs to be renewed. However, we strongly believe that we need to work with our provincial and territorial partners to reach that agreement. Negotiations only work when all partners are at the table and respect each another. Moving this to the judicial system would only hinder our current negotiations and add additional barriers to reaching a renewed agreement, which is the fundamental flaw in the member opposite's motion.

We need to continue with our current approach and reach a negotiated agreement with our territorial and provincial partners. That is why I am against the motion. I would encourage members on all sides to vote against it as well.

• (1340)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while I certainly welcome robust debate in the House, it seems that the Liberal members continue to use the same structure over and over. Every time we talk about the constitutional right of Canadians to trade, they decide to talk about the Agreement on Internal Trade. The motion is about the constitutional right for a Canadian to trade with a Canadian. Does the member recognize and support that right?

Mr. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, I, along with all of my colleagues on the government side, support all of the rights and freedoms that are enshrined in the Canadian charter.

As I alluded to toward the end of my remarks, the flaw we see in the opposition motion is that it would seek to circumvent the natural course of litigation that is being undertaken. We are working closely with the province of New Brunswick. The province of New Brunswick has considered and, I believe, is seeking leave to appeal that decision. However, fundamentally, the way forward is to work with provinces and territories to strengthen the internal trade agreements.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I just heard my colleague talk about the need to consult the provinces. We heard the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development say that internal trade is a priority and that the government is in a consultation process. However, as with many other issues, we never hear about any results from the Liberals' consultations. We never know what course of action will be taken, what the timelines and deadlines are, or what strategies will be adopted.

If it is such a priority, and if we really want to work on internal trade, eliminate some tariff barriers, and help small businesses continue to grow and develop, what sort of results are the Liberals' current consultations producing?

[English]

Mr. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, far be it for me to pre-empt the outcome of the negotiations, however, I will provide a general update.

As members may have heard earlier in the day, negotiations on the internal trade agreement have been progressing well. They have been ongoing since December 2014. In the final analysis, here is what we hope we will achieve from a revised AIT: expansion of the AIT's coverage will apply economy wide; it will be subject to target exceptions; and there will be fair procurement rules. These are just some of the examples which we are endeavouring to make progress on and which will benefit the Canadian economy in the long run.

• (1345)

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could elaborate a bit on this. We were talking about constitutional rights. As a fellow lawyer, perhaps the member for Eglinton—Lawrence would shed some light on the rights of the provinces, the rights that are protected by the province, and the right for a province to raise its own funds through taxation. Could he comment on those rights?

Mr. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, my colleague referred to the fact that I am a lawyer. Hopefully, that will not count against me. I am looking across the aisle at some of my colleagues who were also called to the bar in the same province as I was.

We respect the rights enshrined by the Constitution to provinces to collect certain taxes. As I have said before, this is the subject of ongoing litigation. The proper course for this litigation is for it to take its path to the Supreme Court of Canada. If that is what the province of New Brunswick wishes to do, we will continue to support it.

However, more to the point, we need to work with the provinces and territories to improve internal trade, and that is precisely what we are doing right now.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, is the member opposite aware of what he is saying? He is saying that frameworks that may not be constitutional trump individual rights of Canadians. Does he not agree that section 121 of the Constitution says that products of manufacture and growth shall be admitted free in all provinces? The fact that we are having this debate and the fact that there is a collegial question, does he not agree that the Supreme Court is the

one venue where these issues that apply to all Canadian governments, provincial and federal, on issues of a constitutional nature should be settled?

Mr. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, I am going to draw on my professional experience to answer the question.

The short answer is no. The Supreme Court is not the only forum in which that analysis will be rendered. It may very well be the final forum in which that question is answered but, in the meantime, this matter has to follow the normal statutory and common law process. It has to make its way from the trial court to the provincial court of appeal, and then, ultimately, to the Supreme Court of Canada, which is why we are against this motion. This motion would circumvent that process, and that is why we are voting against it.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise on this important debate today. I will be dividing my time with my friend from Calgary Signal Hill.

I want to take a moment to thank someone who has used his time in Parliament to advocate for an important issue that will actually help all Canadians, and that is the member of Parliament for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. Since his time here, he has helped Canadians and businesses, particularly small businesses in the Okanagan, across the country to sell more product within their own country. These are world-class in the case of wines. The “Free my Wine” and “Free my Grapes” initiative are world-class wines selling around the world. However, there are restrictions about selling them one province over. His advocacy over his years in Parliament, expanding the personal use exemption, allowing Canadians this choice that really should have been provided decades ago, shows that a passionate and knowledgeable member of Parliament can accomplish great things, and we are here debating that today. I thank him for it.

I am following some of my friends on the government side, the members for Eglinton—Lawrence and Newmarket—Aurora, both lawyers, both capable people and friends. As I have joked before, my friend from Newmarket—Aurora was a year behind me in law school. I am quite certain he graduated, but I will leave that to him to talk about. I jest. He is very capable. I know they share our intention here, but their minister has them in a straitjacket, talking about incremental change and agreements on internal trade that have moved at a snail's pace.

In fact, since the war, my friend from Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola has advanced the issue of internal trade more than any government, with the exception of perhaps the 1994 Agreement on Internal trade, which set up the rubric that we need to expand here today.

There has been no recognition of what the origins of Canada wanted to see when this young country started in 1867, which was a free flow of goods and services across the country. We have not seen that. I will remind members of the House, and my friends the lawyers who were speaking before me, of section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867, which clearly says, “All articles of the growth, produce or manufacture of any of the provinces shall...be admitted free into each of the other provinces”.

Business of Supply

Unfortunately, early interpretation of this intention seemed to restrict that just to custom duties, so duties charged by provinces between one another. However, what built up were walls and silos of a legislative and regulatory nature that effectively limited internal trade within the Dominion of Canada, even though the intention of the country forming was to facilitate that trade.

I will remind the House that the early decision of Confederation put Upper Canada, my friends in the Maritimes still refer to Ontario as Upper Canada, put Ontario and Quebec in a more advantageous position by restricting trade with the United States. Therefore, in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, natural north-south trade linkages were stopped by a tariff wall and in return there was the build-up of a competitive manufacturing centre in central Canada. The early decisions to favour some provinces in the Confederation by limiting the north-south trade of other provinces in the Confederation was a policy decision that should have been offset by more interprovincial trade. We did not see that.

In fact, the maritime provinces, and later Newfoundland and Labrador, which is an Atlantic province, had their growth inhibited by the fact that the national policy of Sir John A., who we on this side love, favoured Ontario and helped build up world-class manufacturing and mercantile trade in those provinces at the sacrifice of the others. However, the intention with section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867 was that Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island could trade westward.

● (1350)

However, what we saw built up was not customs, which were specifically excluded by the courts, but regulatory and other provincial barriers being set up.

What we are doing here today, and what my friend is suggesting by asking for a Supreme Court of Canada reference, which is warranted in this case, is we have to, particularly for smaller businesses in Atlantic Canada and other parts of rural Canada, speed up the process, so that 150 years after Confederation, we can say that we barely made it by the 150 year mark in promoting internal trade within Canada. Due to the leadership of the previous government, we were signing record trade agreements with the European Union, with countries in Asia, with the trans-Pacific partnership countries. Yet, we do not even facilitate free trade of goods and services within our own country.

There are two specific legal reasons why I think this Parliament needs to ask the Supreme Court of Canada for a reference. The first is a 2003 Supreme Court case in *R. v. Blais*. It clearly said that the original intent of legislation was something a lower court could raise if it believed there had been a misinterpretation of the original framer's intent. This is the original constructionism of our Constitution. The Supreme Court has said that lower courts are not bound if they feel the original intention and the spirit of that has not been adopted in Canada.

Recently in the province of New Brunswick, the Comeau case, a Superior Court justice took that initiative, which the Supreme Court of Canada said was proper in the *Blais* case, to suggest that section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867 was not properly interpreted. In fact, we have had over a century of limited free movement of trade within Canada, not just goods and services. We have seen Ontario

and Quebec, for decades, struggle over mobility of construction trades and others, when Canada's intent was to facilitate that.

The other reason why we should be going to a Supreme Court reference in this case, particularly before we hit our sesquicentennial, is the chain of precedent established in the *Bedford* and *Carter* decisions. In *Carter*, which we have been debating euthanasia, assisted-dying, the Supreme Court of Canada said that *stare decisis*, or precedent, should not be a straightjacket upon subsequent courts.

Using the *Bedford*, the prostitution decision, it said that that precedent could be looked at for two reasons: first, if there was fresh evidence; second, if there was a change in circumstances. In fact, in the *Carter* decision, the court looked at the societal change in attitudes with respect to assisted-dying, between *Sopinka* decision of 1993 in the *Rodriguez* case, and *Carter*. It looked at societal change.

My friend from Okanagan has shown that Canadians want to free their beer. Canadians want to free their grapes. They want the original spirit of section 121 of the great experiment that is our Confederation to be realized.

It is up to the government now. We have a justice in the Queen's Bench in New Brunswick who took the leadership of the Supreme Court in the *Blais* decision in 2003 to say the original interpretation had not been followed. Then we have the *Gold Seal* case of 1921, dealing with intoxicating liquors being sent to Calgary from outside Alberta, in the years of a Temperance Act for Canada. This government is legalizing marijuana. We are way past the Temperance Act days.

The decisions in *Bedford* and in *Carter* show that when there is societal change and when there is demand by consumers and producers to fulfill the potential of the Constitution Act, 1867, it is up to this Parliament and it can do so responsibly, allowing the Supreme Court of Canada to use its own precedent to liberalize trade in Canada. I hope we see it before July 1 of next year.

● (1355)

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

Mr. Speaker, a wise man said that negotiations trump litigation all the time. I say a wise man because it is interesting that the member for Egmont is one of the individuals who was a signator to that 1995 agreement on interprovincial trade. I believe that he is right when he talks about how important it is to negotiate in good faith.

The difference between the Conservatives and the Liberal government is that the Conservatives want to fight in court and there was always a vacuum in terms of leadership. Will the member not acknowledge that in fact negotiating is a better way of achieving the types of results that Canadians want, and that this is the type of approach that this Liberal government is taking?

Statements by Members

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question, but it illustrates the problem with the Liberal philosophy of negotiation and consultations. The Liberals are never in a position to make a decision on the long-term interests of the country. They would prefer to debate these things incessantly. We have a window, because of the Comeau decision in New Brunswick and because of case law, which is recent, in the Carter and Bedford decisions, to move forward quickly on internal trade, the original spirit of section 121.

I will remind this House that tomorrow we are going to be celebrating Canadian beer on the Hill, “free the beer”. The original brewers, like that good Conservative, Alexander Keith and the Oland family in Moosehead, the only independent and longest-serving brewery in Canada, were restricted to sell their products into prosperous Ontario and Quebec because of misinterpretations of section 121. I know you appreciate Keith's, Mr. Speaker. It is time for the current government to fix it.

•(1400)

The Speaker: The member knows that I like and appreciate all good Nova Scotia products, of course.

The member will have three minutes remaining when the House resumes after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

FEDERAL WOOD CHARTER

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec City is currently hosting experts from countries with a major stake in the forestry industry to discuss the challenge of wood as a renewable resource.

Quebec is a leader in this field. It has already adopted a wood charter that requires entrepreneurs to consider using wood in major projects funded by public money. Our companies can benefit by developing new secondary and tertiary products.

In addition, substituting wood products for energy-consuming products like steel is a good way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We believe that the government should follow Quebec's lead and create a federal wood charter as proposed by the Bloc Québécois. It is a golden opportunity to diversify the forestry economy while combatting climate change.

It would kill two birds with one stone.

* * *

THÉRÈSE-DE BLAINVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY GALA

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on June 3, over 350 people met to celebrate the 30th edition of Gala Stellar, hosted by the Thérèse-De Blainville Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

I am pleased to congratulate Alain Martineau, the general manager of Caisse Desjardins de l'Envolée, who received a special award, the Michèle-Bohec award, for his outstanding social involvement and professional accomplishments.

The Michèle-Bohec award was created in honour of an outstanding business woman from our region and the founder of the Thérèse-De Blainville Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

I would also like to congratulate Pierre Chartrand, who received the Jean-Marc Boisvert award in recognition of his remarkable career and social involvement.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all of the other award winners at the gala who are a shining example of the excellence, talent, and vitality of the Thérèse-De Blainville RCM business community.

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[*English*]

UNIONVILLE-MILLIKEN SOCCER CLUB

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club in my riding, which this year celebrates its 40th anniversary.

The UMSC is a volunteer-based, non-profit community organization that runs soccer programs for all ages, from toddlers to senior players. The club also has competitive and recreational outdoor and indoor soccer leagues for all to enjoy, including a program for players with special needs.

The UMSC relies on hundreds of volunteers who dedicate their time and energy so that thousands of players can enjoy the health benefits of sports. Nothing is more praiseworthy than that.

I hope that the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club's next 40 years are as successful as the past 40 years.

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SHABBAT

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, May 13, in Richmond, I had the honour of joining friends for a communal Shabbat dinner. That night, I enjoyed inspiring conversation, a delicious meal, and the warmth of Jewish tradition.

Shabbat is Judaism's day of rest, the seventh day of the week. It is an opportunity for families and friends to come together in conversation and in reflection.

Shabbat begins with the lighting of candles, followed by the blessing of children, and prayers of thanks for the Shabbat and for the challah, after which the meal is served.

I would like to thank my hosts and the Jewish community in Richmond for welcoming me to their Shabbat dinner. It was truly a lovely evening.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

AIRPORT PROJECT IN SAINT-CUTHBERT

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is a plan to build an airport in Saint-Cuthbert, in my riding. There is no social licence for the project, but the minister refuses to intervene.

The people of Saint-Cuthbert and Saint-Norbert, elected officials across the regional county municipality of D'Autray, environmental groups, the Union des producteurs agricoles of Lanaudière, and the Union des producteurs agricoles of D'Autray are all opposed. In a town of 1,800 residents, 1,500 people have signed a petition. That is very telling.

On top of that, the Quebec National Assembly adopted a unanimous motion calling for a ministerial order in Saint-Cuthbert. I am concerned about the lack of social licence. How can such a project be of public interest? It is simple. The minister must listen to the public and issue a ministerial order.

In conclusion, I want to thank the residents, elected officials, and volunteers for their dedication to this issue.

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• (1405)

QUEBEC CITY SUMMER FESTIVAL

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the House prepares to rise for the summer, I invite all my hon. colleagues to seriously consider a little detour to Quebec City from July 7 to 17 for the Festival d'été.

There are 300 shows, 10 stages, and 11 days of music awaiting my colleagues. If they are still not convinced, perhaps the following acts will do the trick: the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Sting, Peter Gabriel, Selena Gomez, Ice Cube, The Lumineers, Mac Miller, Karim Ouellet, and the Dead Obies.

[English]

For my country-loving Conservative friends, Brad Paisley will also be performing.

As for my NDP friends, it will be \$90 for an all-inclusive transferable pass. I think that is accessible, family-friendly, and in the spirit of sharing.

[Translation]

As for my Bloc Québécois friends, Les Respectables will be playing as well. They got their start back in 1993.

[English]

As for my fellow Liberals who would need to be convinced still, I will just talk to the whip.

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NORTH OKANAGAN—SHUSWAP

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize collective achievements in communities across the North Okanagan—Shuswap, the collective achievements of our high school graduates.

Over the past and coming weeks, 18 high schools across the North Okanagan—Shuswap will see hundreds of graduates cross the stage, marking a successful achievement in their lives. These graduates will go on to great things, I am sure. Whatever path they choose to take in the future, I rise today to wish them the best as they journey into a world full of opportunity. These graduates have reached a significant milestone with the help of parents, guardians, teachers, mentors, and peers, all of whom can share in the celebration and achievement of the graduates.

I congratulate all the graduating students of the North Okanagan—Shuswap, and everywhere else, on their achievement.

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RAMADAN

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *as-salaam alaikum*.

I rise today on the ninth day of Ramadan to acknowledge all of my Muslim brothers and sisters participating in the holy fast this month and to recognize the Brampton Islamic Centre in Brampton West.

During the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until dusk, known as *sawm*. This practice strengthens their understanding of self-discipline, self-reflection, sacrifice, and empathy for the less fortunate.

For over a decade, the Brampton Islamic Centre has enriched the spiritual and community lives of Muslims in Brampton. This mosque has contributed to local community groups, charities, and disaster relief efforts. I thank it for all that it has done for our community.

Ramadan Mubarak to all my Muslim brothers and sisters in Brampton West, in Canada, and around the world.

* * *

[Translation]

NIRRA WELLMAN FIELDS

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to announce that a citizen of Lachine was chosen as the new guard for the Phoenix Mercury professional basketball team.

Nirra Wellman Fields is only the second Montrealer to be on a WNBA team. Before being drafted, number 21 began her career at LaSalle Elementary Senior, and then became part of the starting lineup for the UCLA Bruins, where she broke many records.

[English]

I would also like to mention another amazing person: Faith Fields, Nirra's mother.

Faith raised seven children by herself and taught them the importance of believing in themselves and working hard to achieve their goals.

If members ever find themselves in Phoenix, I recommend that they go and catch a game, but do not go in August as Nirra will be busy in Brazil, with the rest of our basketball team, working hard to bring us the gold.

Statements by Members

I wish her and all her fellow athletes good luck, and “Go Nirra, go Mercury, go Canada!”

* * *

[*Translation*]

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR DAY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am speaking on behalf of Xavier, 9, Jordane, 7, and Guillaume, 4, from Thetford Mines, who decided to start their own business called Becs sucrés XJG. Pauline, 10, Martin, 8, and Auguste, 5, from Lac-Mégantic, are shareholders in another business, Pain et compagnie.

This Saturday, almost 3,000 new entrepreneurs across Quebec will start a new business at the third young entrepreneurs day. This day is geared to children between the ages of five and 12 and allows them to run a business for one day in their own neighbourhood.

Making business plans, budgeting, creating, and retailing are all part of the process of transforming their passion into big bucks. Young entrepreneurs will be running lemonade stands, magic shows, “bike washes”, and other activities on a street corner near you

It is not too late for children to register at petitsentrepreneurs.ca. I salute the vision of the founders of this day, Mathieu, Isabelle, and Catherine.

I invite all Quebecers and my colleagues to encourage young people such as Olivier, Justine, Mathis, and all the others, who will one day be our great entrepreneurs.

* * *

● (1410)

[*English*]

BRAMPTON MEMORIAL

Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in the House to express my feelings about a horrific car accident. Three young children of my riding, Daniel, Harry, and Milly Neville-Lake, and their grandfather, Gary Neville, were killed by a senseless act of an impaired driver. I met Edward and Jennifer, the parents of the deceased children, just after the accident, and again at later stages. I am deeply touched by the emotional trauma to the family. Bramptonians are with the grieved Neville-Lake family.

I discussed a proposal with the mayor and city officials to dedicate a park so as to keep the memories of the children alive. This will be a strong social signal and will always remind impaired drivers in the future.

* * *

BLOOD DONOR ELIGIBILITY

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Blood Donor Day, marked by the World Health Organization.

I want to thank the hundreds of donors in Beaches—East York. This past Friday over 200 of my neighbours signed up to give blood at the Beach United Church, including Amanda Tiernan-Carpino,

whose daughter Gigi was saved by a blood transfusion three years ago.

Unfortunately I am unable to thank the thousands of would-be donors across our country because of our continued policy effectively banning donations from gay and bisexual men, regardless of whether they are in a long-lasting monogamous relationship.

I am proud of the Young Liberals of Canada for raising attention to this issue and of my government for including a commitment in our election platform to end the ban based on science. Other countries, such as Portugal, Italy, Poland, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile, base donor eligibility on a combination of risk factors, not sexual orientation alone. Canada should do the same.

* * *

STANLEY CUP WINNERS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday, Winkler's own Eric Fehr hoisted the Stanley Cup in victory after his team, the Pittsburgh Penguins, defeated the San Jose Sharks in the Stanley Cup finals. Many Winklerites and southern Manitobans were glued to their television sets these past weeks as they cheered Eric on.

This marks the third time in nine years that a Winkler native has won the Stanley Cup. Dustin Penner brought it home to southern Manitoba in 2007 with the Anaheim Ducks and again in 2012 with the L.A. Kings. What a record. Clearly there is something special in the water in the city of Winkler.

During these playoffs, Eric truly became Winkler's son as the city rallied around the boy who grew up playing hockey on the pond of the family farm. I am sure his parents Frank and Helen Fehr only dared to dream that their son would one day not only play in the NHL but win the cup.

I say congratulations to Eric. All of Portage—Lisgar, but especially the city of Winkler, is very proud.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CITY OF VAUDREUIL-DORION

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to inform the House that the city of Vaudreuil-Dorion has won the International Award UCLG – Culture 21 for its I am/Je suis project, beating cities like Rio, Cape Town, Dublin, and Lisbon.

[*English*]

This incredible success is due in part to inclusive multicultural events such as the Mozaik parade, which will be marching through the city this year on June 23. Over 800 citizens, representing various cultural backgrounds and organizations, will take part in dressing in vibrant and innovative costumes and sharing incredible music and dance from countless countries.

[Translation]

I would like to congratulate everyone who worked on the Mozaik parade and the I am/Je suis project, in particular the mayor of Vaudreuil and the members of city council, many of whom are here with us today in Ottawa.

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ROUYN-NORANDA HUSKIES

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies, a major junior hockey team, has won its second President's Cup in three years. This trophy is awarded annually by the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League to the league's top team.

The Foreurs de Val-d'Or won the cup in 2014, and this year it was the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies who came out on top, and also came within four minutes of winning the Memorial Cup, the pinnacle of junior hockey supremacy in Canada.

I want to congratulate each and every player on the team, as well as their coach, Gilles Bouchard, and the rest of the coaching staff, on their remarkable season, their passion, and their 72 victories.

I also want to commend the team president, Jacques Blais, and other members of the organization who contributed to the Huskies' success. The team is also celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, an anniversary that will go down in hockey history for the entire Abitibi-Témiscamingue area, as highlighted by the thousands of fans who turned out for the parade through the streets of Rouyn-Noranda.

To our champions, the Huskies, thank you once again for a great season.

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

MINISTERIAL EXPENSES

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the countless Albertans who have voiced their outrage over the infrastructure minister's astonishing renovation costs for his sky palace 2.0.

Later tonight we will be debating a motion to approve over \$110 million in operating expenditures for the office of the Minister of Infrastructure. The infrastructure minister spent a staggering \$835,000 on renovations, furnishings, and furniture that the taxpayer should not be on the hook for.

It is shocking and unacceptable that the government continues to spend without regard for taxpayers. There are empty office spaces owned or leased by the government that the minister could have occupied, and there are warehouses full of refurbished furniture the minister could have used to furnish his office.

I call on the President of the Treasury Board to do the right thing, support our notice of opposition, and remove the nearly \$1 million of unneeded lavish renovation money spent by the Minister of Infrastructure.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

LIGHT RAIL

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to recognize and congratulate my provincial counterpart, Marie-France Lalonde, MPP for Ottawa-Orléans, on her accomplishments.

[English]

To the delight of all Orleans residents, the Premier of Ontario and MPP Lalonde announced that the Ontario government would commit to fund 50% of two additional LRT extensions, one to the Ottawa International Airport and another to Trim Road in Orleans.

I echo our government's previous commitment of \$1 billion to this excellent project, and pledge to consult with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, who sits very close to me, on the merits of a federal commitment to these two new extensions.

[Translation]

I thank Ms. Lalonde.

[English]

Also, I say congratulations to the new provincial minister of government and consumer services and minister responsible for francophone affairs.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the European Union, the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.K. House of Commons, Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, and others have shown moral clarity by standing up and clearly stating what is obvious: ISIS crimes against religious minorities, women and children, and gays and lesbians are genocide.

Meanwhile, the Liberal government tries to hide behind weasel words and says it may constitute a genocide.

It is totally shameful. If all our allies can find the moral resolve, why can our Prime Minister not do so?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, Canada strongly condemns the atrocities committed by ISIL in the Middle East. We stand with our allies in the fight against ISIL to make sure they lose the capacity to take so many civilian lives.

The fact is, we have formally requested of the United Nations Security Council to make a determination on this. We do not feel that politicians should be weighing in on this first and foremost. Determinations of genocide need to be made in an objective, responsible way. That is exactly what we have formally requested the international authorities to weigh in on.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a low point for the Liberal Party and it is a dark spot on Canada's record as a defender of human rights.

Oral Questions

Liberal MPs actually said calling the crimes committed by ISIS a genocide would be a rush to judgment. Other Liberals said it does not matter because genocide is just a word.

It is more than a word for the thousands of Yazidi girls being murdered and enslaved by ISIS.

Will the Liberal government do the right thing and support the motion to declare ISIS crimes a genocide, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): As we have said, Mr. Speaker, we feel that determinations of genocide need to be done by objective measures and through proper research on the international stage.

We will not trivialize the importance of the word “genocide” by not respecting formal engagements around that word. That is what has been done in the past. That needs to be done in the future.

However, I will take no lessons on playing politics from a former government that used footage of ISIL executions in an attack ad against me.

• (1420)

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is not actually about him.

[Translation]

How many people will have to be murdered by ISIS before the Prime Minister recognizes that it is committing genocide? Canada has always stood up for human rights, but with this Prime Minister, we are now one of the only countries that has not recognized these horrors as genocide. That is shameful.

How far will ISIS have to go before the Liberals declare that these killings constitute genocide?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we understand how important it is not to trivialize the word “genocide” and to give it the international legal weight it deserves. That is why we are asking the international community to examine the facts and make an objective determination.

We do not want to play petty politics with this issue and these atrocities. Canadians expect better than that from this government.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Yazidi girls as young as nine years old are being used as sex slaves by ISIS.

On International Women's Day I asked the Prime Minister if he would step up and ensure that these Yazidi girls get placed in Canada's joint sponsorship program, and he had no answer.

Germany has now taken in 1,000 of these girls and given them safe haven, so I am asking again for the third time, will the Prime Minister step up and follow Germany's lead and help these girls?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under our government we have worked very hard to

reopen Canada to the world. The cuts to immigration that happened over the past 10 years, the cuts to refugee programs were disgraceful, and that is one of the reasons why Canadians asked for this government to restore Canada's place in the world as an open, welcoming country.

That is exactly what we did with 25,000 Syrian refugees, and it is what I have asked our Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to work on in all similar situations.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister still, after three questions, does not even understand the issue. These girls are not refugees. They are not considered refugees. They are languishing in camps as displaced people.

However, we have a special program that the Prime Minister has the power to use to bring these girls to Canada, so I ask him again, when will he take action and help these girls?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Again, Mr. Speaker, the previous government did a lot to diminish our capacity to welcome in people from around the world. The fact is that we are working very hard—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I appreciate the efforts of the Conservative whip to get his colleagues to quiet down. Most members in all parties are able to hear things they do not like without reacting. I would encourage all members to do that, so I do not have to mention their riding names.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we are working very hard to restore Canada's place in the world as a country that welcomes in vulnerable peoples. That is what we were able to demonstrate when Canadians stepped up in an extraordinary way for 25,000 Syrian refugees. That is exactly what the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is working very hard on: to restore it, after all the cuts the previous government made to immigration.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' broken promise to our veterans is shameful. After serving our country and making such sacrifices, veterans are still being forced to fight in court to recognize their rights. We have also learned that the Liberals have just denied care to a 94-year-old veteran on a technicality, when there are empty beds ready to be used. It is a new government but the same disgraceful behaviour.

When will the Prime Minister stop fighting veterans in court, and when will he provide them with the services that he promised?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of a government that shamefully neglected our veterans, we are proud that we are working very hard to restore the kinds of services and the kinds of respect that veterans have earned through their incredible service to our country, to its values, and indeed, to the world.

We will continue to endeavour to restore the kinds of services they deserve, and we look forward to working collaboratively with them to ensure the kind of support they have earned.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year, the Prime Minister, along with all of his Liberal colleagues, voted in the House never to repeat the mistakes of the Conservatives, to respect the rights of our veterans, and that is another broken promise.

• (1425)

[Translation]

That is shameful. Not only has the government broken its promise by taking our veterans to court, but today we learned that the Liberal government is refusing care to a 94-year-old veteran.

Will the Prime Minister explain to us why he is refusing to provide this veteran with well-deserved care, care that he promised veterans?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of a government that neglected our veterans, I am proud to be part of a team that recognizes our solemn obligation to support our veterans, help them in times of difficulty, and show them that we respect their service.

We are working hard to do just that. Our Minister of Veterans Affairs is working with veterans' groups to ensure that we are providing them with the services that they truly deserve.

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[English]

MARIJUANA

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish the Prime Minister would stop blaming the Conservatives and start respecting his own promises.

[Translation]

According to the Liberals, the problem is that it is impossible to decriminalize marijuana because it would be sold illegally. I have news for them: that is what is happening now. The only thing that would change is that tens of thousands of young Canadians would not have a criminal record, and that would be a good thing.

Why is that so hard for the Prime Minister to understand?

Why does he want young Canadians to keep ending up with criminal records?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, NDP members are once again showing that they do not understand the issues around marijuana. Decriminalizing it would provide a legitimate source of income to street gangs, criminal organizations, and gun runners.

We have a proposal to legalize marijuana so that we can protect our children by making it harder for them to get marijuana and eliminate a source of income for criminals. That is what we promised to do, and that is what we will do.

[English]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I guess for the Prime Minister it is a classic case of do as I say, not as I do.

The government is trying to argue that if we decriminalize marijuana, there may be some who will sell it illegally. This just in: that is what is happening now. Do Liberals really think that they can tell everybody in Canada to stop smoking dope until they finally get around to legalizing it? That just does not make any sense.

If the Prime Minister is serious about moving toward legalization, why is his government continuing to hand out tens of thousands of criminal records to young Canadians? That is wrong, and they can change it easily.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, legalizing marijuana is done with two things in mind. It is done to protect young people from having the easy access that they have right now to marijuana, and it is about reducing the capacity of criminal organizations, street gangs, and gun runners to make incredible profits off that marijuana.

Until we bring in a legalized controlled regime, marijuana remains illegal. That is the law of the land. That is what we are working on changing, but we will change it to protect our young people and protect our communities.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is looking into a new way to tax the public. Apparently it is called a carbon pricing mechanism. Let us not be fooled. This is a new tax that will affect everything Canadian families buy.

I would like the Prime Minister to tell Canadians exactly how much more it will cost them to buy necessities.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the opposition members, we know that the environment and the economy go hand in hand.

[English]

I am very surprised to hear the opposition party, the Conservative Party, not recognizing the role that markets play when it comes to reducing emissions. Conservatives should stand with the Conservative Premier of Manitoba, who said in the speech from the throne that the new Conservative government "...will include carbon pricing that fosters emissions reduction, retains investment capital, and stimulates new innovation in clean energy, businesses, and jobs".

That is the right thing to do. It is the efficient thing to do.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we proved that the economy and the environment could go together. We are the only ones who reduced greenhouse gas emissions and created jobs in the country.

For now, those are just words. We will see what happens.

If my colleague is giving clear answers, can she say how much more it will cost to buy groceries, gas, and everything else? Families need these things.

• (1430)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that we must reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in order to grow our economy in a sustainable manner.

[English]

Let me point to another Conservative leader, the Ontario Conservative leader and former MP, Patrick Brown. He said, “Climate change is a fact. It is a threat. It is man-made. We have to do something about it, and that something includes putting a price on carbon”.

He may also want to listen to his colleagues. The member for Wellington—Halton Hills, in launching his Conservative leadership bid, said on the issue of climate change, “I think it's clear that carbon pricing has arrived in Canada”.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting that the Minister of the Environment is actually confirming in the House today that the Liberals plan on introducing a carbon tax. That goes with the broken promise on the small business tax. That also goes with the CPP tax that they are going to be putting on small businesses.

The Minister of Finance also confirmed that he is going to be introducing a carbon tax that will eventually increase the price of, well, everything we pay for. Small business is the backbone of our economy; 95% of Canadians work in small business. When will the Minister of Finance stop his attack on small businesses?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am quite happy to continue repeating all of the people who support a price on carbon. Maybe we should go to industry. We have Pierre Gratton, who is the president and CEO of the Mining Association of Canada. Speaking on behalf of one of Canada's largest industries, he stated that they support carbon pricing and that it represents “the most effective and efficient means of driving emissions reductions and making real progress in the global fight against climate change”.

Maybe it is time for the Conservatives to get with the program and do what everyone else is calling for, which is to take climate change seriously and put a price on emissions.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us get some facts straight here. Canada has one of the highest household debt ratios in the world. The government is planning on introducing a

CPP hike. It is planning on introducing a carbon tax, yet it was elected on the notion that it was going to bring fairness for taxation to the middle class. How is this possibly fairness for the middle class? This is nothing more than taking it out of one pocket and putting it in another.

At the end of the day, it is Canadian families that are going to hurt because of this. When will the minister admit that all of these Liberal tax schemes are making life terrible—

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question, but let me remind the House and Canadians that this is the government that reduced taxes for middle-class Canadians, and we want Canadians to retire in dignity with security. One of the first things the Minister of Finance did was to meet with his provincial counterparts to look at a CPP enhancement. That is what he is going to be doing in a couple of weeks. That is what Canadians want. That is what we are going to pursue, a secure retirement for Canadians in our country.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, maybe the Minister of Environment and Climate Change does not realize that, when the market imposes a fee, it is a cost; but when the government does that, it is a tax. While carbon taxes may be lucrative sources of revenue for politicians, they do not actually do anything to reduce emissions.

The Minister of Finance and his cabinet colleagues are scheming to impose a carbon tax on the middle-class workers who make their living in the oil and gas sector. The Liberals see that the energy sector is hurting, and they want to kick it while it is down. This cold-hearted plan would only delay the recovery. When will the Liberals stop their mean-spirited attack against the hard-working middle-class workers in the energy sector?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that the middle class is working hard. We also understand that we need to take action on climate change. We know that the lowest-cost way of reducing emissions and tackling carbon pollution is by putting a price on it.

However, once again, let me go to Preston Manning. “Conservatives profess to believe in markets. So why don't conservatives major on how to harness markets to the environmental conversation, and make that their signature contribution.”

Mark Cameron, former policy advisor to former prime minister Stephen Harper, said, “As most free-market economists...”—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. minister knows that we do not refer to members in this House by their names, but by their titles.

The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only to a Liberal would increasing taxes result in lower costs. It makes no sense. However, if the Liberals are so keen on helping the middle class, Premier Wall has an idea that would put Canadians back to work.

Across the oil sector lie countless decommissioned oil and gas wells; out-of-work Canadians in the energy sector have the skills to clean up these abandoned wells. This is a practical idea that would actually clean up the environment. Instead of raising taxes, will the Liberals adopt this common-sense idea, and help create jobs?

• (1435)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure to go to Saskatchewan, where I met with my counterpart, the environment minister there. We had a great discussion about how we could reduce emissions and we could tackle climate change working together. I went and visited carbon capture and storage, where they are looking at new technologies. I talked to the agricultural sector about how it could reduce emissions.

It seems that the only party that does not understand the need to reduce emissions is the party opposite.

* * *

[Translation]

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is clearly all over the map with its bill on medical assistance in dying.

After assuring us that Bill C-14 complied with the Supreme Court's decision, the Minister of Justice is now telling us that her bill does not need to comply with the decision and that it only needs to comply with the charter. However, the Supreme Court based its decision on the charter.

Why this new take? Did the government finally realize that its bill does not comply with Carter or with the charter?

[English]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to release an addendum to the explanatory paper that we released previously with respect to Bill C-14, to provide additional information to parliamentarians who are considering this important piece of legislation. In considering very carefully the Carter decision, Bill C-14 would comply with the Carter decision. The Carter decision stated that a complete prohibition on medical assistance in dying is unconstitutional, and the court left it up to Parliament to put in place medical assistance in dying in this country. That is exactly what we would do in this legislation.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice insisted Bill C-14 complied with the Carter decision, but courts in Alberta and Ontario disagree. She argued the bill was constitutional, but then Canada's leading expert on constitutional law

said that was not so. Now the minister is changing her tune again, saying the bill does not have to comply with the Supreme Court of Canada ruling, forgetting, it seems, that the case was based on section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Why is the minister trying to ram through a law that, according to the Supreme Court of Canada decision, would take away Canadians' charter rights?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely reject the premise of the questions that have been proposed. All of the discussions and the considerations by the Court of Appeal in Alberta and others were considering personal exemptions with respect to medical assistance in dying. They were not considering Bill C-14.

The Supreme Court of Canada rendered its decision in Carter. We are complying with the Carter decision in doing our jobs and putting in place a complex framework for medical assistance in dying in this country. The question is whether this bill is constitutional, and I submit that it is.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in today's *National Post*, Laval Professor Stephen Gordon notes:

...much of the argument against using a referendum to choose an electoral system uses technocratic language. The topic is complex, ordinary voters won't understand the issues, and the possibility that voters will make the objectively incorrect choice is too great a risk to run...

Professor Gordon concludes, "The only reliable way of finding out what Canadians think about electoral change is to ask them", the opposite point of view.

Academics agree with the media consensus that has already been expressed often in the country, that there ought to be a referendum. Does the government not agree?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will be asking Canadians. That is the role and function of the all-party committee, made up of members of the House. It is up to all 338 members to ensure that their constituents' voices and needs are reflected in this process.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have reason to be very concerned today. Imagine this: no members have even been appointed to the committee on electoral reform, and after eight months here in the House, we learned yesterday that the Liberal Party is consulting its own members on this topic, for a fee, in order to fill the party's coffers.

Is that the transparency and openness we have heard so much about from the Liberals? Is that what it means to do consultations differently? When will the minister listen to experts and the public? When will the minister tell us that we will have a referendum so that all Canadians can have a say on this?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, it is my understanding that the event the member is referring to is asking for a voluntary donation to help cover some of the costs of the event, such as room rental and light refreshments.

That said, I am encouraged that Canadians are engaged in this conversation. I look forward to all the ways that the MPs in this place will go out of their way to hear from their constituents.

• (1440)

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have never heard such a lame excuse in all my life. The Liberals keep claiming that they are listening to Canadians on electoral reform and that they “will not proceed with any changes without the broad buy-in of the Canadian people”. However, it turns out that what they meant by buy-in was that Canadians were going to have to buy a ticket to get in.

This is not about filling Liberal coffers, it is democracy. Every Canadian deserves a say without having to pay to get in the door. Therefore, will the Liberals actually listen to Canadians and give each and every Canadian a direct say in a referendum, yes, or no?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure all Canadians that our government is acting to remove as many barriers as possible and ensure full participation of all Canadians in this important conversation. I urge the member opposite to bring forward more constructive dialogue into this debate.

[Translation]

Hon. Jason Kenney (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly the minister does not understand the conflict of interest that exists when politicians choose their own electoral system. That is why other jurisdictions have had royal commissions and citizen assemblies followed by referendums. Why does the minister want to put politicians in a conflict of interest situation? Why not let millions of Canadians choose through a referendum?

[English]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the member opposite understands that the role of an MP is to represent his or her constituents in this place. In that vein, I once again encourage all members to ensure the voices of their constituents—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I have trouble hearing the answer to the question. I should not have any trouble. Let us all listen carefully please. I guess the hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions has finished her answer.

The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

* * *

LABOUR

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the previous Conservative government attacked collective bargaining and weakened worker protection for the public service. In January, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour

tabled a bill to repeal some of the Conservatives' anti-worker legislation. However, six months later and the bill is languishing.

It is not enough just to meet with public servants and pay lip service to undoing Conservative damage. When will the Liberals stop stalling and bring Bill C-4 back to the House?

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all anxious to get Bill C-4 through the whole parliamentary system. In fact, members have had an opportunity to speak to the bill. It has gone to committee. I had an opportunity to present. We are looking forward to actually bringing it back to the House, voting on it and making it a new law for Canadians.

[Translation]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer is not good enough.

Bill C-4 is currently in parliamentary limbo. No one even knows what stage it is at. On top of that, the Liberals failed to include a number of elements.

For instance, this bill does not even reinstate the provisions on workplace health and safety. The previous government attacked workers' rights over and over again. The Liberals are quick to make promises to Canadian workers, but they have a hard time keeping them.

Will the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour finally do something and reinstate the provisions on workplace health and safety in Bill C-4 in order to protect Canadian workers?

[English]

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as everyone in the House knows, we have had several very important national issues to discuss, debate, and vote on.

Bill C-4 was introduced second to the budget bill itself. It shows an indication of the priority that our government has to restore fair and balanced labour legislation.

* * *

*[Translation]***INNOVATION IN CANADA**

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, innovation drives growth and makes Canada more competitive.

In my riding, Sudbury, businesses have boosted their productivity and accelerated their growth by adjusting their innovation strategies.

Can the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development tell the House what the government is doing to stimulate innovation in Canada?

Oral Questions

•(1445)

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Sudbury for his question and for expressing his interest in promoting innovation.

Our government has always said that we need a whole-of-government approach to building a more inclusive and innovative Canada. Today, I had the pleasure of announcing our first step toward creating a more innovative Canada.

We invite Canadians to tell us how to better foster innovation as a Canadian value.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, later today, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development will outline the Liberals' latest innovation scheme, but there is one problem. The event is being hosted by Canada 2020. This is the same group that hosted the pay-to-play trip to Washington. It just so happens that the leaders of Canada 2020 are deeply connected to the Liberal Party, and they also happen to own a lobbying firm, which happens to be registered to lobby the minister.

Could the minister explain how this is not textbook cronyism and a gross conflict of interest?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so glad the member opposite raised the issue of innovation.

The Conservatives have been asking a lot of questions around the Agreement on Internal Trade. We believe that both these issues were addressed today when we talked about our innovation agenda.

This agenda is making key investments to grow our economy and to help the middle class. It is about providing future growth opportunities for companies to not only grow but to scale up. It is an opportunity for us to make key investments that ensure we have a better future for our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, running its events through a non-profit that also happens to be run by a lobbyist is quite innovative. For a government that says it is dedicated to inclusive growth, it is quite shocking to see how many exclusive pay-to-play events it promotes.

Today, the Liberals have outsourced the innovation agenda to their Liberal friends at Canada 2020. Not only that, but Canada 2020 controls the invite list for this so-called government announcement. Therefore, there is in fact nothing public or inclusive about the Liberal innovation agenda.

How is the minister protecting the taxpayer by granting exclusive access of a \$2-billion policy to well-connected Liberal insiders?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I had the opportunity, along with my colleagues from science and small business, to talk about our innovation agenda.

We did a press conference. In that press conference, we outlined key themes to growing the economy. We made these announcements on top of the commitment we already demonstrated in our budget to grow the economy: \$800 million for clusters; \$2 billion for research

institutions and our post-secondary institutions; and \$500 million for our broadband connectivity agenda.

The bottom line is that we have an innovation agenda that is about growing the economy and creating jobs, and we made that known to the public.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada 2020 is at the forefront once again.

Apparently the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development's innovation strategy was developed in close collaboration with that organization, which is anything but non-partisan. That organization shares offices with Bluesky Strategy Group Inc., a lobbying firm, and one of Bluesky's top brass was a Liberal strategist during last year's election campaign.

Can the minister tell us when lobbyists started having a hand in his government's innovation strategy and why he condones this conflict of interest?

[*English*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government believes that a very open and transparent process should be put in place when it comes to dealing with the public on the innovation agenda. I met with hundreds of CEOs, small business CEOs and large business CEOs. There were numerous round tables and many engagement opportunities.

Today, we announced a robust innovation agenda that talks about key themes to grow the economy, to bet on talent, to bet on innovation, to ensure we have a process that includes everyone. We have a whole-of-government approach. We have a whole-of-society approach. It is about finding solutions to problems. It is about growing the economy.

I am glad the members opposite are talking about this very important priority of this government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we learned that the launch of the minister's innovation agenda is under partisan and political control. Just a few days after the innovation strategy event was announced, the event was sold out.

Again, Canadians will have a problem with the very close ties between the Liberal government and lobbyists.

Why is the minister allowing his policy to be used in this way, and why is he giving Liberal insiders special access to this \$2-billion policy?

[*English*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I already outlined the policy objectives earlier today in a news conference in a very open and transparent way. We made sure that we engaged Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Oral Questions

When we talk about the innovation agenda, we outlined that during the campaign, a campaign that talked about growing the economy, a campaign that talked about investing in the middle class. Then we reinforced that with making significant investments in the budget.

Today, again, was an ongoing commitment to the innovation agenda. We understand that in order to innovate and grow, we need to invest in people. That was the message we shared with Canadians today.

* * *

• (1450)

[Translation]

FOOD LABELLING

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 90% of Canadians think that labelling genetically modified foods should be mandatory. Today I introduced Bill C-291 to do exactly that. It is far from excessive. Sixty-five other jurisdictions, including Vermont, have already made labelling genetically modified foods mandatory.

My question is simple. Will the government support my bill and allow Canadians as well to make an informed choice about what they eat?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question. That is why I have asked the agriculture committee to explore what steps should be taken to best inform the public about new products involving genetically modified animals.

In our country, there is a clear and strict process for evaluating genetically modified products. Our government continues to follow, and will follow, a science-based strategy.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the chair of the public accounts committee tabled "Report 11: Chapter 1, Implementing Gender-Based Analysis, of the Fall 2015 Report of the Auditor General of Canada". In this unanimous report, our committee recommends that by April 1, 2017, gender-based analysis be made a mandatory requirement for all federal departments and agencies.

Given that both government and opposition members support this report, will the government commit today to implement the committee's recommendation on mandatory gender-based analysis?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, gender-based analysis is a very important tool that this government uses to ensure we embed gender equality in all of our legislation. We will be reviewing the report, and we will be reviewing the standing committee's report as well. We will be happy to report back to the House when we have had a chance to do so.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals broke their promise to Canadians for a fair and open competition to replace our CF-18s. Then they misled Canadians by creating an imaginary capability gap. Now the Liberals refuse to invest the \$400 million that we budgeted to extend the life of our CF-18s.

When will the Minister of Defence tell the Prime Minister to quit playing politics with our troops, with Canadians workers, and with Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to replacing the CF-18s. They were originally acquired in 1982 and by now have had several life extensions. We are approaching a capability gap, which we mean to remedy.

It is a pity that the hon. member does not adopt the former Minister MacKay's view, which was, "Do I regret that we did not make a final purchase of that aircraft? Absolutely". Its cost and capabilities, however, forced a halt to the process.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the unilateral decision to exclude a company from an open and transparent process is a perfect example of the Liberals' doublespeak. Awarding a sole-source contract only helps the Liberal Party. This decision is not good for our men and women in uniform, the aerospace industry, jobs in Canada, or Canadian taxpayers.

Can the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development tell us how acquiring the Super Hornet would benefit Canada economically?

[English]

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, the replacement of the CF-18 is an absolute priority for this government. Regrettably, we have lost about five years in that process, as indicated by the previous minister.

Following that, the analysis of the industrial benefits of various options is still open and is still ongoing, but we mean to close this capability gap.

* * *

MINISTERIAL EXPENSES

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal after Liberal has gotten up over the past few weeks to defend the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities and sky palace 2.0. Initially he tried to defend his actions by claiming that this was simply the Liberals doubling the infrastructure budget. Apparently only Liberal ministers need to apply.

Does the minister feel embarrassed to know that his colleagues are being forced to support his spending almost \$1 million on fridges and flat screens?

*Oral Questions***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

●(1455)

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the expenditures the hon. member is referring to are for 32 staff members. As for the fridges, furniture, and paintings she is talking about, the only painting hanging on my office wall is the map of Canada.

As the Conservatives well know, we did not have a dedicated minister and deputy minister before—

The Speaker: The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

* * *

TRANSPORT

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a thriving marine transportation sector is very important to my constituents, and there is a will in my riding to support local port ownership. Local port ownership opens up new commercial possibilities that allow port facilities to reach their full potential.

Can the Minister of Transport please update this House on recent developments on the Port of Liverpool in my riding of South Shore—St. Margarets?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a great question from my colleague for South Shore—St. Margarets.

We in this government believe that local stakeholders are much better positioned to take over the remaining Transport Canada-owned ports, because they are more sensitive to the local needs, so we are delighted that the Province of Nova Scotia has decided to take over the Port of Liverpool.

This will be good for the community of Liverpool and the Port of Liverpool. It will create jobs. It is great for their marine sector.

* * *

INTERNAL TRADE

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every time I stand up to ask the government about free the beer, the minister starts talking about the Agreement on Internal Trade.

The Wynne Liberals have said publicly that alcohol will not be part of any new agreement. Why is the minister misleading Canadians on a new agreement on internal trade when he knows full well that it will not free the beer?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government supports open markets, and that is why we are working in collaboration with our provincial and territorial counterparts to talk about alcohol and other areas of interest to make sure that we reduce barriers and harmonize regulations.

It is a priority for this government, because we understand the importance of having free trade within Canada. It is good for our economy, it is good for small businesses, and it is good for consumers. This will remain a priority as we continue to grow the economy.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's Black Lake First Nation is struggling to teach students in a school that is bursting at the seams. There are 440 children, from K to 12, crowded into Father Porte Memorial Denesuline School. The school was built for only 350 students.

The Liberals promised \$2.6 billion for first nations education, but so far they have failed to deliver. Will the government commit today to give the Black Lake First Nation the funding to build the much-needed school these children deserve?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

I too am excited and am anticipating the rollout of budget 2016, with the generous commitment to school infrastructure that will benefit so many first nations and have children allowed to learn in dignity, like all other Canadian children.

* * *

SENIORS

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, I know that my province has a diverse ethnic population. Seniors living here require support and resources that are tailored to meet their individual needs. Most at-risk seniors are those who live alone, have disabilities or poor health, have low-income, have language barriers, or have reduced access to services.

Can the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development inform the House about what the government is doing to help support seniors in Hamilton?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me first thank my two colleagues from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek and Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas for their very hard work in support of Hamilton residents.

Our government understands the importance of supporting seniors who are or may be at risk of becoming socially isolated. This is why I had the pleasure, with my colleagues, to announce last weekend \$2 million for seven organizations under the Hamilton seniors isolation population impact plan. This will help support Hamilton's capacity to reach, identify, and connect socially isolated seniors.

Business of Supply

● (1500)

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act of 2003, first proposed by a Liberal, states specifically that it is for poverty reduction, human rights, and the promotion of democracy. The Prime Minister's envoy to the United Nations recently declared that foreign aid will form the backbone of Canada's bid to win a seat on the UN Security Council.

Is the Prime Minister's envoy not aware that they are breaking a Canadian law with the use of aid money to buy a UN Security Council seat?

Ms. Karina Gould (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is incredibly proud of the international assistance we provide to countries and people around the world. As the member knows, since coming to government, the Prime Minister has mandated the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie to refocus Canada's development assistance on the most poor and the most vulnerable, including in fragile states, and that is exactly what we are going to do. We are proud of the work that we are doing around the world.

* * *

[Translation]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning, I talked about the petitions signed by 25,000 Quebecers who are saying "no" to energy east. According to another electronic petition of the House, 257 Quebecers are in favour of energy east.

Therefore, 10,000% more Quebecers oppose energy east. There is no social licence in Quebec for this project and there never will be.

What hidden interests are behind the government's reluctance to say no? Is this the Irving siren call from the Maritimes?

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 27, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and I announced a set of principles that will govern the review of major projects. One of those major projects is energy east. The National Energy Board will spend 21 months reviewing the project, during which time all Canadians, mayors, premiers, leaders of the opposition, members of Parliament, and Canadians at large will have every opportunity to express their views.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health's statements are preposterous. She has announced that a 3% increase in transfers is quite enough, as though there were no such thing as population aging. To hell with the federal-provincial negotiations. They are obviously bogus.

What is worse is that she wants to split the block transfer into 13 individual agreements in order to tell Quebec what to do in the area

of health, even though Ottawa knows absolutely nothing about it. We have stopped counting the fires that the minister has set with a single statement.

Can the Minister of Finance, who oversees the health transfer, rein in his pyromaniac colleague?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the January meeting of Canadian health ministers, the federal, provincial, and territorial ministers agreed to put forward shared health priorities.

I confirmed our commitment to working with the provinces and the territories, including Quebec, to establish a funding agreement that provides for bilateral agreements. The provinces and territories have different circumstances and are at different stages, which will be reflected in these bilateral agreements.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development has just talked about introducing a new innovation consultation, and he said he did it in an open and transparent way. That is not at all true. This is the first I have heard of it. I am not sure how I am supposed to fulfill my role as the critic for science and find out if that is a good process if I am not even invited to this Canada 2020 Liberals-only event.

The Speaker: I have not had notice of a question of privilege, and this sounds a bit like debate. If the member wants to come back and wants to send me a notice of a question of privilege, that is open to her.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—ISIS

The House resumed from June 9 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:04 p.m., pursuant to an order made Thursday, June 9, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Sturgeon River—Parkland relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

The Speaker: The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

● (1510)

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

(Division No. 88)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albrecht
 Ambrose
 Angus
 Ashton
 Barlow
 Beaulieu
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
 Boucher
 Boulерice
 Brassard
 Brown
 Cannings
 Carrie
 Choquette
 Clement
 Cullen
 Deltell
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Dusseault
 Eglinski
 Falk
 Fortin
 Garrison
 Genuis
 Godin
 Hardcastle
 Harper
 Housefather
 Jolibois
 Kelly
 Kent
 Kwan
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Lebel
 Liepert
 Ludwig
 MacGregor
 Malcolmson
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Moore
 Nantel
 Nicholson
 Obhrai
 Paul-Hus
 Plamondon
 Quach
 Ramsey
 Rayes
 Rempel
 Ritz
 Sansoucy
 Scheer
 Shields
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Trost
 Van Kesteren
 Vecchio
 Wagantall
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Wrzesnewskyj
 Zimmer — 139

Albas
 Allison
 Anderson
 Arnold
 Aubin
 Barsalou-Duval
 Benson
 Berthold
 Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
 Block
 Boudrias
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brosseau
 Calkins
 Caron
 Chong
 Christopherson
 Cooper
 Davies
 Diotte
 Dreeshen
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Erskine-Smith
 Fast
 Gallant
 Généreux
 Gladu
 Gourde
 Harder
 Hoback
 Johns
 Julian
 Kenney
 Kmiec
 Lake
 Laverdière
 Leitch
 Lobb
 Lukiwski
 MacKenzie
 Masse (Windsor West)
 McColeman
 Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
 Mulcair
 Nater
 Nuttall
 O'Toole
 Pauzé
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Rankin
 Reid
 Richards
 Saganash
 Saroya
 Schmale
 Shipley
 Sorenson
 Stetski
 Stubbs
 Thériault
 Trudel
 Van Loan
 Viersen
 Warawa
 Waugh
 Weir
 Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Aldag
 Alleslev
 Anandasangaree
 Alghabra
 Amos
 Arseneault

Business of Supply

Arya
 Badawey
 Bains
 Beech
 Bittle
 Boissonnault
 Breton
 Caesar-Chavannes
 Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
 Chagger
 Chan
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 DeCoursey
 Dhillon
 Dion
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Dzerowicz
 Ehsassi
 Eyking
 Fergus
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fragiskatos
 Freeland
 Fuhr
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gould
 Grewal
 Hardie
 Holland
 Hutchings
 Joly
 Jordan
 Kang
 Khera
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 Lebouthillier
 Lemieux
 Levitt
 Long
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 Maloney
 May (Cambridge)
 McCallum
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Soeurs)
 Monsef
 Murray
 Nault
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Peschisolido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Qualtrough
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Saini
 Sangha
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sohi
 Spengemann
 Tan
 Trudeau
 Vandenbeld
 Virani
 Wilkinson
 Young
 Ayoub
 Bagnell
 Baylis
 Bennett
 Blair
 Bossio
 Brison
 Carr
 Casey (Charlottetown)
 Champagne
 Chen
 Cuzner
 Damoff
 Dhaliwal
 Di Iorio
 Drouin
 Duclos
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Easter
 El-Khoury
 Eyolfson
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Foote
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fry
 Garneau
 Goodale
 Graham
 Hajdu
 Hehr
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Khalid
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Leslie
 Lightbound
 Longfield
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
 Morrissey
 Nassif
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Paradis
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Poissant
 Ratansi
 Robillard
 Romanado
 Ruimy
 Sahota
 Samson
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sorbara
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
 Zahid — 166

PAIRED

Nil

Business of Supply

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

● (1515)

OPPOSITION MOTION—DECriminalIZATION OF MARIJUANA POSSESSION

The House resumed from June 13 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Victoria relating to the business of supply.

● (1520)

[*Translation*]

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

*(Division No. 89)***YEAS**

Members

Angus	Ashton
Aubin	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau	Cannings
Caron	Choquette
Christopherson	Cullen
Davies	Donnelly
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Erskine-Smith	Fortin
Garrison	Hardcastle
Johns	Jolibois
Julian	Kwan
Laverdière	MacGregor
Malcolmson	Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Moore
Mulcair	Nantel
Paucé	Plamondon
Quach	Ramsey
Rankin	Saganash
Sansoucy	Stetski
Thériault	Trudel
Weir— 49	

NAYS

Members

Aboultouf	Albas
Albrecht	Aldag
Alghabra	Alleslev
Allison	Ambrose
Amos	Anandasangaree
Anderson	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Barlow	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Bittle
Blair	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boucher
Brassard	Breton
Brisson	Brown
Caesar-Chavannes	Calkins
Carr	Carrie
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chan	Chen
Chong	Clement
Cooper	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey

Deltell	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Diotte
Dreeshen	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Eglinski	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Eyking
Eyolfson	Falk
Fast	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Foote	Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Gallant	Gameau
Généreux	Genus
Glada	Godin
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Gourde
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Harder
Hardie	Harper
Hehr	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Kelly	Kenney
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kmiec
Lake	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauson (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Lauson (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebel	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Leitch	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Liepert	Lightbound
Lobb	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
Lukiwski	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCallum
McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Nater
Nault	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
O'Toole	Ouellette
Paradis	Paul-Hus
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Poilievre
Poissant	Qualtrough
Raiitt	Ratansi
Rayes	Rempel
Richards	Rioux
Ritz	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sangha	Sarai
Saroya	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schieffe
Schmale	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)

Business of Supply

Sikand
Sopuck
Sorenson
Stanton
Stubbs
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudeau
Van Loan
Vandenbeld
Vecchio
Virani
Warawa
Waugh
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young
Zahid

Sohi
Sorbara
Spengemann
Strahl
Sweet
Tan
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vandal
Vaughan
Vierson
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Yurdiga
Zimmer— 256

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

• (1525)

[*English*]

OPPOSITION MOTION—INTERNAL TRADE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: There are three minutes remaining in questions and comments after the speech from the hon. member for Durham.

Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora.

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his contribution to the debate here today.

Just as a point of clarification, he intimated in his comments as to whether or not I actually graduated from Dalhousie law school one year behind him. I can assure the hon. member I did. I think it was in no small part thanks to the notes he left behind from the year before. I will even admit, in the context of this debate, that I used his constitutional notes. I do appreciate his efforts.

It is clear from his speech that he has comprehension and understanding of the Constitution that many in this House do not. However, I think he will also agree with me that the Constitution, as important a tool as it is, as the backbone of our nation that it is, is certainly open to some interpretation and has proven to be, especially section 121, which he so eloquently discussed. The hon. member goes way back to the colour of margarine sold in Quebec or whether hay can cross the Alberta-B.C. border. There is much jurisprudence on these cases.

I just want the hon. member to answer one simple question. Does he think that if we do reference this case or this situation to the Supreme Court it is an absolute slam dunk that the court will rule on the side of there being no tariffs? Actually, there are no tariffs on beer, as it is now, but the provinces are not allowed to enact tax on their alcohol products. Does he think it is a slam dunk?

The Speaker: I hope that in answering the hon. member for Durham will not refer to the year he graduated from Dalhousie law school, because I know it was long after I did.

The hon. member for Durham.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you carved the trail that the member for Newmarket—Aurora and myself humbly walk behind. My friend is an exceptional lawyer and was a member of a great law firm. In fact, his partner, Michael Osborne, and I were in Vancouver, remarking on what a great fellow he is. I am glad he used my CANs, as we called them in law school. Perhaps we had beers in the Domus Legis together, and it might have been Alexander Keith beer, made in the north end, by the Hydrostone, where I lived in Halifax. We used to have an Alexander Keith's sociable in Toronto, celebrating Alexander Keith, who was a Tory, an early privy councillor for Nova Scotia pre-Confederation. However, it is a shame we could not take Moosehead from New Brunswick or Keith's from Halifax and have that same beer in Toronto, or even in Ottawa, because of archaic laws.

This is a time we have the precedence from the Bedford decision, the Carter decision, the Blais decision. I do think it is a slam dunk, particularly, if we get my friend's old law firm on the case.

• (1530)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I had to rise to ask the hon. member for Durham a question because we are making the full round of Dalhousie law grads here and trading notes about who graduated when. I was in the same graduating class with our Speaker and also in the same year with the Speaker of the Senate.

Thank you very much. I am actually older than the Speaker because I was a mature student when I started out, but I appreciate the friendly heckling as to how well I may or may not be aging.

My question for the hon. member for Durham is this. Do we have any examples where the Supreme Court of Canada has been willing to provide a response on a question that has not yet reached it but which is currently under appeal from the courts of New Brunswick from the Comeau decision? I genuinely do not know; I need to do some legal research.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I am glad my friend, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, got up to complete the Dalhousie trifecta here today and to show that there is a quiet Dalhousie law school mafia running the Parliament of Canada. We do not like to admit it. It is kind of the illuminati of Parliament.

However, she raises a great point on whether there has been a Supreme Court reference on a matter in the courts below, in the superior court.

I would refer the hon. member to what the previous government did with respect to the Senate reference where we go straight to the Supreme Court for a reference. The government did that in part because of comments from the Government of Prince Edward Island, which intimated that it would challenge a move to modernize the Senate, which the last government tried to do. To go for that reference would set clarity and allow us to break down the trade barriers before Canada turns 150.

As I said in my speech, the case law, particularly, Bedford and Carter, which showed that societal change, and then the intent of the Blais decision, shows that the Supreme Court would likely look favourably and support the Comeau decision from New Brunswick.

Business of Supply

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to participate this afternoon. Now that we have gotten past all the lawyer self-adulation, we can get back to some blue-collar debate about beer.

Today's motion by our hon. colleague from Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola kind of highlights the dilemma that we have in Canada, the dilemma of the federation itself. Canada is a country made up of 10 provinces and three territories that in many ways operate quite independently, but we still fall under Confederation and under the country of Canada.

We have gone through some cycles in our 149 years. It was not that long ago that we had the federal government playing a fatherly role to the provinces, and I can think of programs such as the national energy program, the Canada Health Act, and so on. However, then we went through what I believe was 10 years where we had a Conservative government that believed that there was federal jurisdiction and there was provincial jurisdiction. By and large, under the leadership of our previous prime minister, it was felt that the federal government's responsibility was to stay out of the jurisdiction of the provincial governments.

It is pretty obvious, by some of the actions we have seen happen so far with the current government, that we are probably moving back more into a time when the federal government will be trying to play that fatherly role with provinces again. I am thinking about things like discussions we are hearing today about a carbon tax. We are also talking at various committees about looking at bringing in pharmacare. We always have the debate in this House about supply management. In some ways it is timely that we have this debate about the motion that has been brought forward today.

As has been mentioned on several occasions, it is clearly pointed out in the Constitution in section 121 that free trade between provinces is part of our Canadian Constitution. However, there are clearly a number of examples of how that has moved over the past number of years. The most recent debate relative to my colleague's "free the beer" campaign is but one issue that tends to rear its ugly head, on more than one occasion.

As an example, labour mobility has become a big issue between provinces. While we have the Agreement on Internal Trade, there are still varying degrees of constraints around labour mobility. I think about the health care field where we have scope of practice, which is not the same from border to border. There are also certain professions that are regulated differently from province to province. Then if we move more into the apprenticeship role, clearly the certification around different apprenticeships varies from province to province. We have issues relative to food inspections and food safety. Then of course, the one that is probably the most troubling is that certain provinces prevent out-of-province companies from competing for government contracts. We all know that takes place on a fairly regular basis across the country.

However, I want to talk a bit about the successes that I am aware of. In a previous life I had the opportunity to serve in a provincial legislature of Alberta. At that time there were a number of agreements that we managed to negotiate. First, with the Province of British Columbia, the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement was very popular in our two provinces; so much so that

Saskatchewan came on board in 2010. I believe a number of issues have been resolved through TILMA. The issue that comes to mind was when the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta decided that to have a weigh station, or a truck regulation stop, in each province did not make any sense as the trucks were travelling either across the Trans-Canada Highway or the Yellowhead Highway. They had to stop in Alberta and get inspected. Then they crossed the B.C. border, and another inspection had to take place.

● (1535)

What Alberta and B.C. did on the Trans-Canada Highway was jointly set up an inspection station to make sure that regulations were adhered to, but it was a joint initiative. It not only saved money but saved a lot of hassle for the trucking industry. Those are the kinds of issues to which the provinces could find some resolution, if they were prepared to work together.

I do have some concern as we move forward. I have to admit that I think it is in the Liberals' DNA that they become protective and more parochial in the way they do business. We all know that we have a number of Liberal governments across the country today. I hope that in the so-called negotiations that are under way, which the federal government is talking about, that the message can be sent that we should be opening up borders, not working to close them.

Coming back to the particular motion that is before the House today, I clearly support the concept of what my colleague is attempting to do relative to the reference to the Supreme Court. I am not one who would normally suggest that the court is the right place to handle these kinds of decisions, but this particular case is a classic case of where a reference to the Supreme Court would give direction to provincial governments in a number of other areas.

I would strongly urge government members to reconsider their position and support the motion that is before us today. With that, I appreciate the opportunity to contribute.

● (1540)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of being in the member's part of the world from 1984 to 1992, when I graduated from the University of Calgary and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.

The hon. member mentioned TILMA. I would like to ask a question for the member. Are there any other trades or technical designations that should be part and parcel of TILMA, so it is easy for us to move professionals around when it comes to creating opportunities that Canadians need?

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, it is a very good question that the member raises.

The TILMA model is one that I would hope we could maybe expand upon across the country. It does not necessarily have to just be a western initiative.

I must admit that it has been a while since I have been involved in the administration of TILMA and how it is unfolding. What I think is important is the framework that was established. I would like to see that possibly work as a framework elsewhere in the country, but also for other industries in the country.

Business of Supply

I am sorry I cannot answer the question more thoroughly than that. I know it provides an excellent framework from which to work.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

It is laughable to think that, officially, I do not have the right to bring a bottle of wine from Ottawa to my home in Longueuil. That way of doing things is outdated and prehistoric. Nevertheless, it is the reality.

I would like to know why it is taking so long to resolve this issue. This is not the first time we have talked about this. The member's party was in power at the time. Why is this issue still not resolved, even just where alcohol is concerned?

[*English*]

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. We could also ask why it was put in place in the first place and why it was not resolved many years ago. That is exactly why this particular motion is before the House today: for reference to the Supreme Court. We would get a decision that way and it would take it out of the hands of politicians to be making these kinds of decisions. That is why I would encourage the hon. member to support the motion before the House.

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the reduction of interprovincial trade barriers is essential for making sure that Canada's economy is strong. The member has made a number of good points, particularly with regard to the reference to the Supreme Court.

I was wondering if he could comment specifically on his region. The region I represent grows potatoes and makes beer. Creemore Springs Brewery is in my riding, and we obviously want it to be available to all Canadians. I would ask him if there are some specific industries that he believes will substantially benefit and, therefore, robustly aid the Canadian economy once we reduce these interprovincial trade barriers, as well as what leadership role the government should be taking, which it has not taken, in order to make that happen.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is that, if we were to start with a blank sheet of paper and start with no trade barriers among provinces, I think we would be quite surprised to find out how many particular industries we do not even recognize today are being impacted by some regulation that is buried somewhere within the system.

As an example, the member raised the issue of industries in her riding. I know, for instance, that things like the labelling of particular products, whether they are dairy products or other farm products, vary from province to province, and that does not make any sense when we are all part of one country.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in today's debate on the Conservative motion on Canada's internal trade. I would also like to

say that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Surrey Centre.

I am pleased to share my opinions on this topic with the members of the House of Commons. I would like to thank the opposition member for raising this important issue.

Today, I want to talk about how important the federal government thinks it is to have a strong and enduring partnership with our provincial and territorial counterparts. This issue gets to the heart of how we want to govern the country.

Our government's approach is very different from that of the former Conservative government. It is particularly important when the governments have to address complex, 21st-century issues on behalf of Canadians. All levels of government need to work in partnership as much as possible to deal with these issues.

That is why the Government of Canada places a high priority on intergovernmental co-operation. We are taking practical measures to strengthen this approach in various sectors in order to increase competitiveness, productivity, and innovation in Canada.

Internal trade is just one example of the positive partnership that the federal government has established with the provinces and territories. Our government is determined to achieve its objectives with a renewed sense of co-operation in order to make changes for Canadians, and we are taking real action to strengthen this approach.

Another example is working together in forums such as the advisory council on economic growth, which my colleague, the Minister of Finance, launched in March. This council brings together a diverse group of forward-thinking business and academic leaders to advise the minister on developing a solid growth strategy for Canada.

Furthermore, yesterday, I attended a meeting of federal, provincial, and territorial innovation and economic development ministers. This meeting was chaired by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and was the first meeting of its kind in 12 years. I repeat, this was the first meeting of its kind in 12 years.

The minister and his colleagues discussed how economic growth in Canada has evolved and what our common challenges are as we try to grow the economy and create high-paying jobs for the middle class.

Because of low commodity prices and relatively weak growth, we can no longer count on the traditional engines of growth. We must switch our focus to innovation in all sectors.

That means businesses, governments, and communities have to make strategic investments in innovation. We cannot move forward without the collaboration and constructive engagement of all parties.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development talked to his colleagues about the federal government's approach in developing an inclusive innovation agenda. The goal is to create more jobs for middle-class Canadians and to solve the problems that Canadian families are grappling with.

Business of Supply

In addition, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development committed to ongoing engagement with his colleagues on issues that matter to Canadians, such as innovation, clean technology, and economic development.

The ministers agreed that governments must take urgent action to support innovation and economic development while meeting their own needs and priorities.

The ministers also agreed to work together to better identify the clusters and networks in Canada that already are or have the potential to be hotbeds of innovation.

• (1550)

They also made a commitment to help create the jobs of tomorrow by further encouraging innovation across the entire economy.

The ministers then had a thorough discussion on growth itself. We do not regard environmental protection as a burden, but rather an opportunity for Canada to become a global leader in innovative and clean technologies.

A panel of experts made up of indigenous trade and economic development organizations also weighed in. Indigenous people are key players in creating a strong and vibrant economy in Canada.

It is a huge program that will require broad collaboration and partnerships. The goal is to promote a Canadian action plan for innovation that is inclusive, adds value to the entire economy, encourages sustainability, and promotes the well-being of our society as a whole.

That is why I was pleased to hear that the ministers agreed to meet again in the fall to continue their discussions with a view to establishing priorities to advance clean technology, innovation, and job creation.

In fact, our collaborative activities are already underway. There are many key measures in budget 2016 that provide a foundation for this action plan and demonstrate our commitment to change.

For instance, our government is investing \$2 billion in enhancing and modernizing research and commercialization facilities on Canadian university campuses through the post-secondary institutions strategic investment fund.

Budget 2016 also proposes an \$800-million investment starting in 2017–18 to support innovation networks and clusters. We have also earmarked over \$1 billion over four years, starting in 2017–18, to support clean technology. We have also announced that we will invest \$500 million to enhance broadband service in rural and remote communities.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order, please. We have a point of order.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the parliamentary secretary. He is a fine gentleman and a great contributor to the House, but I am raising a point of order on relevance. We are debating a motion on interprovincial trade specific to a Supreme Court reference. The member has so far basically skated around everything but that. Again, I do know that oftentimes

Speakers give a fair bit of latitude, but it would be nice to have the member speak on the subject and not on other parts of his portfolio.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Thank you. I have heard many different topics discussed here and often what happens is that it goes from one side to another, and sometimes just as you wonder where it is coming to, the hon. members often bring it back to where basically the intention is.

I will leave it with the hon. member to finish up his speech.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[Translation]

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my hon. opposition colleague that I am here to discuss an option, an alternative to the Supreme Court reference. It is about having discussions with the provinces to negotiate in good faith. I digress. I will come back to my speech and continue.

We cannot stop here. To move forward, we must continue to have a dialogue and work with the provinces and territories. We must work together to succeed. I would like to point that out to my dear opposition colleague. We must harmonize our efforts in order to create the critical mass needed to make progress on the issues that matter. That is the approach we are adopting through the inclusive innovation agenda. It is the cornerstone of the federal approach to innovation and economic development, and it calls for federal-provincial-territorial collaboration in order to optimize results.

Budget 2016 also announced that the government will develop a nationwide Canadian cluster mapping portal. The federal government will develop this portal in collaboration with the provinces, territories, research institutions, and community stakeholders.

This important work is modelled after the cluster mapping that has already been done in the United States and Mexico. We anticipate that this will produce evidence to inform the design and delivery of programs by all levels of government.

The Government of Canada also intends to hold a bilateral dialogue with the provinces and territories in order to better harmonize common priorities. We are determined to work with our provincial and territorial counterparts to establish a solid relationship that is built on collaboration in order to advance the inclusive innovation agenda in Canada.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the federal government sees collaboration as key to meeting 21st-century challenges in innovation and better preparing Canadian businesses to increase their activity and be competitive on the—

• (1555)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We will now move on to questions and comments. The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Business of Supply

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary for his speech. It is fascinating to hear from him that the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development met with all the provincial ministers and that this meeting only resulted in the promise of another meeting.

The provincial ministers are calling for practical measures and the government talks about discussions. Discussions are not an alternative to action. It is all very well to mention “practical measures” several times in a speech, but that does not lead to action. The promise of action in 2017-18 is no substitute for the immediate measures called for by the provinces. Consultations are not actions.

What real action will the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development take to address the provinces' urgent requests?

Today, we are talking about real action. What will be the alternative to real action?

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for her question. I want to remind her that this is the first time that Canada's ministers of innovation and economic development, all of the federal, provincial, and territorial ministers, have met in 12 years. That is extraordinary.

I am sorry, but we are not going to be able to come up with a fully developed plan or anything tangible right away. All of the ministers said that they were delighted that the federal government was working with them for the first time in 12 years. We can finally align all of our plans and projects to make Canada even more innovative.

I had the pleasure of sitting next to the representatives from Quebec. We participated in a number of meetings together over the past two days. Quebec was thrilled that the federal government included measures in the budget and has a plan to make innovation work for Quebecers and Canadians.

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like my Conservative colleague before me, I question the relevance of the speech we just heard. We heard a lot about innovation. We heard a lot about collaboration with the provinces. However, we did not hear anything about the Supreme Court case, the Comeau case, which I believe could be the defining case when it comes to determining whether we truly have free trade within Canada.

The Comeau case is the perfect case to refer to the Supreme Court of Canada, so that, once and for all, Canadians can understand whether we will be able to buy and sell products across provincial and territorial boundaries free of interference from the provinces and territories. Obviously we do not want to tread on provincial and territorial jurisdiction, but this is something that the Supreme Court is perfectly positioned to determine.

I want to bring the discussion back to what the speech should have addressed, and that is the Supreme Court case. I would ask the member for Hull—Aylmer why the Liberal government will not refer this matter to the Supreme Court of Canada to ensure that as the new agreement on internal trade is negotiated it is actually in compliance with Canada's constitutional law.

• (1600)

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I will try my best, but every so often we come up with a fundamental difference of perspective. I know the hon. member from British Columbia, a former minister, supports free trade, so does our government. Not only do we support free trade because it brings jobs and creates growth, we also support having negotiations between the federal government and the provinces and territories. We believe that negotiations can go beyond the narrow scope that the former minister is talking about.

If we were to take it to the Supreme Court, we would be using a big stick and a narrow approach as to the scope. As well, there would be a whole bunch of legal costs. If I could put our approach versus their approach in four words or into words the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Surrey Centre.

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola for raising this important issue before the House.

I am pleased to rise to speak to the significant benefits that internal trade brings to Canada's agriculture and food industries. We are talking about a sector that drives over \$60 billion of Canada's exports, generates over \$108 billion, accounts for almost 7% of Canada's GDP, and creates jobs for over 2.3 million Canadians.

We are talking about an incredibly productive and innovative industry. Canadian farmers today can produce twice as much output compared to 1961 with the same level of input. On the other hand, with the value chain, the Canadian food processing sector has doubled its sales in the span of two decades to over \$100 billion. Science and technological innovation are a big reason for these leaps in productivity and efficiency.

Advancement in genomics and biotechnology are helping to drive productivity and competitiveness in the agriculture sector in many ways, including increasing yields of crops and animals, strengthening disease and pest resistance, and reducing inputs like fertilizers and herbicides. Technology is allowing us to develop new varieties of crops, which are better for consumers, more efficient to grow, and more adaptable to our changing environment.

I want to remind the hon. members that the government is absolutely pro-trade. The Government of Canada supports trade as a way to open markets to Canadian agriculture and food producers, to grow Canadian farm businesses, create good-paying jobs for Canadians, and provide choice and lower prices to Canadian consumers.

Canada is a trading nation. Canada has always depended heavily on international trade and investment for its economic well-being. We live in a vast country with a relatively small population, and we enjoy a high standard of living. We sell our products and services abroad, which helps maintain a strong economy. We strive to maintain and expand access to foreign markets, since an open trade and investment environment allows companies to prosper and provide better middle-class jobs.

Business of Supply

The government is committed to developing trade in Canada and attracting investments that create jobs in our country. In Canada, one in five jobs is generated by trade. In 2014, Canadian exports of goods and services represented just under one-third of our GDP. Canadian consumers also reap the benefits of international trade, which gives them a greater variety of goods at better prices.

Trade is equally vital to our agriculture and agrifood industry. About half of the value of Canada's agricultural production is exported. Over a third of our wheat crop is exported, two-thirds of our pork, 85% of our canola, and 90% of our pulse crops. Trade agreements help Canada's agriculture and food sector build on its stellar export performance for the good of our nation and our economy. That is why we are consulting Canadians on the trans-Pacific partnership, and moving forward on ratifying the Canada-EU comprehensive economic and trade agreement, which will open up the world's most lucrative market for food to Canada's farmers and food processors.

Once the tariffs have been phased out, seven years after the agreement comes into effect, more than 95% of the tariff lines on agricultural products will be duty free. Eliminating duties will increase export opportunities in the European Union for Canadian producers, including exporters of agricultural and agrifood products.

Similarly, the domestic market is vital to a large number of agricultural and agrifood related products. We have seen in the news how consumers have a growing interest in local products. We also know that a strong domestic market is a great springboard for companies to compete in the global arena. Agriculture and food trade within Canada is significant. According to the latest figures, over \$40 billion dollars in agricultural and agrifood products are traded between provinces. We know that number can and should grow. However, there are still some barriers to internal trade.

• (1605)

Agriculture is a shared jurisdiction between the provinces and territories, and this sometimes creates bottlenecks. The federal government is responsible for interprovincial and international trade, while the provinces are responsible for the production and domestic marketing of agriculture and agrifood products. For example, certain products, such as meat, must comply with federal standards to be traded between the provinces or internationally. In addition to the federal standards, the provinces may have their own rules and regulations regarding the foods produced and sold within their borders.

Depending on the product, some industries must comply with a patchwork of rules, which can impede the free movement of products from one province to another. These barriers can lead to losses or shortfalls for some segments of the agrifood sector, for example, the distilled spirits industry.

The Agreement on Internal Trade can help provinces and territories enhance interprovincial trade. The purpose of the agreement is to eliminate interprovincial barriers that impede the free movement of workers, goods, services, and investments. It is also encouraging to note that provinces themselves are collaborating to facilitate greater trade in both western and eastern Canada.

There is no doubt that the domestic market is critical to the success and growth of Canada's agriculture and agrifood sector. We need to do all we can to facilitate internal trade and remove barriers to the interprovincial movement of goods and services. This work will only be done with the collaborative approach that this government is taking.

Industry stakeholders often say that it is easier to export outside of Canada than to another province. With the conclusion of recent international trade negotiations with, for example, the European Union, there have been calls for business associations, consumer groups, and academics on the need to modernize the Agreement on Internal Trade to ensure that internal trade does not lag behind international trade liberalization, and that Canada's market should be as open internally as it is to our external trading partners. The federal government, the provinces, and the territories are now working together to renew the Agreement on Internal Trade.

We are at a time of tremendous opportunity for Canada's agriculture and agrifood sector. Agriculture exports are at record high levels. Agriculture and food is one of the top five fastest growing export sectors of Canada. With our small population and huge production capacity, Canada is the world's leading agriculture trader on a per capita basis.

Meanwhile, global demand for food is projected to increase by 65% by 2050. Our farmers have the responsibility and the ability to feed the world. The future is bright for Canadian farmers and food processors, with growing demand for the great products we grow in Canada.

The government will work hard to open new markets for them, while working hard to strengthen agrifood trade within our borders. A better integrated internal market supports a competitive and innovative agriculture and agrifood sector. Improving internal trade will also reduce costs of production and increase productivity. It is a natural complement to Canada's intense involvement in international trade.

While the member opposite may prefer the antagonistic approach of the former government, this government recognizes that we need constructive collaboration to achieve our goals of creating a strong, more innovative economy.

• (1610)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for actually staying on the motion at hand for most of the speech. That was a refreshing change.

There are two things.

Business of Supply

The Agreement on Internal Trade was actually started by the previous minister of industry. I believe 15 of the 17 rounds of negotiation were done under the previous government. Therefore, it is interesting that the Liberals are talking about new changes to collaboration. It seems that they are just picking up where the previous government left off, and that is not a bad thing.

Does the member believe Canadians have a constitutional right to trade with other Canadians?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. Canadians have a constitutional right to trade with other provinces, however, it is the approach that we take.

The previous government never had a first ministers meeting in the last eight years. It showed that the Conservatives did not want to work with the provinces.

It is this government that made it a mandate, and started with that to work with the provinces. Rather than antagonize them, we work in collaboration with them. Rather than take them into lawsuits, we work with them.

The lawsuit itself will take its course, and we will see the results at the end. However, there are certain jurisdictions that we need to respect. We need to negotiate and work out those trade barriers rather than simply go to the Supreme Court to mandate them.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the theme from the Liberals today seems to be that seeking clarity from the Supreme Court on this issue will hamper negotiations with the provinces and hinder the collaboration and co-operation we all want. I want to know from the member how seeking clarity on this issue will hamper negotiations rather than actually move them forward.

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, it would be much more helpful if we allow the legal action take its course, which is going on in Comeau. We do not need to interfere in that respect. If we work within that process, it would be a lot better, as opposed to interfering and creating a roadblock in that process.

In the interim, it would provide some leverage for the minister and the Prime Minister to work with their counterparts in the provinces to iron out a lot of those differences and come up with solutions, rather than antagonize provincial counterparts.

[*Translation*]

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a very important issue for the Pontiac. I am very pleased that my colleague from Surrey Centre mentioned the agricultural aspect. It is very important to people in the Pontiac to be able to sell their products in Ontario, whether they raise cattle or make alcoholic products.

[*English*]

It is very important for farmers in the Pontiac to get those products to market in the Ottawa and eastern Ontario region. I would ask the member to further describe, particularly in the meat sector, for example, where federal and provincial inspections can be such a challenge. Could the member talk a bit about how we might improve the efficiency of that aspect of interprovincial trade?

● (1615)

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, we already have great regulations in Canada in the meat sector, which is federally inspected. I do not believe we need the health inspections that some provinces place upon each other.

I am a believer that trade barriers must be lifted on products, especially within Canada, a country with some of the best standards for its food supply of any country in the world. They should be streamlined so products can cross the borders between Quebec and Ontario, as well as western Canada. That should be the foremost priority of the government. I trust our government will take that into consideration and ensure that these barriers are lifted as soon as possible.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to engage in this debate. I will be splitting my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Yes, the motion before this House is about freeing beer, but it is far more than that. It is about determining whether in fact Canada truly has free trade, not with other countries; we have a lot of that already, but do we truly have free trade within our country, among our provinces and territories?

We are a trading nation. We trade all over the world. I remember way back to the 1980s when Canada signed that monumental agreement called the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement, which eventually morphed into the North American Free Trade Agreement. That was a defining trade agreement for the world.

For the first time ever, a comprehensive trade agreement was signed where two, and later three, countries—Canada, the United States, and then Mexico—agreed that the North American production platform would be one in which we have highly integrated supply chains and where we trade across our boundaries without the barriers of tariffs. Why do we do that? It is because it makes our nation, Canada, more competitive.

The same thing is true when we talk about internal trade. The more we can remove barriers to trade within our own country, the more productive, the more competitive we become, the greater the value to consumers, the greater the value to businesses, as they have expanded markets within their own country.

We saw a great example of this when three provinces, British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, had the vision to say that they wanted free trade among their three provinces. They tried to bring Manitoba onside, but Manitoba at the time had an NDP government, which was not in favour of trade at all, so they established what they called the New West Partnership, British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. For the first time ever in Canadian history, they were able to remove many of the barriers to trade, to the trade of goods and services, to the mobility of people across our provincial boundaries. They have achieved significant improvement in their competitiveness, because when we are competitive within Canada, we also become that much more competitive within the global marketplace.

Business of Supply

The previous Conservative government, of course, was very active in negotiating trade agreements all around the world. After the North American Free Trade Agreement came into force, we had 13 years of darkness under the previous Liberal government under Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin, when they were only able to negotiate three very small trade agreements.

When we were elected in 2006, our Conservative government said it had a lot of catching up to do, and in the intervening 10 years, we were able to negotiate free trade agreements not with three, six, or 10 countries, but with an amazing 46 countries around the world.

We expanded our global and commercial reach to markets that had been closed to us for so many years, and the same thing is true when we do this in Canada. We need to eliminate the barriers that reduce our competitiveness, that reduce our ability to improve our standard of living. It is right for Canadian businesses to ask why they cannot do business within Canada freely when they can trade with countries all around the world.

The irony is that countries from around the world can do business with individual provinces more easily than businesses in Canada can do business with individual provinces and territories. Who gets hurt? Canadians, consumers, small and medium-sized businesses, and taxpayers writ large get hurt, because of the loss of potential tax revenues that can sustain our great standard of living within Canada.

The barrier we have within Canada among our provinces and territories is protectionism, really, at its very worst. It is freer and more open trade that represents the pathway to secure a strong and prosperous economy going forward within Canada.

Canada has been an outspoken proponent, a champion of free trade on the international stage. The economic freedom index, which the Heritage Foundation puts out on a regular basis, ranks countries in terms of their openness to trade.

• (1620)

Do members know where Canada fits in? It is number six out of 166 countries. We do very well when it comes to openness to trade with countries around the world, but when we look within Canada, it is quite a different picture.

We have set these barriers where regions of the country and individual provinces and territories try to protect their own businesses and do not recognize that the ability of their businesses to actually expand and thrive is based on more competition and freer and more open trade.

Another thing that barriers to trade do in our federation is that they undermine the strength of our federation. Here we are as a country, trying to improve Canada's economic performance, trying to improve our trade performance, trying to improve growth in GDP, trying to nurture our small and medium-sized businesses, and the best thing we can do is to get out of their way and let them do business in an unimpeded way.

That is what we are looking forward to doing. This motion, if I might quote it, just so that listeners and viewers across the country understand what we are debating here in this House, says:

That the House: (a) recognize that it is a constitutional right for Canadians to trade with Canadians; (b) re-affirm that the Fathers of Confederation expressed this

constitutional right in Section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867 which reads: "All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces"; (c) recognize that the recent Comeau decision in New Brunswick creates a unique opportunity to seek constitutional clarity on Section 121....

Over the years, section 121 has been interpreted by our courts as actually constraining free and more open trade across Canada. We now have an opportunity with the Comeau case to have the Liberal government show leadership and step into this litigation, have it referred to the Supreme Court of Canada, and let the Supreme Court of Canada determine whether we are actually allowed to have free trade within the country.

The motion also asks for there to be constitutional clarity on the matter of the relationship between the provinces and the federal government, and their ability to trade amongst each other.

I mentioned the New West Partnership earlier, simply because this is already being done. The provinces have voluntarily gotten together and said that freer and more open trade amongst them is beneficial to the people they serve and to the people who elect them. They have moved forward with that and have achieved significant improvement in their competitiveness.

Moving forward, what we are asking the Liberal government to do is to take a leadership role in this. It is negotiating an agreement on internal trade with the provinces. I get collaboration. We are looking forward to co-operative federalism between the new government and the provinces and territories.

It is very difficult to negotiate an agreement for fewer barriers to trade when we do not know the constitutional framework within which we are negotiating. It is absolutely critical that the Liberal government step up to the plate, show the leadership that is required, engage as an intervenor in this litigation, and make the case that Canada is a country that is built on trade, not only with the rest of the world but amongst the provinces.

Our government started this work with the Agreement on Internal Trade, but having the proper constitutional framework within which that discussion takes place is going to be very helpful as the Liberal government tries to get this right. We have an opportunity to get this right, but it is going to require the leadership that allows us to be an intervenor in this court case, the Comeau case.

I look forward to questions from my colleagues.

• (1625)

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech. The sentiment, as reflected in the motion, is something I can support. I think a lot of the members on this side of the House can support it. Fair and free internal trade in Canada is something that I know I have worked on for several decades now, unfortunately, and much remains to be done.

Business of Supply

Understanding that we just had the recent Comeau decision in New Brunswick, I would just ask this for the member. As part of the prior government, what prevented the member from using his prior portfolio or his prior interests? What prevented him and the mover of the motion from asking cabinet to recommend a reference to the Supreme Court to clarify those rules? It is something that interested watchers of their previous government's processes were kind of expecting. What prevented that member from urging his government to act by referring the matter to the Supreme Court at that time?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. I appreciate the member's question.

I have two answers to that.

One, as former minister of international trade over four and a half years I was busy engaging in the most ambitious and active trade agenda our country had ever seen. Members should remember that we did trade agreements with 46 different countries around the world, something that the previous Liberal government had never gotten done.

The second answer is that the Comeau case was not decided until after we left government. Until the Comeau case was decided by a lower court, it was generally accepted that the constitutional law in Canada allowed provinces to interfere to a certain degree in international trade and to put up barriers for different reasons. Those included regulatory reasons, safety and health reasons, and also reasons that actually were simply protectionist in nature. The Comeau case was decided post-election. A court actually established that there is truly a constitutional right to free trade.

We welcome the Liberal government's intervention in that case, because it is critically important for Canada and would open up a whole new opportunity for economic growth within our country.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his eloquent speech.

Folks in my riding cannot understand trade barriers, especially the non-tariff barriers that we face, not only between our countries, particularly in the agricultural sector, but even for the consumers in my riding. They are very frustrated, and we saw what happened in Quebec when that province regulated the colour of margarine. For 20-some years, we could not even have margarine traded across the provincial boundaries simply because of the colour of the margarine, which was all based on a protectionist philosophy.

Protectionism might seem like an expedient thing to do for politicians to get re-elected, but it leads to division and to treating some more fair than others. When it comes to free trade, we do not need government at all. Individuals can decide anywhere in Canada how they want to trade. If they have a deal that is mutually acceptable to both parties, they can trade. Trade agreements are usually about what we are not going to trade in the context of hoping for what we will trade.

We have barriers when it comes to loading our trucks. A trucker who is travelling across 10 different provinces has to load for the lightest province. These are ridiculous things that cost consumers and cost industries billions of dollars.

I am going to ask my colleague, who is very learned when it comes to trade, whether it is extremely prudent for the Government of Canada to get involved and get a decision rendered that is in the best interests of Canadian consumers and Canadian businesses.

• (1630)

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my very respected colleague here in this House.

I am glad he raised the issue of non-tariff barriers because a lot of Canadians understand that trade agreements can be about eliminating tariffs or duties. In fact, they go far beyond that. Most of the value today in trade agreements is actually getting rid of those standards, regulations, and rules behind the borders that are not being applied to protect health and safety, but are being applied to prevent free trade. The member is absolutely right.

Government needs to get out of the way of business people who are trying to trade with each other. That is how we drive economic growth. That is how we drive economic prosperity for our country.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): 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 Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, National Defence; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Ethics; the hon. member for Sherbrooke, The Senate.

[*English*]

Before resuming debate, I want to remind hon. members that I am really interested in hearing the person who is speaking. During the last speech we had a couple of members shouting at each other across the floor. I just want to remind them that it makes it very difficult for me to hear what the hon. member is saying when the conversation takes place across the floor.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the motion moved by my colleague, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola. This motion has been affectionately dubbed “free the beer”.

As a new member of Parliament, I must say that it is truly motivating to listen to an experienced parliamentarian like the member for Abbotsford.

This member just shared his vast experience as a minister in the previous government. His words were very inspiring, as was his belief in the importance of eliminating trade barriers.

He is an inspiration to us, and he should also serve as an inspiration to the new government, which should be taking advantage of the experience this member gained by negotiating numerous free trade agreements with other countries. These negotiations were successfully carried out by our colleague from Abbotsford, and I applaud him for that. By way of tribute, I would say:

[*English*]

He was fast and efficient.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

I will admit that using beer as the foundation of a motion on the liberalization of internal trade is a little unexpected.

However, for the benefit of those who have been tuning in since the start of the day and who have heard about the Comeau case, but who do not really know what we are talking about right now in the House, I would like to recap because I think it can be useful to look at why the motion came to be and explain how we got to where we are.

This is about a citizen of New Brunswick, Gérard Comeau, and his fight for justice, which highlighted how difficult it is for Canadians to trade freely within our country's borders. Mr. Comeau singlehandedly broke down the barriers to internal trade.

I found a good summary of Mr. Comeau's story in an editorial. The title of the publication made me smile: it is called "*Bières et plaisirs*", or "Beer and other pleasures".

Even so, it is a very serious editorial. It recounts Mr. Comeau's story, which I will now share with the House of Commons and all of the Canadians who are tuned in.

Gérard Comeau was arrested in October 2012 in possession of 14 cases of beer and three bottles of liquor. He had just done some shopping on the Quebec side of the border. In October 2012, Gérard Comeau committed an illegal act: purchasing a quantity of alcohol over the authorized limit in another province, not in a licensed establishment.

According to the Government of New Brunswick and other Canadian governments, alcohol is under provincial jurisdiction.

Here is more from the editorial in "*Bières et plaisirs*":

All residents of New Brunswick buy their alcohol in provincially owned licensed establishments: outlets of the New Brunswick Liquor Corporation, also known as the liquor commission.

That is the law as enacted in 1928, a year after the commission was created. Laws governing the sale of alcohol were enacted around that time across Canada. The goal was to protect each province's market....Many New Brunswickers prefer to buy their alcohol in Quebec, where prices are much lower. The Province of New Brunswick sometimes applies high mark-ups to wine, beer, and spirits sold in its stores.

The article goes on to say:

After receiving a guilty verdict, Gérard Comeau decided to take his case to the New Brunswick provincial court. His argument was simple: the Fathers of Confederation passed a law that stipulates that the provinces of Canada must allow interprovincial free trade, a law that was written long before all of Canada's post-prohibition laws, and one that remains in effect all across Canada....The court found in favour of Gérard Comeau. The judge ruled that the provincial law was unconstitutional. Gérard Comeau was found not guilty.

Our motion today is very clear. It recognizes one of the key elements of the vision of Canada's founding fathers:

That the House: (a) recognize that it is a constitutional right for Canadians to trade with Canadians; (b) re-affirm that the Fathers of Confederation expressed this constitutional right in Section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867 which reads: "All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces"...

The wording is very clear.

● (1635)

I think that the article in *Bières et plaisirs* is a good summary of the Comeau case, but also many other cases involving countless Canadians who travel across our country and would like to take advantage of a free market here at home. It took a New Brunswick

man standing up for his rights to remind us, the elected representatives of this great country, that we have an important role to play to preserve the spirit of our Constitution.

We are talking about beer here, but the Fathers of Confederation were clear:

121. All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces.

It is simple. I am sure that most Canadians did not even know that some provinces put up so many barriers that hinder interprovincial trade. I can understand them, because we form a single great country made up of extremely dynamic provinces and territories. We all want to improve the economy of our regions, and it is rather amazing to realize here that Canadians do not always have the right to do business with one another as they would like.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development said this morning in the House that he prefers that any disputes be settled by negotiations between the provinces. Despite years of negotiations, it seems that the agreement the minister would like to negotiate is not possible. On this side of the House, we believe that this government does not have the leadership required to arrive at such an agreement. It is all well and good to say that the government wants to promote trade and reach an agreement with the provinces. However, at the first opportunity this government does the opposite.

Take the example of Bill C-10, which was supposed to meet Quebec's and Manitoba's expectations. By invoking closure, the government rammed through a bill that forces the legal action against Air Canada to be dropped. Lo and behold, two provinces asked us not to act too quickly because they cannot conclude their agreement as negotiated if the threat of court action, which is on their side, disappears. The government ignored the provinces' requests.

Another example is Bill C-14. The Quebec Minister of Health said that Bill C-14 was inadequate. Even so, the Liberals went ahead and imposed a gag order so that parliamentarians could not express their views.

That does not bode well for the federal-provincial negotiations under this government. Since it took office, the Liberal government has shown leadership and interest in only two things: running an ever-growing deficit and increasing the tax burden on small businesses. The Liberals have done a good job on those things.

Today, the Liberal government has a unique opportunity to do something tangible to help small businesses and, once again, it is turning its back on them by relying on a negotiation process with an unknown timeline. We are skeptical about the results of that. The second part of my colleague's motion is clear. It states:

[That the House:] (c) recognize that the recent Comeau decision in New Brunswick creates a unique opportunity to seek constitutional clarity on Section 121 from the Supreme Court of Canada; and that therefore, the House call on the government to refer the Comeau decision and its evidence to the Supreme Court for constitutional clarification of Section 121.

That would finally make it possible to set clear guidelines for trade between the provinces.

Business of Supply

Creating more free trade in Canada is not a partisan issue. The issue here is what is fair. Canadian businesses do not want their government to tell them with whom they can and cannot do business. Businesses should be able to sell their products across Canada, and consumers should have more choices on the market.

In my member's statement today, I spoke about young entrepreneurs in Quebec. Three thousand young entrepreneurs in Quebec will make deals and work hard to sell their products and share their passions. Three thousand of them will open their own small business. Imagine telling them that they cannot do business with their neighbour because they are not on the same street. They are in the same city, same province, and even same country. These are the kinds of barriers we want to eliminate. We want to eliminate them to enable small and medium-sized businesses to do business, create wealth, and drive our economy.

I will wrap up quickly and say that this was the will of the Fathers of Confederation. The government has a unique opportunity to take action. I hope it will seize this opportunity to do away with empty rhetoric and to finally take real action for small businesses in Canada. For all these reasons, I urge the government to join me in supporting this motion to free the beer.

• (1640)

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. Campbellton and Pointe-à-la-Croix are not the only places where people are buying their beer like that. Anyone who comes to my riding, Gatineau, will see that the same thing happens there.

His colleague, the former minister, basically told us that he was too busy to do anything about the problem, yet he and his colleagues want us to make this a priority even though they themselves did not.

I agree, this is a huge challenge that the government needs to address. Canadians want us to find solutions. For all of the reasons given by the member and many of my colleagues, it is a good thing to help break down non-tariff barriers and barriers to interprovincial trade.

Just out of curiosity, since my colleague is from Quebec, can he give us some examples of non-tariff barriers in Quebec that he would be willing to reduce in the interest of a comprehensive agreement on reducing barriers to interprovincial trade?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated my colleague's short speech. There are so many aspects to his question that I will have to choose which one to address.

First, I commend my colleague from Abbotsford for his excellent work when he was minister. He made it possible for Canada to take its place in the global economy. All Canadians should be grateful to him for that.

Second, if the member is such a strong supporter of abolishing borders, he should vote with us in favour of the motion. We would gladly welcome him.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the subject of the motion, which is a really practical subject for most people in Canada, Quebec, and all the other provinces.

My government colleague says that we are pressuring the government to take action whereas the Conservatives did nothing for 10 years. That is also true. I am not a beer expert. I drink beer, but I do not import any from Ontario.

If this is so simple, why does my colleague think it has not been done before? Why is it easier to buy Corona, Dos Equis, 1664, or European beers, which are found everywhere? Quebeckers look for exotic beer, but they cannot get beer from other provinces.

Why is this so complicated?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, it is so complicated because everyone wants to protect their market and their interests. No one wants to lose what they already have.

My colleague's political party is a champion of protectionism. If we want to move forward, if we want our economy and small businesses to grow, if we want to set an example for young entrepreneurs and tell them that they can succeed in business, the last thing we want to do is to tell them that they will have to comply with a thick book of regulations and prohibitions. This would discourage them before they even got started.

We need as few barriers as possible. Everyone will benefit: our economy, small businesses, and all Canadians.

• (1645)

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be dividing my time with the member for Essex.

I am happy to rise today to speak to this motion. Although my colleague from Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola has framed it as “free the beer”, it has much broader implications, as we have heard throughout the debate today. It is an important issue in my riding and his because of the wine industry. However, I will happily start with beer, as the motion refers directly to the Comeau decision that was triggered by the transport of beer across provincial boundaries.

Not being an economist, when I began to prepare my speech on this subject, I asked my colleague, the member for Regina—Lewvan, if he had any advice. His immediate sage advice was to watch *Smokey and the Bandit*. That was a 1970s movie that I had somehow missed over the past 40 years, but I found it yesterday on Netflix. I knew that it was a fun story about truckers and the police, but I had not appreciated the serious theme at its heart, which was the transport of beer across state lines. I am told that in subsequent years, the interstate restrictions on beer transport were largely lifted in the United States, though I am not sure that Burt Reynolds can take any credit for that. However, interprovincial restrictions on beer transport are still an issue in Canada.

Business of Supply

There are many examples of interprovincial trade barriers, but the most apparent to the public are those for alcohol. Beer production and sales are a great example. One of the biggest trends in Canada over the past decade has been the growth of independent breweries in Canada. In 2006 there were 88 breweries in our country; today, there are more than 500. Most of them are small and produce less than 2,000 hectolitres each year.

Over a quarter of Canadian breweries are in my home province of British Columbia. Yesterday I talked to the owner of one of those fine small breweries in my riding. He urged me to support this motion to clear up the uncertainty around the transport of alcohol across provincial boundaries. These legal restrictions hamper the ability of small breweries to expand as their products grow in popularity.

Earlier today, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development mentioned the problem many small businesses have scaling up their operations. Here is a straightforward way to make it easier for many small businesses to grow across our country.

The issue of interprovincial trade barriers is even more critical for small wineries, since it makes even more economic sense for small wineries to ship their products across the country than it does for small breweries. The wine industry is a large and growing part of the economy in my riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay, as it is in many other parts of Canada, although I have to say, as I often do, that wineries in my riding make the finest wine in the country.

There are now 671 wineries across Canada, over 250 of them in British Columbia, and they create \$6.8 billion in economic activity each year. I applaud the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola for his private member's bill in the previous Parliament, which removed the federal interprovincial trade barriers for wine. Unfortunately, since that bill was passed, only three provinces have removed their own barriers to the transport of wine: British Columbia, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia.

For British Columbia producers, the most critical barrier is the one between British Columbia and Alberta. When Parliament passed the legislation that freed up interprovincial wine trade a couple of years ago, Alberta was the only province without specific trade barriers for wine. Ironically, the Progressive Conservative government in that province then took it upon itself to create such legislation to keep a barrier in place once the federal barrier was removed. Now to bring wine into Alberta from British Columbia or any other part of Canada, one must accompany the wine across border and consume it in one's own home.

Many of the visitors to the local wineries in my riding come from Alberta, and many of them are so impressed with the quality of the wine they taste that they like to buy a case or two to ship home. They cannot do it.

• (1650)

Those visitors also cannot go back home and order that wine online, and neither can wine shoppers from Ontario, Quebec, or most other provinces in Canada, but if they were from the United States or Nova Scotia or Manitoba, they could do both of those things.

I have talked to many of the wine producers in my riding and several from other parts of Canada in the past few years, and lately

they have quickly brought up the Comeau decision as an example of how federal action could help their industry grow.

Right now, only 10% of the wine consumed in Canada is made entirely in Canada, but that could grow more quickly if interprovincial barriers were lifted. That would benefit all Canadians, both financially and by allowing them to consume the fine wines made in my riding and across the country.

The question today is on the motion. Is this the best way to move forward? Will asking the Supreme Court for a reference to the Comeau decision help the negotiations between the federal government and its provincial and territorial partners? I can only say that the situation now is a situation of uncertainty, and it cannot be helpful in these negotiations. Clarity would help negotiations and help build collaboration and co-operation between provinces and the federal government.

I am happy to support the motion. While I cannot speak for the whole House, on this side of the aisle at least, as Burt Reynolds would say, "Looks like we got us a convoy".

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it bears repeating that we need to look at how we can bring down provincial barriers to enhance interprovincial trade. One only needs to recognize the amount of money that comes through interprovincial trade. It is \$400 billion, and it makes up about 20% of Canada's economy.

The federal government in particular needs to work with stakeholders and look at ways we can harmonize regulations and take steps that would enhance trade. If we realize that ambitious goal, we will have a healthier economy, which means that Canada's middle class will be healthier.

Does the member believe that it will be through negotiation, as opposed to litigation, that Canada will be better able to accomplish tangible results on this particular file?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I would characterize the House asking the Supreme Court for a reference in this case as litigation. I would think the House would just be asking for some clarity. If we are going to negotiate with the provinces and the territories to seek some sort of agreement to bring down interprovincial barriers, then it behooves us all to have some clarity. It behooves us all to know if what we are negotiating is actually constitutional.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay for his support of the motion.

We have heard many government members comment today that somehow litigating would be inappropriate. This case is going to be litigated all the way up to the Supreme Court. It is just a question of how soon and how much time is wasted.

Business of Supply

Would the member agree that the Supreme Court, the ultimate arbiter of issues of constitutionality in this country, should be the proper mechanism to deal with this issue?

• (1655)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I am not a constitutional lawyer or anything like that, but as the member mentioned, this case will likely be carried up the line to the Supreme Court eventually. If it would bring clarity to the negotiations between the federal government and the provinces to have the Supreme Court rule on this sooner rather than later, that could be helpful.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am also a member of Parliament who represents a wine-producing region, the beautiful Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island.

There are a lot of great things about visiting the province of British Columbia. However, our fine wines and our wine industry really are a top reason that many people come to my area. We get a lot of Americans, but we also get a lot of people from other parts of Canada.

I think the member is a fantastic representative for the wine industry in his area. I was wondering if he could tell this House a bit more about some of the feedback he has received directly from his constituents with respect to this particular issue.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate what I said. When I go to a local wine club barbecue at one of the wineries, it seems that most of the people there are from Alberta, and they are buying good quantities of wine that they want to ship home. A lot of wineries do ship it, even though it is not legal. I know that in Newfoundland, there was a case where a courier was charged with shipping wine illegally.

I think the law is ignored a lot. There is a lot of confusion around this right now, and I think it would really be helpful to the industry if it could be cleared up as soon as possible.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to today's opposition motion on internal trade. Issues relating to internal trade are important for the Canadian economy, as well as for consumer rights. Businesses and consumers have the right to have access to clear and fair rules.

By now, most of us are familiar with the case addressed by today's motion. In 2013, Gerard Comeau, a resident of New Brunswick, was fined about \$300 for buying beer and spirits in Quebec and then taking his purchases home with him back to New Brunswick. According to authorities, he was in violation of New Brunswick's Liquor Control Act, which requires that residents of New Brunswick purchase their alcohol from the provincial liquor corporation.

Mr. Comeau challenged the fine, arguing that New Brunswick's rules violate section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867, which reads:

All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces.

The judge in the case agreed with Mr. Comeau, and now the New Brunswick government is appealing that decision.

My colleague, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, is now asking fellow parliamentarians in this place to call on the government to refer the Comeau decision to the Supreme Court for constitutional clarification of section 121.

This strikes me as a pretty crafty move, pardon the pun. We know the Supreme Court has jurisdiction to hear constitutional order references and provide clarifications, but in this specific instance I have to wonder if this is the best avenue available to us or if it is just the most politically convenient tool at the moment.

I understand that my Conservative colleague who moved today's motion has done a lot of work over the years on liberalizing the interprovincial trade for beer, wine, and spirits. Interprovincial trade has always been a key element of Canada's economic development. The NDP is in favour of reducing artificial barriers and harmonizing regulations, because we know this is good for Canada's small and medium-sized businesses.

To clarify who we are talking about when we say SMEs, let me take a step back. Statistics Canada defines small businesses as those that employ fewer than 100 employees, and these made up a whopping 98.1% of all Canadian businesses that reported having employees in 2014. Medium businesses employ between 100 and 500 employees, and represent 1.7% of Canadian businesses. While large businesses, those that employ more than 500 employees, represent 0.2% of Canadian businesses.

Small businesses create local jobs, support our families, and drive economic prosperity. They are the backbones of our country and the hearts of small towns across Canada, small towns like those I represent in Essex.

It is important that we have this conversation about reducing trade barriers because there are actually a lot of barriers inhibiting Canadian SMEs from greater trade both interprovincially and internationally. We hear a lot about tariff reductions with international trade agreements, but it is also important to look at the range of non-tariff barriers that inhibit trade.

Last spring, the Standing Committee on International Trade undertook a study about the experiences of Canadian SMEs that are involved in international markets, and some of what they learned is also applicable to our conversation today about internal trade. I think Canadians would be surprised to hear of the challenges facing SMEs in accessing international markets.

The committee heard testimony about the strong entrepreneurial spirit that exists among Canadians. This is clearly evident when we look at the explosion of craft breweries operating in communities across Canada.

The committee also heard that the international footprint of Canada's SMEs has not reached its potential. Only 10.4% of SMEs exported in 2011, and most of this trade was done with the United States. They really have not penetrated the high-growth markets we see around the world. SMEs told the committee how they face challenges accessing capital, require deeper levels of support, and experience difficulties and inefficiencies with border clearance.

Business of Supply

Many people in my riding of Essex have extensive knowledge of the challenges with moving goods across the U.S. border. This is just the tip of the iceberg. It is critical to the success of Canadian SMEs that the federal government act on this report, and that they address the trading challenges faced by SMEs.

Domestically, there is a lot the government can be doing to strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs, such as craft breweries, wineries, and distilleries. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, internal trade barriers cost the Canadian economy more than \$14 billion each year. These trade barriers add costs and discourage our businesses, mainly our SMEs, from doing business in more than one jurisdiction and from growing their presence in new markets in Canada.

● (1700)

In addition to addressing internal barriers, we should support talking about other ways the government can support SMEs.

The NDP is a strong proponent of several proposals to help our businesses and interprovincial trade, including restoring cuts to the tax rate for SMEs from 11% to 9%, restoring the hiring tax credit for small businesses, imposing a limit on credit card transaction fees, and facilitating the transfer of family businesses from parents to children. The Liberals' broken promise on reducing the SME tax rate is very disappointing to the many small business owners I represent in Windsor Essex. I urge the government to re-examine its commitment and seriously look at following through on that.

It is important to note that most Canadians support trade within our own provinces and territories. Canadians are quite favourable to the idea of removing internal trade barriers, particularly when it comes to alcohol.

This is an important issue to my riding of Essex, which is home to well over a dozen wineries, including distillers as well as craft beer brewers. They attract a significant level of tourism to our region. I have met with several wineries in my riding, as well as the Canadian Vintners Association. We spoke about the interprovincial trade issues and they are pleased to have an opportunity to export their wines to some provinces. However, only a few provinces have reduced regulations so far, so there is still a lot of work to be done on this file.

I think there is broad support among parliamentarians from all parties for the spirit of the motion. What I would really like to see now is some concrete action. We know what can be done to support Canadian SMEs. We know what can be done to increase internal trade. Now it is on the government to get the job done.

According to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, issues relating to interprovincial trade, including discussions around the 1995 Agreement on Internal Trade, would be a priority. He said he has addressed this issue with his provincial counterparts, but once again we have seen no evidence of this.

Now the Conservatives are blaming the Liberals for not being able to reach a new agreement with the provinces and territories on interprovincial trade. It should not be forgotten, however, that the Conservatives had 10 years in office and were not able to settle this issue. I appreciate that some progress was made, but the fact of the matter is that these issues are still outstanding. Now they are trying to go through the Supreme Court for political gain.

I intend to support the motion, but in the same vein, I also want to encourage the government to follow through on concrete solutions for Canadian small businesses. As I discussed earlier, that means reducing the SME tax rate, restoring the hiring tax credit for small businesses, and limiting credit card transaction fees.

I would also like to emphasize that the public system for distributing liquor has been a largely effective model for both consumers and government. Crown corporations such as the LCBO provide significant revenue streams for the provinces, as well as good-paying jobs. The LCBO is globally recognized as an award-winning retailer of beer, wine, and liquor. Recognizing the success of provincial retailers in Canada and the incredible service they provide to consumers is important.

In conclusion, I support reduced restrictions on the interprovincial trade of wine, beer, and spirits, so I will be voting yes to the motion.

● (1705)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member said she wants to see the government take more action. I believe that the government has acted. In fact, in terms of the agreement that was put in place in 1995, the Agreement on Internal Trade, it was the first time there was an agreement put in place. A number of years went by and there was a change in government, which did take some action but it was somewhat limited.

We have now been in government for roughly eight months and already we have seen significant attempts to try to get the provinces, premiers, and ministers to recognize the benefits of taking down those barriers. We can think of inconsistent regulations and standards, and the cost to potential business growth, which has an impact on the number of jobs that could be created, and then the increase for consumer choice if we can get this done right.

However, this is critically important, and this gets to my question for the member. Would she not agree that the best way to deal with interprovincial trade is to work with the different provinces in a collaborative fashion, to bring them to the table and recognize where the modifications can best be realized and ultimately where the Canadian economy would benefit so that all Canadians benefit? The best way is a collaborative approach and that is something that we should be aggressively pursuing as opposed to trying to bring something to the Supreme Court of Canada at this point.

Business of Supply

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, I think that having a collaborative approach is incredibly important. We know that the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development has said in the House that he has discussions that are ongoing between the federal government and the provinces on this issue. What we would like to see is some transparency. We would like to have a fulsome understanding of what those conversations are so that we can know if interprovincial trade barriers are being addressed in the way the member who presented this particular motion speaks to.

Therefore, we would like to know if the government is considering a phase-in period. The specifics around these conversations that are happening is what we would all like to know. We support any effort that would remove interprovincial trade barriers in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her very eloquent speech. It is clear that she is quite familiar with trade between provinces and countries.

As a consumer, when I stand in front of the shelves of beer in a grocery store, in Quebec, or in a Beer Store here, I am increasingly surprised to see how many European brands there are, when our own industry produces so many beers. We have many craft brewers, but there are so many imported beers.

Since I know that my colleague is quite familiar with this issue, I would like her to explain how we got to the point where it is easier to bring Dutch beer into Quebec than Ontario beer.

[English]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, I think this is exactly what this particular piece speaks to. It is the fact that it is easier to import and export outside of the country than it is across provinces with these barriers. We certainly see this in the case of Mr. Comeau who was making a purchase for personal use in another province and trying to bring it back.

I think that all Canadians would be very pleased to see these provincial barriers removed and to be able to access beer, wine, and spirits across those borders. Therefore, when they travel to the beautiful regions of Canada, such as mine in Essex where we have a beautiful wine industry, they can go back home and still access those products within Canada, as opposed to having the only option of international products on the shelf.

• (1710)

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all my colleagues for this important debate. I would like to acknowledge my colleague from British Columbia for the work he has done on freeing wine across Canada. I understand now his campaign to free beer is also very popular among Canadians. It is something we should continue moving forward on as we start to liberate the Canadian economy from provincial trade barriers.

I want to talk about bales. No, this is not a Liberal speech that is irrelevant to the topic. This is actually a very relevant example of what happens with interprovincial trade barriers and regulations.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Barrie—Innisfil. He has a very important topic he wants to talk about also.

One might ask what hay bales have to do with interprovincial trade barriers. Actually, this is a very real story. In August 2003, we had a horrible frost on my farm. It took out my crop. It cost me and many of my neighbours in the area of millions of dollars. For myself alone, it cost me about a quarter of a million dollars in one night.

When a farmer has an established crop and that happens, he looks at what he can do to salvage that income. We worked with our local agriculture officials and they realized that canola, for example, made great horse feed. We did everything right and we baled that crop. We salvaged it. Then we went on the Internet, *Western Producer*, and places like that and we sold that crop. We sold it into Alberta. It worked out great. The horse guys in Alberta were happy. We were happy. Everything was happy-go-lucky. We got everything baled and ready to ship the crop into Alberta. The trucks hit the border, and who would have known that the regulations for a trailer in Alberta when hauling hay are different? It required a different coloured sign and different symbols on the wide load signs, and different permits.

For farmers, they look at this and ask “What are you talking about? If it's safe to haul in Saskatchewan why can't it be safe to haul in Alberta, or be funded?” A neighbour gets a fine, then another neighbour gets a fine. All of a sudden the guys from Alberta are saying it is not worth the hassle to buy the hay from Saskatchewan, even though they really need it because of the drought. However, because of the interprovincial trade barriers, the regulations that were put in place, it made that move impossible to happen.

That is just one example of how a barrier like this really restricts the flow of goods across our country. It is a very real example of what costs people thousands and thousands of dollars for no reason at all. The roads were not made any safer by having different regulations. They were not improved. There was no issue other than the fact that Alberta wanted to do it one way, and Saskatchewan's NDP government at the time wanted to do it another way.

It went the other way also, when we had stuff coming back from Alberta to Saskatchewan, we had to get a permit. The Saskatchewan NDP government at the time said it did not want to get rid of the permits because they were a good cash cow. We have to remember that back at that time all our kids were moving to Alberta, so the NDP was looking for any type of taxation it could get. This was one way to do it.

When we look at that we realize that is a direct impact on what can happen when we have improper trade regulations.

Business of Supply

I sit on the trade committee. I was actually the former chair of the trade committee. I always find it really interesting when we bring in different producers from around Canada to talk about trade. They say we need trade, that it is very important. When we ask about internal trade they say it is actually easier for them to sell their stuff in Washington than to take it out of B.C. and sell it in Alberta.

We have to scratch our heads and ask if this make sense. What is the logic behind that? What are we really trying to accomplish as a country, as a confederation, when it is easier to export our goods than to sell them next door in our own country? Those things need to be eliminated. The Comeau case really provides the government with a unique opportunity to be involved in helping eliminate barriers.

We have heard speeches here in the House today talking about how this case is probably going to go to the Supreme Court and be ruled upon by the Supreme Court. The provinces should be very worried about that. They should be so worried they might want to negotiate something beforehand to put some stability in place, so that it is done in such a way that the barriers are actually removed.

The federal government has a chance to show tremendous leadership on this file if it so chooses. Keep in mind, I am also on the trade committee that has been consulting and delaying TPP passage. Let us face it, the Liberals are going to let Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump actually write our foreign trade policy. If the Liberals would not write their own foreign trade policy, why would they write their policy here in Canada? They will just vacate that to provinces and accept whatever comes out of it. That way they are not responsible. Why show leadership? They are not used to doing that.

● (1715)

Another example of silliness in this market, I think, is that all of us here in Ottawa sneak across to Quebec and go to Costco. I can buy beef there, bread, wine, and beer. I can buy beer, but I better not bring it back to Ontario where I live because then I would be breaking the law. I would be like Al Capone. However, that beer in Quebec is the exact same beer that is in Ontario. It is just as safe, brewed probably in the same factory, but yet for some reason we have a barrier to prevent that from happening. It does not make sense. Canadians cannot figure that one out. The reality is, they are just ignoring it and doing it anyway.

A colleague from the NDP just stated the exact same thing. We have already seen wine shipments going across Canada, breaking these barriers as we speak. In reality, Canadians are already doing what the market should be allowed to do, and that is trade interprovincially, free.

We look at legislation, and the Liberals say we should not use litigation to solve this; we should actually negotiate and wait until negotiations move forward. Like I said previously, we could use this court case to enhance our argument in that process if we want to go through a consulting process, but litigation is a valid form for settling this. When we are breaking somebody's constitutional right, that is what the courts are there to do, whether we like it or not.

We have a perfect example of where that has happened here, right in front of us in the Senate today. Bill C-14 is because of litigation. It is because the court did not like the way the law was written. I do not agree with the court. I do not necessarily like it, but litigation was the

process that was used that sent it back to this House to rewrite the law. It is valid. In fact, the government is doing it through C-14 as we speak. To say that we should not do it that way just does not make sense. It is hypocritical. It is already happening.

The reality is, the courts are there to actually protect the rights of Canadians, so in this scenario, Canadians feel that they should be able to trade freely among the provinces. I should be able to go to B. C. and sell some stuff, and the member from Kelowna should be able to come back to Prince Albert and sell his goods. As long as they meet the safety requirements, as long as they are safe, where is the issue? Why do we have these barriers?

If we looked at them more closely, I think we would see there is a good reason to get rid of them, and I will give credit to the western provinces. They actually showed some leadership on this. The New West Partnership, Premier Wall, showed lots of leadership in trying to identify what these barriers are and remove them.

Labour mobility, getting rid of the situation that we had with trucks hauling hay across the border. These things need to be eliminated, and I want to congratulate the provinces that have taken this seriously because it just happens that those are the provinces that are doing very well in this confederation. Saskatchewan has a growing, booming economy, regardless of what is happening in the oil and gas sector, what is happening everywhere else. It is still holding its own.

If we want to do economic stimulus, if we want to boost this economy without spending a dime, let us deal with these. This is one thing the Liberals could do and it would not cost them a dime, but the impact across this country would be spread and felt immediately.

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Should you seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, for the consideration of the supply period ending June 23, 2016, Standing Order 81(18)(c) shall be amended by replacing the words 10 p.m. with the words 9 p.m.

This of course means that the bells would ring at 9 p.m. tonight for the vote at 9:30 p.m.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Business of Supply

(Motion agreed to)

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

Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to what the member was saying. I loved the example of hay. The member illustrated just why we need to see the different levels of government working together to see what we can do to streamline the regulations. The member is quite right in his assertion that by taking a proactive approach there is \$400 billion in interprovincial trade. If we get this thing right, we could see a significant increase in economic activity. There is a great deal of benefit by it.

The question I have for the member is similar to what I have been asking of other members. Would he not agree that the best way to take down those barriers is in fact to work with the provinces and indigenous governments in trying to build consensus as to how we can take away and harmonize regulations? We know that can be effective because we saw that take place in 1995 when everyone came to the table, and they took down the barriers and put us on a road. At least that would take us in a more positive way dealing with internal provincial trade.

• (1720)

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. He hits the point right on the head. It was 1995.

The provinces are not willing partners. They do have the unique opportunity by participating in this court case, by actually watching it and working with it going into the Supreme Court. They have an opportunity to actually have a hammer on the provinces to say that this is going to the Supreme Court, that we think the Supreme Court is actually going to respect Canadians' rights to trade as they see fit across this country.

It enhances their bargaining ability, so they should be there showing leadership because that would be their fail-safe if they cannot negotiate. If you can negotiate something in the next six months, which I do not think you can, that would be fine. However, Canadians are becoming very impatient on this issue, so to drag your feet and go through a process like you are doing on TPP would not be acceptable and would not be accepted by Canadians.

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

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is the case that Canadians are impatient to get rid of interprovincial trade barriers. I want to remind the House that the commitment was made in the Speech from the Throne in 2007 by the previous government that there would be a specific effort to tackle barriers to trade interprovincially. The former government said in 2007 that the previous prime minister would be prepared to use the trade and commerce clause in the Constitution if needed.

I am very sympathetic to this motion. I appreciate the fact that we have had a day to examine the Comeau case and to consider whether a Supreme Court reference would help. However, would the hon. member not agree with me that, as the previous prime minister had it in his powers and did nothing, the current Prime Minister has it in his

powers to invoke the trade and commerce clause and begin cleaning up interprovincial barriers to trade if we do not see movement from the provinces?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I would like to look at that very closely before I give my opinion on that.

Regardless, in this situation with the Comeau case, the Liberals do have that ability to use that case and take it right to the Supreme Court to get a result that would actually be beneficial for all Canadians. That definitely is an option. There is the fact that in 2007 there was a strong commitment to move forward on this file. The agreement was not lacking on the federal side; it was lacking on the provincial side. That is what I am saying.

They do not have a hammer with the provinces unless they decide to use it. Right now, the Liberal government is showing no leadership and no ability to use that hammer. Just simply by being involved in this case would give them that hammer. Why not be involved? Why not do that?

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again the issue is that the Supreme Court narrowed the application of section 121 in 1921. Since then, we have been unable to have evidence that would actually show otherwise.

This court in New Brunswick, with Justice LeBlanc, has brought that evidence forward and found that. The member has raised that the Supreme Court is the venue for this issue to be solved. Does the member agree right now that there is going to be a ton of provincial taxpayer monies used to litigate this all the way up to the Supreme Court? Would it not be better for taxpayers and for Canadian producers to get this in front of the Supreme Court right now?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I do agree. It is just common sense. This is a lot of money being spent that is not being used for health care and other things that are important to our provinces. The reality is that this law is going to change. The Supreme Court is going to hear it and it is going to throw it out, and Canadians are going to end up being able to trade across this country freely and widely.

The reality is this. Does the federal government want to have a leadership role in this, or is it just going to sit back and let the wild west evolve?

• (1725)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand today to speak to this subject. At the outset, one does not get a body like this by not drinking beer. One gets a body like this by drinking a lot of beer. Therefore, I am in support of freeing beer.

In all seriousness, I know the hon. member was speaking about this, and it is his motion we are presenting today. However, it quite disturbed me this morning to hear the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and his answers to the issues the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola brought up.

Business of Supply

I was elected as a new member of Parliament in an opposition role, and as a new MP not part of the previous government. I did not come to the House for history lessons, on a daily basis, about what the past governments did or did not do. I came to Ottawa to hold the government to account on what it was not doing, not what previous governments did not do.

We see the government not providing leadership on a lot of issues. In fact, the Liberals are looking back through rose-coloured glasses, through a Liberal lens. Of course, it is easy to govern when we do not want to make a decision. Leadership means that we stand for what is right, even when people do not agree with us. It is about moving people in a direction in which they know they should be going but perhaps are unwilling to go, and we are not seeing that.

We are seeing a lot of misses by the Liberal government, with respect to the Carter decision and the deadline of June 6, and the Agreement on Internal Trade. I anxiously await, and I am sure all Canadians do, for the time when the government starts building its own legacy rather than tearing down others. I am not sure and I am not confident that a legacy will be had.

However, we have seen a systematic dismantling of a lot of things, almost, in effect, like governments had never existed in our country. One of the things the Liberals need to focus on is not only talking about the Constitution when it suits them, but they are the government now. As such, they must uphold the Constitution at all times and not when the wind blows in their favour.

I want to remind Canadians, again, how we got to this point.

The Comeau ruling is a landmark court decision in New Brunswick, which struck down the province's alcohol importation limits. In his decision, Judge Ronald LeBlanc dismissed charges against Gerard Comeau under New Brunswick's Liquor Control Act, saying the law violated section 121 of the Constitution.

Section 121 is clear:

All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces.

In a May 30 news release, the deputy leader of the opposition and the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola issued a press release which said:

If the Liberal government truly supports free trade in Canada, it will refer the Comeau ruling to the Supreme Court, and agree to act as an intervenor now that the Comeau ruling has been appealed....Given the failure of the Liberal Government to reach a new agreement on interprovincial trade with the provinces and territories, it only makes sense for the Liberals to refer the Comeau ruling to the Supreme Court. The Court should also comment on which products, jurisdictions and types of barriers are covered by the Comeau ruling.

It further states:

The Comeau ruling could lead to stronger economic growth because freer trade amongst the provinces and territories is a cost effective way to encourage greater job creation and private sector investment. A positive decision by the Supreme Court would also give consumers access to more choice in the marketplace.

It then goes on to say, "It is time to free the beer and free the Canadian economy."

What does it mean in terms of the Canadian economy when we look at the issue of interprovincial trade?

● (1730)

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has said that barriers to internal trade cost the Canadian economy nearly \$15 billion every year. What could we do with that \$15 billion today? We could pay for a year's worth of taxpayer funded benefits to parents with children under 18. It could cover the costs of the employment insurance system for an entire year. That \$15 billion represents more than triple the funding the government has allocated to building strong communities in budget 2016. It could even pay for the Liberals' Syrian refugee plan 15 times over, although we should probably wait for the final bill to come in for that before we start committing to that figure.

The Atlantic region of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has said that small businesses in Atlantic Canada lose \$1 billion in annual compliance costs associated with trade barriers within its region. What can \$1 billion do for Atlantic Canada? It would support the many routes of ferry services in the Maritime region for 20 years.

The Conference Board of Canada says that removing internal trade barriers would add \$4.8 billion to real GDP and create 78,000 jobs in British Columbia and Alberta alone. The 78,000 jobs that could be created represents more than all jobs lost in Alberta in 2015.

From 1981 to 2014, interprovincial trade has lagged behind growth in international trade. From 1981 to 2014, interprovincial trade grew at an average annual rate of 4.2% and international trade grew at approximately 6%. Therefore, in terms of the federal angle on interprovincial trade, what does it mean?

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development wants to talk about previous governments. Then, let us talk about previous governments.

The previous Conservative government, with the provinces and territories, agreed to work together to increase free trade across provincial borders. Former industry minister Mr. Moore declared the Agreement on Internal Trade outdated and made removing domestic barriers to internal trade a priority. The former minister called for the modernization of internal trade in Canada by updating the Agreement on Internal Trade based on four new additional principles: first, the economy, and that is that Canadian goods, services, labour and investments should be treated as favourably as those from other countries; second, full inclusive transparent coverage, that we should ensure the free trade of all goods and services, labour and investment; third, aligning regulations, standards and practices across the country and explaining when exceptions are necessary; and, fourth, parties should regularly report to Canadians on the progress of those modernization efforts.

Those were the goals of the previous Conservative government, with the understanding that there were limits on internal trade, which the Comeau case has now opened up constitutionally.

There are some key recommendations in the Senate report on internal trade called “Tear Down These Walls”, which was released in June of this year. As the report is available, I would encourage all members of the House to read it if possible.

In conclusion, the current AIT had a deadline of March 31 for a renewed agreement. No new agreement has been announced.

When the Agreement on Internal Trade was signed in 1994, Canada had free trade with two countries, Mexico and the U.S. Today, Canada has 36 agreements involving 15 countries.

The federal Liberal government needs to lead and show leadership as the intervenor of the Comeau case now that it has been appealed.

• (1735)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thought the leader of the Green Party raised a good issue. She made reference to the fact that the former Conservative prime minister said that he believed internal trade between the provinces would be of the utmost priority. He knew full well at the time that he could have gone to the Supreme Court for a reference.

I listened to the member opposite. If I take him at his word when he said the Conservatives were aggressively trying to work with the provinces to update the Agreement on Internal Trade, something Jean Chrétien established.

At the very least, would he not recognize that this government has been in office now for seven months and has made a commitment to work with the different stakeholders, in particular, our provinces, to deal with internal provincial trade? Should we not allow for the opportunity to work in collaboration to accomplish the types of things that his previous government was unable to cause to materialize and that has been called upon—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member brings up an important point. When we look at what happened before the Comeau case was announced, there were some clear challenges in dealing with the provinces. There is no question that we should be taking a collaborative path with the provinces. I do not think any member on this side of the House would disagree with that.

The challenge exists now on the constitutionality of what the Comeau case does. The government now has the ability to appeal that case and act as the intervenor, as I said earlier, in order to open it up. We have to be very careful. I think if we were to ask Canadians, most of them would like internal trade opened up, not with a narrow focus on internal trade but a broad focus on what goods and services could be traded between provinces.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his speech. One good thing about his approach is that he provided a lot of information on the negotiations and the issues.

Business of Supply

However, let us look at a very simple, very clear example that will be easy for everyone to understand. When it comes to a case of 12 or 24 beers, can the member tell me, out of all the potential obstacles to interprovincial trade, what are the two most important obstacles to overcome and negotiate with the provinces?

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I refer back to the recent case. There is a definite constitutional issue that can be addressed, as long as the government acts in a leadership manner to do that. I do not think, as I said in my speech, that we should be limiting it. The Comeau case very clearly indicates that it is the constitutional right of Canadians to deal with internal trade and to have this done. The government should, in fact, intervene on this matter rapidly.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we heard a number of arguments today, and over the past several weeks, when we started talking about “free the beer”. First is the moral argument. It is completely moral for Canadians to want to trade with Canadians when there are negotiated trade deals with foreign jurisdictions that give them federal market access. Then there is the economic argument. It is a debt-free way to grow our economy.

However, now we have a legal argument, one that has been found by a justice in a court, new evidence that challenges the current understanding of constitutional law when it comes to section 121. Would the member agree that the most expedient way for us to deal with this business is to raise this to the Supreme Court level for its ruling? There is a clear public interest and a clear desire for change.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I would absolutely agree with the member on that. This case has really opened up the issue of interprovincial trade and the constitutionality of it. It is quite clear that if the government chose to, and it should choose to, act as an intervenor on this case and get some real clarity on the issue, Canadians would be better off.

I spoke about the overall economy and how that would benefit not just our economy but Canadians in general. It is absurd that we are not moving in this direction.

• (1740)

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Richmond Hill. I want to thank the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola for bringing his motion before this House.

I think we will find that all members, no matter where they sit in this chamber, will agree on the importance of internal trade to the Canadian economy. This debate, however, highlights two approaches: one legislative and one collaborative. The collaborative approach provides more opportunity, in my opinion.

Canada has always been a trading nation. The Agreement on Internal Trade represents an important issue where we are implementing the government's commitment to work closely with provincial and territorial partners.

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Modernizing the agreement would lead to enhanced trade across provincial and territorial boundaries, and serve to strengthen our economy. As a small business owner, a certified international trade professional, and a member of the international trade committee, I feel very strongly about trade and also internal trade.

Today, I will speak to the very topic where our government is working to enhance Canada's internal trade, the topic of energy. From electricity transmission to oil and gas pipelines, we have an opportunity to protect Canada's energy security, encourage energy conservation, and bring cleaner, renewable energy onto a smarter electricity grid.

In fact, these opportunities are outlined in the Minister of Natural Resources' mandate letter from the Prime Minister. The minister has been asked to work closely with his provincial and territorial counterparts on a Canadian energy strategy. That is exactly what he is doing.

This new approach of bilateral relations, working collaboratively across government, is an approach that will provide clear and substantive results. For best collaboration, the provinces and territories have developed a Canadian energy strategy, and we look forward to supporting the work they have started.

In fact, at the recent first ministers meeting in Vancouver, the federal government formally recognized the leadership demonstrated by the provinces and territories in developing the Canadian energy strategy. This strategy will shape the sustainable development of Canada's energy future.

Further, budget 2016 speaks directly to greater regional co-operation between provinces and territories. The objective of this co-operative relationship serves to encourage greater electricity reliability while simultaneously reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants across Canada.

To that end, budget 2016 provided Natural Resources Canada with \$2.5 million over two years to facilitate regional dialogues and studies to identify promising electricity projects. As all of these steps demonstrate, there is growing consensus across the nation for a Canadian energy strategy. Moving forward with a collaborative plan is key.

I would like to use my time to touch upon five areas of federal jurisdiction where our government can help deliver a truly comprehensive energy strategy, not with a hammer but with collaboration.

First is clean energy innovation. Along with the provinces and territories, our government recognizes that the continued investments in clean energy technologies are imperative in order to ensure that Canada's resource sectors remain sustainable and prosperous.

Furthermore, these investments must include technologies that improve energy efficiency and security, while expanding the use of cleaner energy resources, such as wind and solar energy. For this reason, the Prime Minister announced last November that Canada—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola has a point of order.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, while I do appreciate the member opposite has a point of view, I bring up the fact of relevance. So far,

beyond acknowledging that this is the motion we are discussing, there has been no conversation whatsoever, no relevance to what is here.

If this were a discussion about energy policy, I am sure it would go quite far. However, I would ask that she return to the actual motion we are supposed to be discussing.

● (1745)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his intervention. It is true that it is in the Standing Orders that members should make sure that their commentary and/or questions are pertinent to the question that is before the House.

I do note that the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest began her commentary on the energy topic as it related to barriers between provinces and so on. If members start and link the topic of their discussion to the matter before the House, they can in fact carry on with that topic.

One would normally expect, of course—and I recognize that the member is about four minutes into her time permitted—that she will summarize and bring that back around to the point that is before the House. I am sure she will do that.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, linking the two—energy and the motion at hand—is very significant and very relevant. It is a true example of working in collaboration with provinces and territories to get the work done, which has not happened in the energy sector over the last 10 years. I will get back on track.

Our government will help deliver a truly comprehensive Canadian energy strategy through international leadership on energy, which does require collaboration. As one of the world's top producers and exporters of energy, Canada has a powerful story to tell on the world stage. Canada also has a powerful opportunity to demonstrate on the world stage that we are not a government that wields a hammer. We are a government that talks and collaborates.

Strengthening our relationship with international partners will help position Canada as a stable, reliable energy supplier of choice, as well as increase export opportunities for Canadian products, services, and technologies. Whether it is joining with the United States and Mexico in continental co-operation on energy and the environment, or opening new markets through international trade agreements, the federal government can propel our efforts both here at home and internationally.

The third area where Canada can lead is through indigenous engagement. In Canada, the role of indigenous people in the energy sector has never been more important or promising. Again, they need to be collaborated with, and they need to be involved in the discussion.

Business of Supply

In order to get things done in this country, we all have to be working together to have a solution that we can live with. Indigenous people have asked for assurances that their rights and communities will not be adversely affected in developing energy. Provinces and territories have identified respect for aboriginal and treaty rights as one of the key principles that will guide their ongoing work under the Canadian energy strategy. Federally, we will do the same.

The fourth area pertains to infrastructure development. The federal government recognizes that Canada needs significant new investment in green, climate-resilient infrastructure. That is why we will invest billions over the next decade and work with the provinces and territories.

We have an amazing opportunity to connect our energy resources across the country and to foster the kind of enhanced internal trade outlined in today's motion. This is true in many different scenarios, be it the enhancement of the east-west electricity transmission in order to strengthen resiliency and reinforce market integration, or be it new pipelines that support the diversification of our oil and gas markets.

The last component I would like to speak about in which the federal government could help deliver a truly comprehensive Canadian energy strategy is public trust. As the Prime Minister has said many times, governments grant permits, but only communities grant permission.

Canadians expect energy to be developed sustainably to ensure that the health, safety, and security of citizens are protected, and our vital ecosystems. Recently, however, Canadians have been dissatisfied with the manner in which major energy projects are reviewed and assessed.

Through meaningful engagements with indigenous people, through investing in clean technologies, energy efficiency, and renewable sources of energy, we can make significant improvements to our current procedures. This is the reason our government has announced an interim strategy to review major resource projects currently in the regulatory review process. For this reason, we have promised an overhaul of Canada's environmental assessment process to achieve a more permanent and comprehensive collaborative approach. To that end, we will be modernizing the National Energy Board.

Provinces and territories also have environmental assessment and regulatory processes, and they have an equally important role in restoring public trust that energy development will be done safely and sustainably. We will continue to work collaboratively with the provinces and territories to efficiently achieve common objectives to our respective regulatory processes, just as in internal trade.

We see a bright future for the Canadian energy sector. We see a bright future for the internal trade sector; a future that takes our vast endowment of energy—collaboration from oil and gas to wind and tide and sun—and joins them together under one cohesive plan. We are a nation, and nation to nation, from coast to coast to coast, we want a plan that is a national plan.

The government is currently working with its provincial and territorial counterparts to renew the agreement on internal trade. We believe working collaboratively with our provincial and territorial

partners is the best approach and the one that will deliver the results that Canadians expect of us.

• (1750)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we heard on CBC about a week and a half ago from the CEO of Moosehead Brewery, Canada's oldest independent brewery, who said, on the subject of a supreme court reference, that he was fully supportive of this getting done as soon as possible. Industry in New Brunswick is calling for this. He even mentioned that Moosehead Brewery is doing business in more than 50 U.S. states and it is fairly open. He hopes he will have the same opportunities here in Canada. That is what industry is saying.

On the other side, we all know the case involving Mr. Gerard Comeau, a resident of New Brunswick, who tried to bring beer across a provincial border and was fined. He took his case to court. We on the Conservative side, and I believe members of the NDP, salute his courage in standing up to this.

Does the member believe that Mr. Comeau has a constitutional right to do that? Does she believe that every Canadian has a right to trade with other Canadians?

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, as the member representing southwest New Brunswick, the riding where one of the owners of Moosehead Brewery lives, I can speak quite personally to this.

The transfer of alcohol from one province to another is limited. We want to have freer trade and managed trade. There is an opportunity here for us to look further into this, but the provinces need to be involved in terms of the regulations.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my hon. colleague from New Brunswick Southwest on the leadership she continues to show on the international trade committee.

We would agree that different levels of government need to work collaboratively to take down the interprovincial trade barriers, in order to promote trade within our country.

Could the member perhaps elaborate on what might be some unintended consequences of allowing interprovincial trade to continue without proper agreements between the provinces?

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, in terms of unintended consequences, we have an opportunity here to solve a problem. We want to reduce the barriers to free trade between the provinces, but we need to do it in a managed format, the same as we do with international trade. We prepare our businesses and our governments. We prepare our policies for the best avenue for trade to work in the best interests of Canadian consumers and Canadian businesses.

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We also have to work closely with the provinces because we also have the other aspect of consumption tax that is collected on goods such as alcohol. That is something we have to consider. What would happen in the province of New Brunswick if 80% of New Brunswickers were purchasing their alcohol out of province? Where would we be as a province to pay for some of our services? We are looking to have managed trade to help our businesses prepare for this rolling forward, and that preparation includes looking at the possible consequences of freer trade. We want freer trade. New Brunswickers and Atlantic Canadians want freer trade. We just want it done in the best interests of Canadians, with the best process to help and protect our businesses.

• (1755)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague from Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola for bringing the motion forward today.

My colleague on this side asked a question a few moments ago, and he definitely did not get an answer. One part of the question was this. Does the member on the Liberal side believe that it is a constitutional right for Canadians to do business across provincial borders without penalty?

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Mr. Speaker, the aspect of a constitutional right is best decided by a court. In the interim, we are looking to continue with our good will, to work with the provinces and territories, one of the things that we campaigned hard on. We have been successful since the election as a result of that. We want to continue with that because it is the best way to find solutions.

If it goes to the court of appeal, we also stand the risk of a level of uncertainty if it does not go forward and is struck down by the court.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to participate in the debate today on the Conservative motion in relation to internal trade in Canada. As we all know, the government is currently working with its provincial and territorial counterparts to renew the Agreement on Internal Trade. We believe that working co-operatively with our provincial and territorial partners is the best approach.

We also respect the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories and want to work with them to bring down provincial and territorial trade barriers. The motion presented proposes an antagonistic approach that is inconsistent with the collaboration needed to make meaningful progress on internal trade, and as such, I oppose it.

My objective today is to highlight important federal actions that are helping to foster a more competitive environment for businesses, including small business and entrepreneurs, across Canada. I will tie this in at the end.

Let me provide an overview of several key initiatives that are advancing entrepreneurship and fostering internal trade. These actions are informed by our commitment to consult broadly with stakeholders and businesses to strengthen our platform of innovative, inclusive growth.

It is no secret that one of the important ways for Canadian businesses to improve competitiveness, productivity, and innovation is by enhancing trade within Canada. The Canadian market provides

valuable opportunities for growth and accounts for almost \$400 billion in annual trade per year.

Canadian businesses have noted a number of areas where firms and entrepreneurs are held back by internal trade barriers. For example, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business conducted a survey of over 6,000 of its members and identified many interprovincial obstacles, such as regulatory differences and burdensome and duplicative paperwork and permit requirements. These obstacles can significantly impair the ability of its members to expand across borders.

To address such issues, the CFIB and other prominent business groups developed a far-reaching vision paper to help inform government priorities for renewing the Agreement on Internal Trade. The vision paper advanced several principles. For example, it should be as easy to trade with another province or territory as it is with other countries. All businesses should have open access to all markets within Canada.

The business coalition identified a number of priorities for reform, such as modernizing the AIT to align with the commitments made to the EU; enhancing regulatory co-operation and addressing technical barriers to trade; ensuring effective and efficient dispute resolution; and ensuring an effective, transparent, and inclusive structure to govern internal trade.

It emphasized that regulatory and administrative barriers are the most prominent barriers to trade for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. It also highlighted that past incremental efforts to improve internal trade have often not focused on the needs of the SMEs.

We are very mindful of the views of the business community, and the overall message we have heard is that now is the time for strong, collaborative action, by all governments, to work together to renegotiate the AIT. We are committed to advancing and finalizing those ongoing collaborative negotiations.

As the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development attested, there is goodwill and commitment on the part of the federal government and our provincial and territorial partners to get this job done. We need to continue in this positive manner and work to sign an eventual agreement. The timing of this motion could not be more wrong.

We are also committed to acting, as the federal government, to make it easier for entrepreneurs and growing firms to do business across Canada. For example, small businesses and entrepreneurs regularly cite BizPaL as an effective and efficient service for navigating jurisdictional differences in government permits and licencing activities for federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments.

Business of Supply

●(1800)

While Biz Pal users are currently able to obtain the kinds of business registration forms required to operate in various jurisdictions, they are not able to acquire information on associated regulations, such as provincial regulations related to goods and services.

The federal government continues to work with willing jurisdictions through initiatives such BizPal to explore ways to make it easier for Canadian businesses to operate anywhere across the country.

Another area identified by business is the need to reduce differences across Canada in corporate registration and reporting requirements.

In Canada, when a business is incorporated, it must generally register and report in each province and territory in which it carries on, or intends to carry on, business. Our government is working collaboratively with provinces and territories to explore the feasibility of electronically connecting federal-provincial-territorial corporate registration systems. Such an approach presents an opportunity to help reduce the burden faced by businesses in the areas of multi-jurisdiction searches, registration, and reporting. This could potentially make it easier to find information on whether a firm with the same name has been incorporated elsewhere and would eliminate duplicate requirements across borders.

The government is also committed to broadening the use of the business number as a common business identifier among federal departments. Broader use of the business number would allow the federal government to cut red tape and expand electronic services for all businesses.

For example, the business number could eventually allow a business dealing with the federal government to register once to be eligible to access a range of federal programs and services for businesses instead of having to register separately under each federal service or program. This would make it simpler for businesses to interact with the government anywhere in Canada. Such actions would further foster domestic trade, given that many provinces are already using the business number and are expanding the range of provincial programs that are connected.

Finally, our government is working to better quantify the extent of existing trade barriers and to determine their economic impact. Such information is notoriously hard to assemble, calculate, and validate. However, we are taking a major step by building a comprehensive internal trade barrier index to catalogue barriers to internal trade.

The results of this work are expected late this year and should help all governments work better and understand the extent of existing barriers. It should also help governments prioritize areas to address that particularly impede the flow of goods and services across Canada.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that we are committed to listening and to acting. We want to understand the concerns of stakeholders and position ourselves to advance collaborative solutions. We are also committed to advancing meaningful initiatives that will help businesses compete and thrive.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you and the members of this House for allowing me to share our approach. We will continue to listen, collaborate, and act in the service of strengthening our domestic markets and fostering a more competitive and innovative economy.

●(1805)

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Richmond Hill for his substantive speech. One of the great things about being in the House of Commons is getting to know different people from all across the country. The member for Richmond Hill has a rich history and experience in the business community. That is what my question is about.

The member provided an eloquent description of the benefits of removing barriers to interprovincial trade and how we would need to modernize the Agreement on Internal Trade in Canada.

I wonder if the member could share with the House what a modernized agreement on internal trade would accomplish for Canadians, as opposed to the Conservative motion to refer the Comeau decision to the Supreme Court. I wonder if the hon. member could help educate the House on that.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the great question and for his leadership on the industry and innovation committee.

The renewal of the AIT gives us the opportunity to work together on a new framework that addresses the common challenges faced by our various partners.

Canadians expect us to work together to make doing business in this country much easier. All governments are seized with this goal. Our government ran and won on a positive platform that encourages co-operation across Canada. However, the opposition proposes an antagonistic approach that is not aligned with our platform of meaningful engagement with Canadians.

Modernizing the AIT would allow us to reduce barriers and harmonize regulations across all sectors in Canada, unlike the current AIT, which covers only a few specific sectors.

It would have more open government procurement, which would give Canadian firms the opportunity to bid on procurement contracts and to lower the costs. All this would eventually lead to growing our economy and creating jobs that would be of benefit to the middle class.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

We only have five minutes for questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Business of Supply

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for his speech, but when he uses phrases like “antagonistic approach”, I would encourage him to go back and actually read what the motion talks about. The motion talks about a Supreme Court decision. It talks about getting clarity from the Supreme Court on what we are required to do in light of constitutional rights.

It seems to me that there are two separate issues here. There is the issue of protecting rights and the issue of policy. We would say that we can move on both tracks simultaneously. Yes, ongoing conversation with the provinces is important as a matter of policy, but it is also critical that we actually get some understanding from the Supreme Court of what rights exist, and then that we protect those rights.

The Liberals talk a lot about rights. Can they not agree, in this case, that there is a rights issue that needs to be protected, and that is why the Supreme Court needs to be reviewing the situation?

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member agrees that we need to continue on the path we are taking, because that is, I believe, the path that will ultimately lead to the result we are looking for.

However, I would like to go back and clarify the “antagonistic” comment. There is a process in place, and there is an appeal process within the provincial court system. We can follow that process, and if it does not work, we can follow the natural process to go to the Supreme Court.

Right now, cutting it short and bypassing that process is not going to result in the outcome we would like to see.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a feeling that more people than usual will be listening to this afternoon's debate. We are talking about something that affects a lot of people. Obviously, this is about consumers.

It is deplorable that, clearly, the Conservatives' natural inclination is to say that this is terrible, because it has to do with a constitutional right. This kind of American-style rhetoric is from another era.

At the other end of the spectrum, we have a government with a severe case of “consultitis”. Everything takes forever; nothing happens quickly.

Can the member name one single thing, one point he would like to resolve with the provinces, even if this motion is adopted?

• (1810)

[*English*]

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to working collaboratively with the provinces and territories, and it will continue to do that.

As I stated before, this is the process that we believe, in the long term, will be beneficial. We are working on it. We are committed to making sure that it will move as fast as possible without compromising the result. This is not an issue we are going to resolve in the next week or month. This has been an issue that has

been going on for a long time, even in the previous government, and we have now been successful in doing it right.

Please be patient. The process is the right process. The participants are all at the table, and we are working on it. I believe it will result in a positive outcome.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go to resuming debate, I will assure the hon. member for Yukon that we will get him into questions and comments at some point.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share my time with the member for Calgary Shepard. I look forward to his remarks and hope that we have time for most of his speech.

Canada was built on trade. From the earliest European settlers trading with indigenous peoples and fur traders following rivers and exploring the land, to present-day Canadians for whom one in five jobs depends directly on exports. Extraction and exchange are in Canada's bones.

As well as creating a single unified country for mutual defence, the Fathers of Confederation sought to bind the provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia together through unrestricted internal trade. Indeed, the debates around Confederation tell us that trade was a top priority. In fact, if one consults the debates on the subject of the confederation of the British North American colonies, 3rd session, 8th Provincial Parliament of Canada, one sees in the pages of debate that the colonies eagerly desired full access to each other's markets.

I find it fitting that a railway to British Columbia would later unite Canada's centre to the west, while demand for one between Halifax and Quebec City drove the formation of the Dominion to unite the centre with the east.

In a time when governments relied heavily on tariffs for revenue, the founders clearly stated in section 121 of the British North America Act of 1867 that, “All Articles of the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of any one of the Provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other Provinces.” The founders did not foresee the rise of the regulatory state and all of the non-tariff barriers that an ever-growing bureaucracy would erect.

Canadian parliamentarians must ensure that the spirit, as well as the letter, of section 121 of the Constitution create a country with unrestricted labour and goods. Therefore, I urge my colleagues of all parties to vote in favour of the motion to seek clarity from the Supreme Court on the interaction of constitutional provisions on jurisdiction and free trade.

Business of Supply

Canada has a strong domestic economy and admirable labour mobility. However, many non-tariff barriers continue to impede the flow of goods and workers across provincial borders. For example, many licensed professionals and tradespeople still have to qualify for different regulatory regimes in different provinces. Should standards differ for dentists and accountants? Are teeth so different on one side of the continent than they are on the other? Are debits and credits wildly different from the east side of Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, compared with the west side in Alberta?

Canada devotes resources to foreign credential recognition and requalification for foreign-trained professionals, yet neglects to harmonize some of our own internal standards.

Red tape and redundancy do not stop with so-called white collar work. Many tradesmen and tradeswomen are similarly stymied from working across provincial lines. Many might find it frustrating that a road crew from Gatineau can cross the river to work in Ottawa, but one from Ottawa cannot go and work in Hull since provincial labour rules keep Ontarian labour out of Quebec.

In contrast, there are many encouraging examples of labour mobility that benefits Canadians. Many Maritimers and Newfoundlanders have come to Alberta to work in the oil sands. This mass migration sent money back east to the workers' families, addressed a labour shortage in Alberta, and generated taxes and royalties that funded public services.

Speaking of public services, preferential sourcing for government procurement costs Canadians in extra spending and foregone savings. I understand that provincial governments would want to hire or buy from firms in their own province. However, this does a disservice to the rest of their taxpayers. Speaking as an Albertan taxpayer, if the government in Edmonton needs a service that a Saskatchewan company can provide at a lower price than an Albertan one, it makes sense to spread the benefit of a good deal to all Albertans by choosing the best bid instead of paying extra to an uncompetitive firm.

Shrewd sourcing is even more important given that free trade agreements open foreign government procurement to Canadian goods and services, granted that we let their firms compete here in return. Why should a domestic company from another province suffer any restriction in competing for contracts in Canada when foreign firms can enter the bidding?

Moving from talk of services to goods, many Canadian staples are slowed or stopped in their travels by unnecessary regulatory variations. Starting with the example on which today's motion is based, what logical reason is there to keep vacationers to Niagara or the Okanagan from stocking up on the fantastic local wines that they sample before heading home?

•(1815)

Why should a New Brunswicker be unable to buy a few cases of beer in Quebec? Mr. Comeau could be congratulated for his service to Canada by doing such a Canadian activity as shopping for the best deal on beer. Provincial liquor monopolies, which restrict supply to raise revenue through high markups, are just tariffs by another name.

One could argue that Canadian beer, wine, and whisky are not truly essential to life in Canada. I might not make that argument, but one could.

However, gasoline certainly is a necessary part of our economy. The same cars, trucks, and lawnmowers that are sold throughout Canada have different sets of requirements by provincial governments for the fuel. This means that refineries that supply our gasoline cannot make one large batch and deliver it wherever needed. They must prepare different batches for each different mix requirement and transport them into each jurisdiction despite the inconvenience and extra costs that this adds. This inefficiency costs us all at the pump and is less than ideal for the environment.

It is challenging enough that Canada is a continent-wide country with a thinly spread population and a high demand for transportation, but geography, monopolies, and regional sale restrictions are not the only impediments to internal trade in goods.

Transportation itself is subject to bizarre regulatory discrepancies such as different allowable weights, dimensions, and tire sizes for trucks. One can imagine the nuisance this causes for a company trying to send cargo across several jurisdictions.

This red tape coiled around Canadian companies costs Canadian consumers. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business and other organizations estimate that internal barriers cost the economy nearly \$15 billion per year in inefficiency. Similarly, the Conference Board of Canada estimates that eliminating internal barriers would add \$4.8 billion to real GDP and create 78,000 jobs in Alberta and British Columbia alone. Although that figure is just for our two westernmost provinces, I am sure that similar employment gains would accrue to other provinces were the barriers to be abolished.

Non-tariff barriers slow the economy down unnecessarily. However, these barriers fall under provincial jurisdiction. How can we in Parliament help without overstepping our constitutional bounds? We can vote for the motion today, and seek clarity from the Supreme Court of Canada on where exactly the lines are between jurisdictional differences on one hand and internal free trade on the other.

Business of Supply

I mentioned earlier that Canada was founded as an internal free trade zone. The Fathers of Confederation knew that trade enriches both parties, overcomes linguistic divides, and builds trust and respect between different groups. The wording of section 121 of the Constitution clearly expresses their intent for a Dominion free of the division and distrust brought about by discriminatory trade rules in favour of one of prosperity and co-operation brought about by free trade and mobility.

Establishing true free trade in Canada should not be a partisan issue. Canadians of all parties and political persuasions benefit from labour mobility, more jobs, and more affordable goods and services.

The current government may be commended for its oft-stated commitment to work with the provinces and all Canadians toward good policy, but I encourage it to act on that goal by negotiating a new agreement on interprovincial trade.

In the meantime, the government can take a serious step toward resolving the issue of non-tariff barriers by referring the New Brunswick case of the *Queen v. Comeau* and its evidence to the Supreme Court of Canada to seek clarity on the constitutional limits on such impediments. It can also intervene on the side of free trade as New Brunswick appeals the *Comeau* decision.

Today's motion does not intrude on the lawful jurisdiction of the provinces. It seeks clarity from the Supreme Court on how they can co-operate with us and each other for the benefit of all Canadians.

Canada's founders desired the Dominion to be free of internal tariffs. I am sure that they would have wanted Canada to be free of non-tariff barriers as well. Our founders knew that cultural, geographic, and language differences would require a federal system with provinces with real power, bound together by mutual defence and free trade, but I do not believe they wanted that provincial power to be used to stifle the very trade and mobility that united the colonies.

As Canada's 150th anniversary approaches, I urge all of my parliamentary colleagues to take this small but significant step toward upholding our founding purpose and vote in favour of the motion.

● (1820)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for paying attention to such a far seat in the House and a far region of Canada.

I do not have a question. I thank the member for his thoughtful speech. However, I do have a comment. I want to outline the special case of the territories.

In the territories, we have very fragile economies, very small companies, and high costs of energy, of living, of expenses for the companies. They are not well able to compete with their big southern neighbours, so we have to work out these special agreements, internal trade agreements, with the provinces and territories. I think that is the only way we can accommodate that.

If we are going to make a reference to the Supreme Court that unilaterally opens things up, it would reduce the chance that our territories would negotiate something where they would actually fit in this Confederation and still be competitive.

I just want to make that case on behalf of our businesses in the north.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, in response, I would say that, yes, of course, we must be sensitive to not only the territorial governments, given the challenges they have around small populations and remote physical proximity to the larger provinces. In the maritime provinces we have small populations as well. I cannot see how the restriction of trade and barriers to the exchange of goods could benefit any province or territory, large or small, such as having different sets of tire requirements for trucks. To me, any step taken to reduce these kinds of barriers and incompatibility within provinces will benefit all Canadians, regardless of where they live.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hate to pass up an opportunity to ask my esteemed colleague, the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge, a question.

I have been up on my feet today advocating for this. My constituents have been advocating, through me, for this for a long time. We have managed to have some gains on the international trade front over the last 10 years, with some 46 new countries we have trade agreements with. Some of my constituents would tell me that it is actually easier for them to trade, buy, and sell goods and services with other countries than it is to purchase goods and services from other provinces.

I wonder if my colleague has any particular examples when it comes that, and if he could cite some of the absolutely ridiculous barriers we have as well. They are all non-tariff barriers. We do not have tariffs, I believe. He mentioned the organized trades, when it comes to Blue Seal versus Red Seal, and how people who have the same credentials from a school in Alberta cannot work in Saskatchewan, and vice versa. These are ridiculous barriers and impediments. Perhaps he could comment on the, hopefully soon, accession of Manitoba into the new west economic partnership, with B.C., Alberta, and Saskatchewan, and, as a fellow Albertan, talk about how Alberta's initiative has resulted in years of prosperity that we have had there.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I do not think I am going to get too far into some of those specifics because I am not as deeply versed in some of these, other than by anecdote. We hear about things like truck tires and gasoline, which I mentioned in my remarks, as well as labour mobility and the challenges that professions, regulated occupations, and construction trades have in dealing between provinces. It is well known and I have heard many times the same comments that the member for Red Deer—Lacombe made about how it is easier to do business in any particular state, or maybe all 50 states, than it is deal with the province next door. This is well known and well documented.

What I would like to add and what I would like to stress is that the state we find ourselves in with these barriers that make it so difficult to do business with other Canadians is not what this country is supposed to be about. This is a trading nation. Internal trade is what we began with, and it is very important that we restore internal trade in Canada.

•(1825)

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate, I will let the hon. member for Calgary Shepard know that there are only five minutes remaining in the time allocated for the business of supply this afternoon, but I will give him the usual indication before we approach that spot.

The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have done before, I am going to start with a Yiddish proverb, a hint hits harder than the truth. The truth is that the government is wrong to be moving its members to vote against the motion. The hint is from my colleague, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola that this is the right thing to do on behalf of all Canadians. The hint is in the motion. The truth is in the motion, and the government should support this because it is good for Canadians.

I want to thank the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola both for having a difficult riding name to pronounce and also for fast becoming the most popular member on Parliament Hill with his catchy free the beer campaign. I get countless messages from constituents. He deserves a round of applause.

The motion the member has put forward to the House challenges us to answer the question of what Canada is. What is our country? Are we a nation of traders, or are we 10 separate islands? Are we living up to the dreams of the Fathers of Confederation for something more than a mere customs union, or are we 10 distinct protectorates set on fighting endlessly? I believe we can be a nation of traders while respecting the distinct character of every single province.

On the matter of the free the beer campaign, the provincial liquor control boards and the related regulations are a holdover from the temperance movement that was introduced during the Prohibition years. Prohibition has been gone for over half a century, but the controls remain, and they have become an impediment to internal trade.

Mr. Gerard Comeau did us all a favour on probably the greatest Canadian beer run ever. He did the most Canadian thing ever, the Canadian tradition of shopping around for the cheapest possible beer, so we can bring it home and enjoy it. His error was that he moved across a border, but his error was to the benefit of the Canadian taxpayer because we have an opportunity here to do the right thing for Canadians and refer this case to the Supreme Court to review its original decision, the Gold Seal decision. The \$292.50 fine Mr. Comeau got is probably the best money ever spent if this is referred to the Supreme Court and if the Supreme Court does review its original Gold Seal decision. Fighting this in court is pointless. The right thing to do is for the government to refer it.

Section 121 should be applied in the spirit of the original intent of our founders. On that intent, I actually went to the original *Debates* on confederation. They are often called the constitutional moment. In referring to parliamentary *Debates* on the subject of the confederation of the British North American provinces, the third session, 8th Provincial Parliament of Canada, page 276-277, the member, Mr. Ryan, goes into vast details on the type of trade they had imagined for Canada: flour, grain, bread, beans, peas, butter, eggs, tallow, soap, and they keep going on. New Brunswick, shockingly enough,

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is an incredible source of boots and shoes, and he goes into vast detail on how the Canadian confederation could benefit from being able to trade among themselves instead of running it through the United States.

The member said, “These under Confederation would go duty free from Canada”. They were concerned about customs and tariffs and duties imposed by the American government. This was in 1865. A year later, in 1866, the reciprocity treaty would be abrogated by the United States. This was a long time coming, and the founding fathers knew it was coming. Therefore, they knew when they were debating this issue that they were not debating what size of barrel there should be and what the gauge should be for the railway on the intercontinental railway that they were debating. They were talking about free trade for all of these products. That was their concern. They were not debating the size of the product, but that the product itself should be available for all Canadians.

We should support Mr. Comeau. I invite all members to support the motion.

•(1830)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:30 p.m., and today being the last allotted day for the supply period ending June 23, 2016, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the opposition motion.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 81(18), the recorded division stands deferred until later this day.

* * *

[*English*]

MAIN ESTIMATES 2016-17

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—INFRASTRUCTURE CANADA

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (for the President of the Treasury Board) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Vote 1, in the amount of \$110 040 788, under Office of Infrastructure of Canada — Operating Expenditures — in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, be concurred in.

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Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to be here this evening to talk about infrastructure.

Infrastructure Canada has an unusual history. It originally operated as a program, known as the infrastructure national office, which was administered by the Treasury Board Secretariat, until it was established as a department.

Between 2006 and 2016, the department has operated under various portfolios, often sharing ministers and deputy ministers. My predecessor, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean was also responsible for other departments when he was minister of infrastructure and communities. He held the Transport Canada portfolio for a period of time. He was the minister of intergovernmental affairs and president of the Queen's Privy Council, and he was the minister of the economic development agency of Canada for the regions of Quebec.

Infrastructure Canada, until November 2015, was never a stand-alone department with a dedicated minister and a dedicated deputy minister and their support staff. As minister for intergovernmental affairs and president of the Queen's Privy Council, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean was able to make use of the office space associated with these positions.

In November 2015, a dedicated Minister for Infrastructure Canada was appointed, and Transport Canada and Infrastructure Canada were separated into two different departments. However, one deputy minister remained in place with the responsibility for both departments, and he sat with Transport Canada employees in their dedicated office space and building a few blocks away from Infrastructure Canada.

On March 2, 2016, just over three months ago, a dedicated deputy minister for infrastructure was appointed. The same month, our government announced the first phase of our \$120 billion 10-year plan to invest in Canadian communities. We committed to invest more than \$10 billion in the next two years to our government's priorities: public transit, green infrastructure, and social infrastructure.

However, being able to deliver tangible results for Canadians requires space where we can work collaboratively and efficiently. We required offices for our support staff. When I was first appointed, my colleague the Minister of Transport was kind enough to loan us some office space in the short term. We looked at various options, including continued operations out of the Transport Canada offices, but ultimately the best option was to build a separate office space to consolidate all of our staff to one floor.

The department worked with Public Services and Procurement Canada to find space and create the new accommodations. Our working space, for up to 32 staff members, was created in accordance with Treasury Board and Public Services and Procurement Canada guidelines. As per the Treasury Board guidelines, Public Services and Procurement Canada reviewed the contracts and made sure there were no concerns from the Government of Canada's perspective.

In full support of the Government of Canada's commitment to openness and transparency, we proactively disclosed these expenses

publicly last April. We bought furniture for 32 office spaces. We bought furniture for collaborative spaces and boardrooms, where we can hold our meetings. We also purchased furniture for the reception area, so that visitors can sit while they wait to meet with our team.

• (1835)

To be clear, the cost to build and furnish the space for 32 people, including an office for me, the deputy minister and our support staff, and the reception area was \$835,000.

When I took office in November, I committed to working in collaboration with my provincial, territorial, and municipal partners. I committed to working in collaboration with other stakeholders, indigenous peoples, and our key partners, and I have done so. I have met with mayors, wardens, premiers, chiefs, parliamentarians, and ministers. I have met with stakeholder organizations, like the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Canadian Urban Transit Association, and the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships.

In fact, after my visit to the city of Red Deer last March, Mayor Tara Veer said this:

The fact that a sitting federal infrastructure minister came to Red Deer to me bodes well for recognition of mid-sized cities and regional hubs...But it also built a relationship with the minister and our region so that in the future there is an open door for the municipalities of our region.

I have also met with city organizations like the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal and the Vancouver and Toronto boards of trade. I have met with chiefs and elders from Treaty 6 First Nations, and chiefs from Treaty 8 First Nations. I met with Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde, and with the Fort McMurray Métis and with Saskatchewan chiefs just last month. It is through working closely with these partners and stakeholders and listening to their priorities for their communities that we have made it to where we are today.

Where we are is delivering on our commitment to invest more than \$120 billion over the next 10 years. We announced in March that we would be providing more than \$10 billion of new money over the next two years for public transit, green infrastructure, and social infrastructure, starting right away. We established the clean water and waste water fund, worth \$2 billion, and the public transit fund, worth \$3.4 billion. We shared the allocation details with the provinces and territories.

Our discussions around bilateral agreements with the provinces and territories are going very well. In fact, we will have good news to share very soon. These agreements will allow us to start investing infrastructure funds and start funding new projects, retroactive to April 1.

Since Canadians elected our government, we have announced 164 projects for nearly \$300 million in federal funding across the country, leveraging almost \$800 million of investments in Canadian communities, investments that will create jobs, grow the economy, and bring opportunities for the middle class.

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However, we are not coasting on our successes; we are building on them. When we announced \$10 billion in budget 2016 for our infrastructure investments, we said it was for infrastructure work that could begin right away. We encouraged our partners to think of rehabilitation work that had to be put off for too long. We said that we wanted to renew the existing infrastructure, while we worked toward a plan that would support the long-term infrastructure investments that we knew were also needed.

We are referring to that as phase 2 of our plan. This is the phase that will focus on large-scale projects that take years to plan, design, and build, projects that we know our partners want to do and that will have a transformative effect on communities.

● (1840)

We have committed to announcing phase 2 of the long-term plan in the next year. It will be built through collaborative discussions and consultations so it can meet the needs of the communities across the country.

Through the upcoming summer months, I will continue to engage with my provincial, territorial, and municipal partners. I will be engaging with indigenous peoples and other key stakeholders to craft a plan that meets their needs. This includes attending conferences and events where we can host ministerial round tables.

My staff and I have reached out to all of our colleagues from both sides of the House to ensure we hear from Canadians across the country. My parliamentary secretary is leading these consultations and he will speak more about them later.

In my time as a bus driver, as an Edmonton city councillor, and now as a federal minister, I have conducted myself in an open and transparent manner. I have spoken at length about my belief in the principles of collaborative working relationships, of partnerships, and of honest, direct communication. I have held myself to a high standard and have expected my office to act in the same manner.

In that spirit, my department has posted on our website an unprecedented level of information, including the funding remaining in existing programs for each province and territory. We have posted project level information and funding amounts for all of our programs on the government's open data portal. We have shared the letters that were sent to the provinces and territories, which specifically detail their allocations under the new infrastructure programs and the changes we have made to old programs.

As I mentioned earlier, the costs that we incurred as part of the set-up of the new office for up to 32 people were posted in that same spirit of openness and transparency.

People often ask why we include social infrastructure as part of our broad-based infrastructure plan. People think that investing in roads, bridges, transit, water, waste water is the only infrastructure investment we can make. Those are very important and critical investments.

We committed to invest in social infrastructure because we felt that investment in affordable housing, investments in ending violence against women, investments in early learning, investments in cultural and recreational facilities would unlock people's potential.

I have experienced the power of infrastructure. I am the Minister of Infrastructure, but I am also the minister because of infrastructure. The transit buses that I took to work, the libraries where I went to learn English changed my life. The people on my bus who I took to work, the people who came home from work using public transit, those are the people on whose behalf we build the infrastructure.

Let me close by telling a story of a young mother of three children who was on the verge of being homeless. She called my municipal office looking for support and help. We were able to provide her with a secure, stable, affordable place to live through the agencies that served Edmonton. Within one year, that mother was able to turn her life around. Her children were back in school and succeeding at school. She had a job that she could hold because of that access to housing, that access to support services that she needed to put her life together. That is the power of infrastructure.

● (1845)

That is why we are investing in communities and why we need to do it now. That is why we are investing \$120 billion in public infrastructure, public transit, clean infrastructure, and social infrastructure, to make our communities more inclusive and welcoming for people to live, to make our communities more resilient to climate change, to ensure we invest in projects that matter to Canadians from coast to coast to coast. That is our vision for infrastructure.

We have created a dedicated ministry with a dedicated minister, a dedicated deputy minister, dedicated staff, and a dedicated space to deliver on those commitments.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the member's speech, clearly infrastructure is very important to him. Could he provide us with what, in his view, is the definition of "infrastructure"?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, infrastructure is about unlocking people's potential. Infrastructure is about public transit, about having safe places for people to go home to. Infrastructure is about providing homes for people who do not have them because they have ended up living on the street due to circumstances beyond their control.

Infrastructure is about women fleeing domestic violence and finding safe havens to escape that violence. Infrastructure is about early learning facilities for our little ones, so we can invest in the future by unlocking their potential. Infrastructure is about everything each and every day that Canadians use, whether they are buses that take us to work, or the waste water facilities that we do not notice because the municipalities have done a good job running them, or clean water, or the investments we are making in social infrastructure. It is about people.

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•(1850)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister making himself available to the House for questions and for providing some context for the \$835,000 figure, which is for 32 employees.

I first want to know if the minister could tell the House how many employees in the previous government were dedicated just to infrastructure when infrastructure and Transport Canada were together. Maybe he could compare and contrast that number with the 32 he has now and provide Canadians with more of an explanation on some of the different roles those 32 employees carry out. What Canadians really want, in the spirit of transparency and openness, is to ensure that government resources are being used as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Speaker, when I was appointed Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, I did not have any staff, so I had to start from scratch. I had to build my ministry from scratch. The only person who gave me support was the deputy minister, who I share with Transport Canada.

I had to hire a new chief of staff, parliamentary secretaries, my departmental political non-exempt staff. There are close to 24 people working in my office now, with the potential to grow up to 32 people. We are doubling our investments in infrastructure, from \$60 billion to \$120 billion over the next 10 years. I currently have those staff members, with the potential to grow that number.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is refreshing to hear a definition like the one the Minister of Infrastructure provided. It is refreshing, modern, and open to the world.

I want to congratulate the minister on his excellent speech, but especially on the excellent work that he does. I have the privilege of working with him on a daily basis, and I have seen him in action. The minister toured the country. He went to every province and every region. He met with mayors, councillors, and Canadians across the country.

I would like to know what priorities people talked about when the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities had these meetings across the country.

[*English*]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Speaker, the first thing I did when I was appointed to this position was engage with Canadians to learn what the needs were, what was working for them, and what was not.

I engaged with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and with big-city mayors. I made phone calls to all of my provincial counterparts to let them know about our government's willingness to work in collaboration and partnership.

I learned during those conversations that the top-heavy approach of the previous government was not working for them. They wanted local decision-making. They wanted their municipalities to decide what the needs were. I heard about the relaxing and reforming of the building Canada fund. The building Canada fund was started in

2014, and when I took office in November 2015, almost zero dollars of it was invested in communities.

We heard that public transit is important to people. Water and waste water is important to people. Affordable housing is important to people. Day care facilities are important to people. Roads, bridges, interchanges, and transportation corridors are important to people. Things that grow our economy and create jobs for Canadians, things that—

•(1855)

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and what I heard was that he had to hire a chief of staff, and he had to hire staff. However, every minister who was appointed by the Prime Minister had to appoint staff. The issue here is that every other minister did not have extraordinary costs in setting up their offices associated with hiring these staff.

We have heard time and again that there is space available in terms of staff. There is a surplus of equipment, furniture, and artwork. Therefore, the reason we are talking here tonight is not because he had to hire staff, like every other minister had to, but because his expenses stand out extraordinarily high in comparison to every other colleague.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Speaker, I did state the day this issue came up, from that day to today, that ours is a stand-alone ministry with a dedicated minister and deputy minister, which did not happen in the previous administration. Infrastructure Canada was part of Transport Canada.

Therefore, we needed to create this whole ministry from scratch. The only person who was in common was our deputy minister. We were sharing space with Transport Canada for a little while, but we needed appropriate space to consolidate our staff on one floor as well as create a workable space for the staff we needed in order to deliver on those commitments.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a hockey player and I have ragged the puck before, but I have never seen anything like this. I will get to my question really quickly.

I wonder if the hon. minister across the way can explain why, when the federal cabinet goes from 39 down to 30 and the next closest ministry has spent on renovations around \$50,000 and when his division of his department is excised off from the transport minister, the transport minister did not need to spend 800-and-some-thousand dollars on a newly dedicated office? When we go to the Government of Canada website and look at surplus items, such as \$20 for chairs minimum bid, times 32, is \$640, \$40 for work stations, times 32, is \$1,280, \$100 for boardroom tables, times 10 let us say, is 1,000 bucks, he could have refurbished pretty much his entire office for about 3,000 bucks.

Can he explain and justify to the taxpayers of Canada why, when there is extra office space, with nine fewer ministries, and the surplus items are already here, available to be used, he needed to drop close to a million bucks on an office for himself and 32 people?

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Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Speaker, we looked at different options. We continued to share the space with Transport Canada. The best option for us was to build a new space; a space where we could have a dedicated minister, a dedicated DM, and space for 32 people on one floor to bring the efficiencies and to bring the collaborative approach to working together. We did that under the guidelines of the Treasury Board. We did that under the guidelines that are followed by all other ministries, the procurement guidelines, and everything. We proactively disclosed that information in April, and that information was available. We are doubling our investments in infrastructure throughout the country.

● (1900)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be sharing my time with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

The budget debate will come to a close this evening. In summary, contrary to its promise to create a small deficit of only \$10 billion, the government will saddle Canadians with a budget deficit that could reach \$29.4 billion this year alone. Canadians did not vote for that.

Just six months after it was elected, the Liberal government seems to be suffering already from an incurable Liberal disease: acute spendicitis. That is what I will try to show in my speech this evening.

By analyzing the expenses incurred to set up offices for the ministers in this cabinet after they were appointed, we realize, fortunately, that not all the ministers have caught the disease.

Let us take a look at the race to set up the beautiful offices for ministers. In last place, we find the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, who spent only \$500 on setting up her office. I would like to congratulate her. That is to her credit. For once, coming in last is quite honourable. The first shall be last and the last shall be first in this case.

There is stiff competition among the other ministers. Even the Minister of Finance, who spent \$12,000 on a superluxurious flight to New York, spent only \$1,400 to set up his office.

At the back of the pack, ministers spent between \$1,000 and \$7,000 to set up their offices. Then there are the ones who wanted to spend a little more money. Four ministers spent between \$12,000 and \$19,000 on their new offices. Then you have those at the head of the pack. Here are the ministers who spent the most money on setting up their offices.

In third place is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who spent \$40,000 to refit his office. In second place is the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, who spent \$57,000 on his office. In first place, the big winner is the Minister of Infrastructure, who spent \$835,000 on his new office.

When I wrote my speech, the results were not yet official since the other ministers had lodged a protest, claiming that the minister was on spending steroids. They thought that he had cheated and padded the numbers. How is it possible to spend \$835,000 on a single office?

Unfortunately, I have the official results here, which come from officials in the minister's department. A total of \$835,000 was indeed spent to set up an office. According to what we learned today in question period, it might have been two, three, four, or even 32 offices.

We questioned the Minister of Infrastructure a number of times about how much was spent to set up his office. He said several times again this evening, with his hand on his heart, that the reason why he spent \$835,000 was that there was no infrastructure minister in the previous government and therefore no office.

First of all, there was a minister responsible for infrastructure and that minister also had an office. The minister should also know that previously, there were at least eight additional ministers and so there were eight office spaces with furnishings for the staff of eight ministers' offices. That is a lot of ministers' offices that became available after the last election.

Why did the Minister of Infrastructure not take advantage of the eight completely furnished offices that were available and ready to receive staff? Was it because of vanity? Was it because those offices were not good enough for the minister? If there are at least 10 employees per minister's office, that means that in terms of office equipment alone, there were 80 desks, 80 computers and monitors, 80 chairs, and 80 telephones available to the new Minister of Infrastructure.

● (1905)

I do not understand the minister's decision given that his new department has not even announced a single construction site for this summer. There is nothing to stimulate the economy. There is nothing this summer for cities that are still waiting to find out when they can invest the money that was promised during the election campaign. The only thing that was announced was this big project to set up a new office for 32 people at a cost of \$26,000 per employee.

Unfortunately, that is not all. When the associate deputy minister of Infrastructure Canada appeared before the Standing Committee on Transport, she told us that setting up her offices and hiring staff for this "new" department would cost taxpayers an additional \$10.2 million. How many employees for that \$10 million? The deputy minister said 20. Twenty employees for an extra \$10.2 million. Some quick math says that is \$500,000 per employee.

The deputy minister did not want to leave us with that impression. She quickly added that the money would be used primarily for computer systems and other expenses. I asked for a breakdown of those expenses at committee, but I still have not received anything. We still do not know how much of that \$10.2 million will be used to further refurbish the offices of the minister and deputy minister, at \$835,000 a pop. We need to get these answers. That is why we oppose this part of the budget.

Government Orders

In closing, I have a suggestion as to how the minister can quickly and effectively treat this acute case of spendicitis: have a look at the Government of Canada's auction website, GCSurplus.ca. Here is some of the furniture I found that could be used to furnish the minister's office: 16 full work stations with 33 office chairs for \$550; five filing cabinets for \$20; 58 cabinets for \$100; two bookshelves for \$20; a shredder for \$100; 28 conference tables for \$100, since they are so fond of meetings and consultation; an executive desk with a cabinet for the minister for \$50; an executive suite with desk for \$100; 12 bookshelves for \$115; six briefcases for \$10; 80 telephones, in case they are busy, for just \$750; 13 tables, two printers, and a photocopier for \$95, after some quick math.

There were no computers, so I checked Kijiji and found 10 computers for \$2,000. If they need three times more, that would be \$6,000 for computers. It was a little harder to find 10 monitors. I had to check another site. I will not advertise for that site, but I found monitors for just \$100. That adds up to just \$33,000. To furnish the minister's office and meet all of his needs with respect to meetings and consultations in the coming years, that adds up to \$10,960 for an office that can accommodate 32 people, not the \$835,000 the minister put in for.

Rather than worry about the colour of the walls, the minister should hurry up and find a way to put Canadians to work by announcing projects for the summer as his party promised during the election campaign. That is why we will oppose the budgets allocated for the minister's new offices.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member just said that he has not heard any announcements lately.

My colleague and friend seems to have a very short memory because I was with him in his own riding at Saint-Fortunat to make an announcement about waste water treatment. He was there. We even had a conversation.

Where was he a few days ago when we announced a major investment in Saint Joseph's oratory? Where was my colleague a few days ago when we announced a major investment in Le Diamant, a performing arts centre in Quebec City? This is a very important project for the provincial capital.

What I find deplorable and a bit sad is that the member seems to have a selective memory. He remembers what he wants to remember and forgets the rest.

• (1910)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, yes, I was anxious to reply to the member's question.

I was very pleased to welcome the parliamentary secretary to Saint-Fortunat for an announcement about work that is very important to that town. The people of that town will finally have clean drinking water. That announcement was easy to make, because everything had been set up by the previous government. All that was left was to announce it. Thank you very much, Mr. Parliamentary Secretary.

We are not looking for announcements. What we want are building sites and shovels in the ground. Announcements are easy to

make. What matters is making them so that the projects can get going as soon as possible.

Almost nothing has been announced. Having been a municipal mayor, I know how long it takes to prepare files, calls for tender, and all the plans and specifications. We have missed almost the entire season, and that is what is most unfortunate.

Why is it that despite all their promises, the Liberals have not managed to invest in and improve the Canadian economy this summer?

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to explain to us in clear and simple terms how someone can furnish offices with equipment that we all have in our offices, but at such a ridiculous cost. How can someone spend \$825,000 to set up offices for 32 or 34 new staff when it is not a new department?

Our colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean was the infrastructure minister in our government until last year, and he managed to spend and oversee an infrastructure plan worth \$60 billion. The Liberals have doubled that amount.

Does my colleague think it will take 32 new staff to spend twice the amount we announced in recent years and spent for the most part?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question about the number of people in the new office of the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

Whether there are 32, 20, 10, or 60, I do not know how many people are needed. To make announcements, you need a minister, a press secretary, and an administrative assistant. However, seeing projects through requires more people.

If people can really be helpful in advancing the project, investing in our communities, and ensuring that Canadian taxpayers' money is truly being used to grow our economy, if that takes 30 people, then it takes 30 people. I have no problem with that.

The important thing is that the money is invested properly, not just in setting up an office in the only major summer construction site at the Department of Infrastructure and Communities.

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows full well that before we can get to a call for tenders or construction sites, projects need to be approved and announcements need to be made. That is what we have done.

These announcements translate into construction sites, job creation, and economic development, which my dear Conservative friends did not do in all those years because most of their famous \$60 billion was never spent.

That is what we are doing right now by accelerating the projects and expanding the criteria to make different types of projects eligible. We are speeding up the process so that the money is available as soon as possible.

If they had the chance to do that in the past, then why did they pass it up?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, most of the \$60 billion has already been invested.

Government Orders

There are still some announcements to be made, and the government is currently making announcements regarding old projects that were already ready to go. It takes a long time to plan these things. I know. I was a mayor. Several of us on this side of the House were mayors and we are worried. We want to know when these projects will be able to begin.

Rather than talking about announcements of upcoming projects, why do the Liberals not show us some boots, shovels, and tractors on work sites to let us know that work has begun? It is because there are no new projects with the new funding.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during questions and comments, I asked the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities what his definition of infrastructure was. After a rather flowery response, he concluded that infrastructure is everything Canadians use. Therefore, it is a pleasure in this debate to address the self-styled minister of everything about his no doubt important file, but perhaps not quite as important as he has invested it to be.

My colleague, the infrastructure minister, is actually my neighbour. Our ridings back in the Edmonton area are right beside each other. I know that he served for a long time as a city councillor in Edmonton and justly earned respect for his service. However, it is unfortunate to see that since coming here to Ottawa, he has been imbibing alarming quantities of Liberal Kool-Aid.

After arriving here, the minister joined his Liberal colleagues in voting against our motion to approve the energy east pipeline. Clearly he is in favour of infrastructure, except vital energy infrastructure that is needed to create jobs in his riding and in my riding in the Edmonton area. I very highly doubt that he was highlighting that vote in his communications with his constituents back home.

When the new cabinet was sworn in, the minister said, “I just want to make sure that Albertans understand that they have nothing to worry about”. Then he voted against the energy east pipeline.

The government had to be dragged kicking and screaming to finally extend EI coverage, at similar levels as the rest of the province, to the Edmonton region. Certainly that was not its initial intention.

Albertans are justly worried about whether the minister is actually respecting their hard-earned tax dollars and whether the government cares about what is happening in Alberta. As a city councillor, the minister spoke a lot about infrastructure, but as a minister, as I alluded to earlier, he is not even clear about what infrastructure really is.

Canadians can look at page 92 of the budget, which shows a pie chart of what the government means by infrastructure, and it really seriously seems to mean that infrastructure is everything Canadians use. When it talks about investing in infrastructure, that includes everything up to and including child care.

During the committee of the whole a few weeks ago, I asked the Minister of Finance if he thought child care was infrastructure. He said he did. I asked him if there is anything the federal government

does that does not qualify as infrastructure. The best he could come up with was that the tax changes the government brought in as part of one of its bills did not qualify as infrastructure. It seems that the government really regards everything that involves the programming activities of the government as infrastructure. There is social infrastructure and cultural infrastructure.

It is not at all clear to me what the job of the minister is in relation to his colleagues, especially when he does not have a clear sense of what exactly he is supposed to be doing. That is one major concern I have about the communication and direction we have seen from the minister on this.

Building on that, when the minister was first elected, he took a \$46,000 transition bonus from the City of Edmonton, despite the fact that he started collecting his MP salary the day after the election. Given how bad the minister is at getting deals on furniture, it is perhaps understandable that he needed the money. The outrageous expenditures of the minister for his office renovations and new furniture are beyond the pale. Really, they stretch credulity. He spent \$835,000 for this newfangled, beautiful, I am sure, office, far eclipsing any other minister or what is ordinarily spent on this sort of thing.

Back home in the Edmonton area, Edmontonians and Albertans have seen this movie before. Indeed, we had a premier in Alberta who spent \$760,000 on upgrades for a residential area at the top of Alberta's Federal Building. That premier was Alison Redford, and those upgrades were to her infamous sky palace.

● (1915)

I think the minister would have been wise to learn from the cautionary tale provided by the rather unceremonious end to Premier Alison Redford's political career, yet the minister went ahead to spend more on his office renovations than Premier Redford did on those particular upgrades to her proposed residential suite.

My colleague has quite rightly called this sky palace 2.0. Of course, anyone who watches movies knows that 2.0 has to be bigger than the first edition, and indeed, it was in this case. It is disappointing to see the minister show such flagrant disrespect for hard-earned taxpayers' dollars.

I do not mind sharing a little bit with the minister about the situation of my own office. Obviously, the situation is quite different. MPs have a much smaller staff. However, in my office situation. Including interns, I currently have six full-time people working in my Ottawa office, and that does not include myself. We have two rooms in our office in the Confederation Building where these people work along with me, and this includes our use of meeting room space. I am proud that we have no problem getting the work done in the space that we were given, and that is important.

The attitude of the minister, I believe, should be to dream big for Canada, but when it comes to his office, to make do with what he has. Yes, dream big, but do not dream big about the size of one's office. When the Prime Minister said that better was always possible, I do not think Canadians knew he was referring to the size of ministerial offices.

Government Orders

The minister's best argument that he can come up with in defence of his behaviour and the behaviour of his office in this context is that he says, well, in some sense there was not really an infrastructure minister before, which is patently not true. The fact that the minister had other responsibilities does not change the fact that we definitely had a minister of infrastructure. We not only had a minister, but a minister who was quite active with a clear sense of what infrastructure actually was, what infrastructure actually meant, and a minister who brought in the building Canada fund, which was the biggest long-term investment in Canadian real infrastructure ever.

When Canadians think about infrastructure, I think that they usually think of things such as roads, bridges, and the hard infrastructure that is vital for our transportation needs. It is not that this other stuff is not important, but we need to have a sense of what we are actually talking about when we talk about infrastructure.

There is a general point that needs to be underlined here and that is the point of respect for taxpayers. Of course, in the scheme of the total federal budget, the amount the minister spent is a relatively small percentage of the overall total budget. However, when Canadians see how ministers and members of Parliament spend their budgets, it communicates clear information about whether or not those ministers, those members of Parliament, respect taxpayers and understand and appreciate that the money we spend is not our money. It is money that Canadians had to work hard to earn. That is what is communicated when we see this kind of disrespect for taxpayers.

It is about the money, yes, but it is also about the message that it sends about whether or not we care about the people who sent us here and who work hard to pay for public expenses. Clearly, this action of the minister, spending \$835,000 on sky palace 2.0, going beyond Alison Redford's sky palace, in fact, is not something that shows respect for taxpayers.

I have the minister's mandate letter with me. Part of his mandate letter is to "Support the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to improve essential physical infrastructure for Indigenous communities including improving housing outcomes for Indigenous Peoples".

I wonder what kinds of housing improvements could have been achieved for aboriginal Canadians with \$835,000. How many houses could have been built with that kind of money?

This is the kind of question we need to ask, because Canadians, Albertans, people in the Edmonton region, expect that when ministers come to Ottawa they have respect for taxpayers' dollars, that they do not drink the Ottawa Kool-Aid so fast, and that they focus on representing their constituents, representing taxpayers, and representing the people who sent us here.

I think the minister needs to own up to this and he needs to recognize that this is not an appropriate expenditure of taxpayers' dollars. He also needs to provide some clear definition about what his department is actually talking about in the context of infrastructure.

I hope that going forward we will see a better job from the government, and that we will see actual respect for taxpayers.

● (1920)

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, in his poorly documented speech, said that we include everything in infrastructure. This may disappoint him, but we will not include gazebos, fake lakes with fake docks on them, and sidewalks leading nowhere.

● (1925)

[*Translation*]

I would like to ask my colleague a question. Since the Conservatives had so many years to distribute funding for infrastructure programs, why is it that there is still so much unspent money and why is it up to us to implement the program and ensure that the money is distributed responsibly?

We lost at least two years of construction under the Conservative regime. We will never do that again.

Why did the Conservatives waste so much time when they should have been helping Canadians?

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genus: Mr. Speaker, it is gratifying to know that there are no gazebos in the minister's new office, because for that much money, it sort of made me wonder.

When he talks about the infrastructure investments the Conservative government made, it is clearly evident in the budget, and I think the question acknowledges this, that a lot of the infrastructure money Liberals are talking about was money that was allocated by the previous government. The Conservative government had laid out a long-term plan to make significant investments in infrastructure, not infrastructure in this kind of loosey-goosey, could-be-anything way that the government talks about but concrete investments in hard infrastructure.

The government says it will continue with some of this spending. That is a good thing to the extent that it continues with the infrastructure investments that the Conservatives had made, but the infrastructure investments made under the previous government were very substantial. I appreciate the parliamentary secretary at least tacitly acknowledging that in his question.

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always listen to the member with a lot of attention as I have enormous respect for him. I happened to be in the finance committee of the whole that he talked about earlier and listened to him until, I think, one o'clock in the morning, so I paid a lot of attention to his words.

What surprised me when I listened to him today is that he is questioning this government's investment in infrastructure for early childhood development, to make sure that the children of this country have proper infrastructure in order to learn. I am surprised to hear that from the member. This is a government that is going to continue to invest, I can assure him, in Canadian families, to make sure there is infrastructure for our children, because our children are the future of this nation. Why is it that he does not agree with investing in our children?

Government Orders

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear. The government eliminated the universal child care benefit. It is now no longer universal. I take no lessons from Liberals when it comes to investing in the next generation. The next generation, by the way, is going to need a very good education to figure out how to unload the debt that it will be left with because of the disastrous fiscal policies of the government.

My point was quite specific. It was about what actually constitutes infrastructure. Child care is important. Child care is not the same as building roads and bridges. It is a category error. When the Minister of Infrastructure says that infrastructure really means everything that Canadians use, there is obviously a lack of coherence there. There is obviously a bit of a problem when we try to understand if Liberals actually know what they are doing when it comes to infrastructure or the stimulative benefits that are supposed to be associated with infrastructure.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I heard the hon. minister just a few minutes ago, as well as the parliamentary secretary, talk about the fact that they felt dollars had not made it through, especially in Alberta. I wonder if the member could comment on the fact that there was no agreement signed by the Province of Alberta with the federal government because the province was going through numerous changes at that time. That was not signed until the end of November and the call for proposals had taken place in the spring.

We hear a lot about how money did not flow, but I wonder if the member could comment on the reasons why that took place.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right to point to the fact that there has to be due diligence on these kinds of projects, working with the provinces and making sure that the necessary time is taken to get to that point. There are, of course, important infrastructure needs in my province. There are important infrastructure needs in my riding and I would be remiss if I did not plug the need for a bridge in Fort Saskatchewan.

In particular, there is a need to do the due diligence and the Conservative government made substantial investments while working with the provinces to set up framework agreements that would allow that to happen, and I am very proud of that record.

• (1930)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate.

[*English*]

When I was first elected, I sat on the public accounts committee, so I could speak for a long time about gazebos and all the fun we had at that committee with that story. However, irony has rolled in its grave enough for one debate.

[*Translation*]

It is important to indicate what it is we are debating before getting into the details. We are talking about votes and also about the total operating budget of the Department of Infrastructure, which is \$110 million. When the Conservatives talk about the astronomical amount of \$825,000, we can understand that there are questions to be asked. That is legitimate. That is what happens when one is in

government. We must answer these questions. However, we must nevertheless realize that we are talking about the operating budget of a department with ambitious projects.

Despite the political differences that we in the NDP may have with the government and the Liberal Party, we are very aware of the importance of infrastructure projects and the gaps that must be addressed in the coming years, and we agree with them on that. Therefore, it goes without saying that there must be an appropriate operating budget in order to have a robust department that will be capable of implementing the programs that we will be working on as parliamentarians in the next few years.

Once again, this is worth elaborating on. Even if we move forward with this operating budget, it is no less legitimate for the Conservatives to ask questions. However, the facts are the same, as I joked when talking about the time I spent on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Whether we are talking about gazebos or other things, I would venture to say that the Conservatives' memory is a bit short when we consider the problems we faced and the questions we had to ask in the last Parliament, in which I sat, and the preceding Parliaments.

[*English*]

It is important to make this clear, and with all due respect to our interpreters, I will say this in both official languages. We are talking here about the operating budget of an entire department. While the government does have to answer questions from the opposition about spending and different line items and we do accept that, at the end of the day, New Democrats do recognize how it is important to get our cities moving and how it is important that we bridge the infrastructure gap that has been created unfortunately over the last couple of years. While we do certainly share differences with our colleagues in the Liberal Party and the government, at the end of the day, we do not feel that these issues amount to the kind of issue that requires us to say no to an entire \$110-million operating budget of a department.

Once again, I will point out the irony of that coming from my Conservative colleagues. Perhaps there are questions to ask the minister about the \$800,000 in spending, but there certainly were questions that were posed to the Conservative government at the time. Therefore, we find ourselves once again in perhaps the “Liberal, Tory, same old story” conundrum.

[*Translation*]

That said, I would like to take this opportunity to get to the bottom of things and talk about the topic at hand. We are talking about the infrastructure department's operating budget, and I would like to talk about infrastructure.

First, I want to thank the minister. Since I became the NDP's infrastructure critic, we have had a very good working relationship. We have had discussions. That speaks to his passion for infrastructure issues.

Government Orders

As many of my colleagues in all parties can attest, having a municipal background helps you understand the challenges facing municipal officials. After all, they have a lot of responsibilities and, unfortunately, very few fiscal tools, or at least not as many as the federal government has. We recognize this, and I acknowledge the work that the minister has done.

• (1935)

[English]

At the same time, I heard my Conservative colleague who preceded me wading into the weeds of the minister's life as a municipal councillor, and all these ideas of what he may or may not have received for his time as a municipal councillor. I do not want to do that. I do not think it is appropriate for this debate.

I was at the FCM, and again, our policy differences aside, I know that the minister is greatly respected among municipal leaders. I know that my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona, among others, worked with him when he was in municipal politics.

I do not want to get into that more personal aspect of the debate. I do not think that is entirely appropriate for what we are facing here today, again, notwithstanding any questions that the opposition can legitimately pose. I think it is important to put that on the record.

[Translation]

That said, we still have questions on substance. Although the minister and I have an excellent relationship, I want to take this opportunity to raise some of these questions and perhaps review how we got where we are today when it comes to infrastructure. Fortunately, I have the time to do so.

There have been some problems with the building Canada plan in recent years. This is worth pointing out, since there were some challenges to overcome to get the money to the right place, into the pockets of municipalities, for projects to reduce traffic congestion, develop good public transit systems that meet people's expectations, and have access to water management systems that meet people's expectations. Obviously, some examples are more well known than others.

In my riding, there is the Champlain Bridge. As we know, this example attracted a lot of attention during the 2011 election campaign. We can give the previous government some credit, but not too much, since there was talk about the lack of transparency and the lack of a concrete plan for truly working with the Government of Quebec and municipal officials.

We also need to talk about the toll on the Champlain Bridge, which the NDP opposed. The toll would have been detrimental to the communities on the south shore, communities like mine. I am thinking, for example, of the municipalities along Highway 10. The people who have to travel to Montreal for work would pay the price. I am also thinking of the lack of co-operation with the former minister.

Expectations of the new government are high. It is facing the same challenge of ensuring that the money makes it to the municipalities and the provincial governments so that we get good results.

[English]

It has been a challenge for at least the last 10 years and probably before that, I would argue. We have certainly wanted to find ourselves in a situation where the federal government was able to get the money to those who need it, particularly municipalities but also provincial governments. We want these projects and agreements to respect different jurisdictions and different levels of government.

However, we recognize that if we want to get our cities moving and make sure that we have an infrastructure that is meeting the expectations of our constituents that we represent, whether it is in urban communities, suburban communities like mine, or rural communities, there is a lot of work that needs to be done to make sure that we are making the most of those federal dollars.

At the end of the day, the federal government has a very big purse, but very limited expertise on what it means to really succeed in getting these projects off the ground and making sure we are maximizing the impact these projects have. It needs to make sure that our communities have the resources they need, so that we have less traffic on the roads and so that we are not losing that economic productivity that comes when these work crews get stuck in traffic.

It is kind of interesting when we consider that my drive to Ottawa, twice a week, means that I am spending less time in my car than my constituents spend in traffic on a daily basis going to Montreal from the south shore of Montreal. That is a situation, and whether the solution is public transport, which is certainly important if we are looking to tackle greenhouse gas emissions, or making sure that we have the appropriate infrastructure with the Champlain Bridge, to use a local example, that situation is completely unacceptable.

There is a cost on productivity, and a cost on morale, I daresay, if I can put it that way. At the end of the day, when we consider that our constituents who we represent spend so much time in traffic, time away from their families, time they are not actually at work, time that their blood pressure is rising as they sit in their cars, trying to cross the bridge, listening to the same radio show they listen to every day, and I say that with all due respect to the talk radio hosts, that is having an impact on our economy. It is certainly something that needs federal dollars.

• (1940)

We know the government has committed a lot in that sense. New Democrats share that commitment, share that priority, but we need to make sure that the results are actually there. On that front, it certainly remains to be seen. We know it is still early, so I will give the benefit of the doubt to the government, but that is why it is important that it certainly at least have the operating budget necessary to achieve these ambitious goals. New Democrats will be there every step of the way to make sure that we can accomplish these goals, because that is certainly what our municipalities and, most important, our constituents need in order to be more productive and have a higher quality of life. It is certainly something that would benefit us all.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

The provincial governments have an important role to play in achieving those goals. That is important in the spirit of bilateral agreements. In that regard, we have questions for the government, but I know that it is a very complex process. Canada is a vast country, and I understand very well the importance of the uniqueness of all the provinces. After all, I am from Quebec. If anyone understands the importance of respecting the uniqueness of a province, it is a Quebec MP.

Having said that, we must take action immediately. Since we are talking about Quebec, I would like to mention once again that I attended the annual meeting of the Union des municipalités du Québec a few weeks ago in Quebec City. We had the opportunity to attend several workshops and hear a speech by the Minister of Finance. We also had the opportunity to have discussions with municipal officials.

I was pleased to speak to municipal officials from my riding and also a number of municipal officials from across Quebec. That is important because I represent a suburban riding. We must listen to the officials of major urban centres and rural communities as well.

Their biggest concern had to do with the urgent need to sign a bilateral agreement. I always hesitate to point a finger at previous governments. We need to look forward, and I think the current government is taking responsibility. However, we cannot deny the fact that part of the blame lies with the previous government.

As the parliamentary secretary pointed out, we missed a number of construction seasons in Quebec, and this created a deficit of several billion dollars in terms of infrastructure projects, which are still on hold. Our dynamic and innovative municipalities are waiting for that money.

Under this new government, everyone is still waiting. I know its members are acting in good faith and it is still much too early in their mandate to accuse them of bad faith. However, there is an urgent need for action, and I want to take this opportunity to reiterate that that is what the Union des municipalités du Québec, the members from Quebec, and the people we represent are calling for. We must act now in order to begin these projects before the 2016 construction season is over.

[*English*]

This issue is not just an issue facing Quebec. I had the opportunity to go to Winnipeg for the first time. The member for Winnipeg North will be happy to hear that I certainly enjoyed my first visit to his city. It was an opportunity to go to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' convention and to meet municipal leaders from across Canada. It was a great opportunity because, as I mentioned a bit earlier in my speech in French, Canada is a large country. We are dreaming if we think that we could find a one-size-fits-all solution. There is no way that is ever going to happen, and we accept that. I think the Conservatives, when they were power, accepted that. I certainly know that the Liberals accept that, as well. That is why it is so important that we get it right, and that we get it right quickly. At the end of the day, suburban communities, urban centres, and rural communities all have specific issues that they need taken care of.

That is why these bilateral agreements with provinces are so important.

• (1945)

I know the minister is working hard and again, at the risk of repeating myself and with all due respect to our interpreters, I really think it bears repeating and mentioning again in both of our official languages that it is so important that when we are negotiating these bilateral agreements that the government recognize that there is urgency.

I think it is far too early in the Liberals' mandate to accuse them any sort of any sort of bad faith, but we cannot afford to miss the construction seasons. It is a challenge that we face in Canada. Winters are long. We all suffer through the temperatures that we go through in winter. Perhaps my colleagues from B.C. have a different reality, that is fair enough. We need to make sure that we are maximizing the opportunities that we have to get these projects going.

Municipalities are ready. We have very dynamic municipalities that have projects that they want to accomplish. We have provinces that have their priorities as well. It is so important that we get this right and get it right quickly. I cannot emphasize enough that speed and urgency is of the essence here.

In particular, when I look at the budget and the phase one program, that is the essence of what the government has committed to. We are talking about refurbishing infrastructure. We are talking about repairing infrastructure. We are talking about bridging that gap so that they can bring in phase two. If we really want to accomplish those objectives, we need to get these bilateral agreements signed quickly so that we can maximize what we are doing with the phase one program, so that by the time we reach the next phase of the infrastructure program, at least the provinces and municipalities have had the opportunity to bridge that gap. That is so important. That is certainly a priority going forward. As New Democrats, we are going to holding the government's feet to the fire and make sure that it keeps the negotiation of these agreements as a priority.

[*Translation*]

We talked about the short term, but we also have to think about the long term. What does the future hold for us when it comes to infrastructure? There are a number of aspects to that, and the Conservatives raised a very important point.

I dare say that I am asking the government a question by way of my speech, and it is about the way the different types of infrastructure are defined. There has been a lot of talk about social infrastructure, and I have to admit that we find that problematic.

At the end of the day, we agree with the government's priorities, indeed all of them. I am thinking about affordable housing, public transit, and infrastructure for early child care, even though I also wonder what exactly this means.

Our concern when it comes to social infrastructure is that we must not lose sight of the different priorities because everything is being put into one big basket.

Government Orders

It is easy for a government member to turn around and say that there is such and such an amount for social housing, such and such an amount for public transit, and such and such an amount for green infrastructure, but the problem at the end of the day is that it is the same money in every case because it all comes out of the same big basket.

It is very important to know that, and we should pay close attention because the government has promises to keep when it comes to the different aspects of infrastructure. It is very important that the government keep those promises and that it understand that the situation is urgent. I am repeating myself, but urgent action needs to be taken given the importance of the various files.

Much to my colleagues' chagrin, I could probably talk about this issue for a long time yet, but my time is running out.

As the leader of the NDP, the member for Outremont, said at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference, we appreciate the government's change of tone.

[*English*]

We certainly appreciate a renewed relationship between municipalities and provinces, but at the end of the day, it does not substitute for results. For New Democrats it will certainly not be enough to keep us off our feet, standing in the House and making sure that the government is living up to the very large expectations that have been set on the infrastructure file.

[*Translation*]

An example of a sector in which expectations are very high is green infrastructure. I know that is also one of the government's objectives. There are high expectations, and the municipalities are on the front lines working to combat climate change.

[*English*]

Municipalities are certainly key partners in fighting climate change and New Democrats recognize that. We like to hope and I have certainly heard that the government agrees on that point, but now the devil will be in the details. The results we have yet to see will be something that we will be waiting for.

• (1950)

[*Translation*]

I would like to close by saying that we respect the commitments that the government has made and we share its priorities. I appreciate the work that I have been able to do with the minister and the working relationship that we have established.

However, as an opposition party, we are now going to stand up and ensure that the Liberals fulfill their mandate and live up to the high expectations that municipalities have of them.

[*English*]

Municipalities, provinces, and our constituents depend on our delivering these results. While we appreciate what the government is doing, we are going to be standing up to make sure the government lives up to these very high expectations that have been set on the infrastructure file.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also appreciate my hon. colleague's very deep understanding about infrastructure and why we need to invest in areas that the hon. member has identified; whether it is public transit, affordable housing, or making our communities more resilient to climate change under green infrastructure.

I also share the concerns raised by the member about the lack of investments that should have been made in the last number of years but were not made. It will be worth sharing that in 2014 the previous government, despite allocating \$1.6 billion for Quebec, delivered zero dollars in the last two years for the province of Quebec, which is a concern to us. It was the same with Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. It is not a new story, how the previous government neglected the needs of the provinces and municipalities.

However, I agree with my hon. colleague to have flexibility, as well as that once I—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his question.

[*English*]

I am old enough to have a certain appreciation for *Jerry Maguire* and the famous phrase, "Show me the money". That is what provinces and municipalities are thinking now.

We certainly appreciate the interest in investing more in these different infrastructures. As I said in my speech and I will say again, the priorities that the minister just listed are certainly priorities that we share. What is really going to be important is that we have agreements with the provinces to make sure we can actually deliver those dollars.

At the end of the day, we can promise any amount of money that we want to the provinces and municipalities, but if there is not an agreement to let that money flow in the appropriate fashion, it is for nought. So let us ensure we get it right, and let us recognize the urgency of getting that money to those who need it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my New Democratic Party colleague for his speech.

When I entered politics, a journalist asked me a question. It was during one of the first interviews I gave after deciding to run. The journalist asked me a simple question: once elected, if I could do one thing to counter people's cynicism, what would it be? I said that I would do something meaningful to prove that we could do things differently.

Even if we set aside the expenses to set up the minister's office, when I see that \$850,000 was spent ahead of the multitude of projects that are waiting in every municipality and region in Canada, I really have to wonder.

Government Orders

I would like my colleague to make his opinion on that \$850,000 expense clear. Given the choice, not a lot of private companies would spend that much money setting up offices. Even if people tell me that public servants made that decision, I think a minister who wants to show leadership and do things properly from day one should take a close look at that kind of thing and keep an eye on his own department's spending.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. As I said in my speech, he is one of the members of this House who understands how important infrastructure is, since he is a former municipal mayor.

To answer his question, as I said many times in my speech, the minister is not immune to having to answer legitimate questions from the opposition regarding taxpayers' money. Let us be clear: what we are debating today is votes that the Conservative Party opposes.

The more than \$800,000 that was spent was probably excessive. My colleague and I agree on that. However, at the end of the day, the department's operating budget is \$110 million. Should we ask the minister questions about how money is spent? Certainly, but there are also some objectives to be achieved. For now, I will give him the benefit of the doubt.

He spoke about doing politics differently. We still share some priorities. I can say that the mayors in my riding, and certainly in other ridings across Canada, at least want to know that we are working with the government to try to achieve these objectives. We will talk again to determine whether the objectives were achieved, and we can certainly ask questions. That is our job as opposition members.

•(1955)

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in defence of the Conservatives, their motion sparked some important debate on the spending that the minister's office does.

I was looking at *National Newswatch*, and this was the top story. I think it has achieved its desired effect. We have had a closer look. We have had the government come to the House and defend itself.

However, I was really intrigued by my hon. colleague's speech that touched on green infrastructure. I just wanted to provide a specific example from my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. We are increasingly seeing the effects of climate change with respect to the Cowichan River getting down to historical lows. One of the big things we need to do is build up the weir, to mitigate the effects of climate change. I think this is a case study that happens right across Canada.

Given the member's recent experience at the FCM and the many conversations he has had with municipalities, I just wanted to hear a little more about the feedback he has received about mitigating the effects of climate change and how important that kind of green infrastructure is to Canada.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Madam Speaker, the fight against climate change, as far as municipalities are concerned—and we, as federal

MPs, in terms of what the federal government can do to help municipalities—is happening on two fronts.

On the one hand, there is reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the obvious direct fight against climate change and protecting the environment. On the other hand, unfortunately, we find ourselves in a position where, as my colleague highlighted, municipalities also have to deal with the consequences.

The two, unfortunately, are not mutually exclusive. Municipalities need to adapt. I have heard about adaptation, resilience, and mitigation. These are three words that come back very often from municipal leaders, as well as from experts in the field of infrastructure. These are things that are very important going forward.

When we look at the challenge of the environment and climate change, we need to make sure that municipalities and provinces have the tools they need to combat climate change, and also, unfortunately, to adapt to it. New Democrats share that priority. We are looking at the permafrost melting and drought in parts of British Columbia. These are very serious issues that we need to take on, and the federal government needs to play a lead role.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me touch base on the bilateral agreements for a minute.

I have an excellent relationship with our provincial counterparts. I had a chance to meet with my provincial counterparts in the province of Quebec. I had a chance to meet with the mayors of Gatineau, Montreal, and Quebec City. We are working in close collaboration to provide the necessary support that our communities need. We are moving forward on signing bilateral agreements.

As far as flood mitigation is concerned, absolutely, we understand. We need to make our communities more resilient and adapt to the impacts of climate change. We are working with our municipalities to do so.

However, the challenges the member has identified are not unique for that particular community. There are challenges throughout the country. Different areas have different needs. I had a chance to visit the city of Red Deer in March. I was surprised to know that I was the first infrastructure minister to visit that city in a decade. That tells us how the needs of the municipalities have been ignored for the last decade.

We will work in collaboration with the municipalities and welcome co-operation from my colleagues to deliver on the necessary infrastructure that communities need.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his comments and his question.

In fact, I will take this opportunity to talk about the bilateral agreement, more specifically, the one with Quebec. Naturally, it affects my riding. I appreciate and respect both the government's and the minister's goodwill. However, at the end of the day, it is important to hear what is being said right now.

Government Orders

The Government of Quebec is telling us that this is taking far too long, that we must act now or we will miss another construction season, as was too often the case under the previous government. We must act now; I cannot say it enough. Projects worth billions of dollars are ready to go. The minister must show some goodwill. I think the goodwill is there, but we need to act now.

● (2000)

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would first like to mention that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Saint-Maurice—Champlain.

I am very pleased to rise today in the House to speak about the important work done by Infrastructure Canada to support the government's priorities and help it keep its commitments to Canadians.

Everyone here today is well aware of the importance of building strong infrastructure in order to create sustainable communities that are great places to live. In many ways, infrastructure is what links Canadians to their communities.

[English]

To support Canadian communities, the Government of Canada is committed to delivering a historic plan that will invest more than \$120 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years. Phase one will invest more than \$10 billion over the next two years toward the infrastructure projects that Canadians need most: public transit, green infrastructure, and social infrastructure.

[Translation]

In phase 1, we will accelerate delivery of funding for Infrastructure Canada's existing programs and extend project categories to meet the needs of communities because that is what we want to do: meet communities' needs.

New infrastructure projects will continue to be eligible under current infrastructure programs, such as the 2014 new building Canada fund and the gas tax fund.

It is also important to note that we have been working to strengthen our relationship with the provinces, territories, and municipalities and fund their priorities and our shared priorities.

For example, in the past month in Quebec alone, Infrastructure Canada has announced over \$55 million from a fund that was set up in 2007. That fund has been around since 2007 and lay idle for years. Thanks to our efforts and the minister's efforts to deliver that funding so it can benefit communities, we have funded projects that the Government of Quebec identified as urgent and top priority. Among these is the Place des Canotiers, the Le Diamant performing arts centre in Quebec City, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, and Saint Joseph's oratory. Other projects are coming on stream just as quickly.

How was this possible? It was thanks to a desire to establish a solid partnership with the provinces in order to advance our common interests to build strong, inclusive, sustainable communities.

In Quebec and elsewhere, the investments target large communities as much as small ones. We have invested in the major projects

I just mentioned, but also in small communities such as Trois-Pistoles and Saint-Fortunat, which I had the opportunity to mention earlier. The money invested in Saint-Fortunat, Trois-Pistoles, and other small communities will be used to improve the water supply networks and waste water treatment.

My counterparts in Quebec told me that our many efforts and our collaborative approach are making our relationships stronger. These relationships and partnerships in turn are making our communities stronger.

Allow me to cite a few examples of support we have received from officials in Quebec. Marc Demers, the mayor of Laval, said:

We appreciate the significant investments in affordable housing that have been announced. These announcements mean a lot to us considering how much money is earmarked for the Val-Martin housing project. The fact that the Government of Canada considers cities to be major partners and reserves funding specifically for them should help them meet their priorities better.

● (2005)

Sandra Desmeules, a member of the executive committee and a municipal councillor in Concorde-Bois-de-Boulogne, had this to say: "As a member of the board of directors of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, I can only applaud the Government of Canada's decision to make major investments in the sustainable development of cities."

There is also Denis Coderre, a former colleague, who is a well-known and highly regarded mayor.

[English]

He said, "I had a feeling like it was like a new deal. This is exactly what we were looking for ...". This comes from somebody neutral, Denis Coderre, the mayor of Montreal.

[Translation]

Then there is Maxime Pedneaud-Jobin, the mayor of Gatineau, who spoke on behalf of the Union des municipalités du Québec. He said, "When 50% of the cost of projects is covered, that is a big deal for me."

I would like to read a short quote from the official press release issued by the Union des municipalités du Québec after the Federation of Canadian Municipalities annual conference:

The partnership between the federal government and municipal leaders was front and centre during the conference, as [the] Prime Minister [of Canada], representatives from federal parties, and several Cabinet Ministers outlined their commitments to working with municipal leaders to build a strong country. Municipal leaders confirmed their ability to move quickly with the first phase of the federal government's infrastructure plans, which includes \$11.9 billion in short-term investments in key priorities for Canadians such as public transit, housing and clean water.

I have a stack of quotes that I could read to my colleagues, but will stop here and continue my speech.

[English]

As solid progress continues to be made on phase 1, I would like to take the time to speak about a commitment for the phase 2 of our long-term plan. I have been working closely with members of Parliament from all parties to ensure that voices from the community are heard in the development of this long-term plan.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

We have consulted different stakeholders such as citizens, municipal councillors, mayors, leaders of indigenous communities, and our provincial counterparts, which has allowed us to hear different perspectives on the issues and the pressing day-to-day needs of communities.

[*English*]

From coast to coast to coast, we are learning about the areas of investment that matter the most to our communities and our constituents. We are getting feedback on the type of programs that should be developed in order to help build strong, sustainable and inclusive communities. This is not only about identifying projects, it is about identifying the fundamental and real needs of Canadians and our communities.

[*Translation*]

This information will help us develop phase two of our infrastructure plan. I recently met with colleagues on both sides of the House to discuss our plan. I thank them for their co-operation and availability, and I would like to tell them that their feedback is important. We will continue to hold extensive public consultations over the summer to ensure that all communities in Canada, whether they are big or small, urban or rural, and all Canadians can have their say.

• (2010)

[*English*]

Communities know, more than anybody else, their pressures and opportunities. We are listening to them and identifying the types of investments that make a difference. It is time to invest in people and in our communities.

[*Translation*]

Sustainable public infrastructure is key to ensuring that communities prosper, and the Government of Canada's ambitious plan requires ongoing targeted efforts. This is exactly what we are doing.

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened both to the minister and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities. I find it quite stunning that they are trying to defend spending almost \$1 million on office furniture to run this department.

It is important to not get into a lot of revisionist history here, but I think back to the time of our economic action plan. Of course the former minister of transport and infrastructure, John Baird, ran both of these ministries. He managed to get \$40 billion worth of infrastructure out the door. Not only that, he did it with the Auditor General being very approving of how that program was managed, and he ran it with half the staff.

If he could run one of the largest infrastructure investments in Canadian history and he ran Transport Canada at the same time with half the staff, why does the minister need almost \$1 million in new furniture and office space?

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear my colleague speak about the economic action plan of the Conservatives. They spent \$750 million on advertising, money thrown out the window for partisan purposes.

[*Translation*]

We have been clear. We explained that there was no minister dedicated exclusively to infrastructure. As a result, we needed to set up an office for the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, as well as an office for a new deputy minister dedicated exclusively to infrastructure and a full team. This was necessary because we are implementing the largest and most ambitious infrastructure plan in Canadian history.

These are the resources we need and we will use to move forward with this plan.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is funny because I have been listening to both sides in the debate and I get the feeling that the NDP is caught between the two. On one hand, the former Conservative government is constantly bringing up extremely petty subjects. Speaking of furniture, the Conservatives were ready to burn the furniture for heat to make sure that there would not be a deficit and to give the impression that they had balanced the budget.

On the other hand, the Liberals are here saying that they have a new department for infrastructure. They are filing all kinds of issues under infrastructure: spiritual infrastructure, green infrastructure, food infrastructure, and so on. When most people think of infrastructure, they think of roads and highways, pipes, water intake structures, and that sort of thing.

The member has certainly been around long enough to know that, in Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, for example, there have been problems at the intersection of Highway 116 and Chambly Road for years. Everyone knows that area. It is next to the airport.

Can my colleague opposite tell me whether he was able to determine how the Conservatives could have gotten so behind in 10 years, particularly with regard to Quebec and its infrastructure? What is he going to do to avoid falling into the same trap?

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, my colleague asked an excellent question.

The first thing that we need to do when we want to move forward with infrastructure programs is to open a dialogue. It was very difficult for the previous government to sit down with the Government of Quebec, the cities, and the municipalities to discuss priorities, which is something that we have done.

The other thing that is going to help speed up the distribution of infrastructure funding is that we have broadened the eligibility criteria. We have created a larger number of funding categories. We have also eliminated some of the red tape, which means that the tax dollars we are going to invest in infrastructure will be spent more quickly and more responsibly. That will help boost the economy and create jobs and will provide us with modern infrastructure for the new century.

Government Orders

• (2015)

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to have this opportunity to talk about the major progress that my colleague, the hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods, has made on the infrastructure file. I also want to talk about our plan to create quality jobs, generate economic growth in Canada, and support middle-class Canadians.

As my colleagues have said, infrastructure is an important part of our government's efforts to grow the economy. That is exactly why we have an infrastructure minister. Anyone who consulted Canadians, would realize that, after 10 years of the Conservatives neglecting infrastructure, it is about time we had a dedicated infrastructure minister. I travelled the country to hear from Canadians, which is not something that happened much in the last 10 years. People congratulated us and told us they need infrastructure.

That is why budget 2016 has an infrastructure plan that commits to smart, strategic investments that will grow Canada's economy and improve the lives of Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Our plan will focus on accelerating federal investments in the short term by providing funding for projects that rehabilitate and modernize public infrastructure. We will achieve this by working collaboratively with our provincial and municipal partners, who are best placed to quickly identify their priorities for funding.

Earlier my colleague, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, talked about this dialogue, which had not taken place for 10 years and through which the various levels of government focus on the interests of Canadians and put them at the forefront of their actions.

It is like a breath of fresh air to hear my hon. colleague talk about this renewed collaboration with our provincial, territorial, and municipal counterparts in order to work together to identify all the infrastructure needed across the country.

We are getting the money flowing as quickly as possible, so that projects can begin right away. I listened very closely to my NDP colleagues who were saying that they do not want to miss the construction season. The members on this side of the House are motivated by a desire to have good projects that benefit all Canadians and ensure that we do not miss another construction season, which is what happened over the past few years.

We are also working more collaboratively in order to reduce any unnecessary administrative burden and streamline approvals. That is one of the things that people talked to us about. Canadians are calling on the government to take new measures to avoid the same delays that we saw in past years and to be more efficient when it comes to giving Canadians from coast to coast to coast the infrastructure they so desperately need.

My colleague made a very interesting comment. He talked about investing not only in our urban centres, but also in our rural and suburban communities. I have the privilege of representing the riding of Saint-Maurice—Champlain, a riding that is larger than Belgium. When we talk about infrastructure, the people of my region understand what that means.

In order to make the most of the 21st century economy and be an entrepreneur, people need infrastructure. My NDP colleague may not agree with me on this, but in the 21st century, people are no longer talking only about bridges and highways. They are also talking about digital infrastructure. That is why our government is investing \$500 million to connect our communities, so they too can participate in today's economy.

The public transit infrastructure fund allocation for the Government of Quebec is quite significant at \$923,710,000. The funding allocation is to be distributed in such a way that every recognized public transit system receives a minimum base amount of \$50,000, with the remainder of the funds to be distributed based on overall ridership of each transit system.

The clean water waste water fund allocation for the Government of Quebec is \$363,774,400.

• (2020)

This fund will primarily support investments that meet immediate public priorities for clean water and waste water in order to support a healthier and cleaner environment in our communities.

Allow me to come back to what Canadians said to us. I had the opportunity, and even the privilege, of speaking to Canadians from Moncton to Yellowknife during the pre-budget phase to gain an understanding of what Canadians wanted from us to ensure that there was economic growth in Canada. During my tour I also had the opportunity to meet with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities in Edmonton. I saw how much he is respected in his community. He spoke here in the House about his past, and his background, which make him a great infrastructure minister who understands what communities want because he went through the experience. He was a municipal councillor and a bus driver. He is a man who understands, a man with the kind of integrity that no one in this House can deny. He is a man who works for his community.

Allow me to tell you what Canadians told us. I know that the Conservatives are trying to make this a petty debate. We are here in the House to examine the major issues in our society. What is the major issue for our society today? When we travelled around the country, people asked us to help them and their families and to grow the economy. When it comes to helping families, the government delivered. The first thing we did was to cut taxes for the middle class effective January 1 of this year. The second thing we did was introduce the most important social measure in the country since universal health care. The Canada child benefit will lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty, help nine out of ten families in Canada, and do so in a simpler way. That is what Canadians asked us to do, to give them a non-taxable benefit and to support the economy.

Government Orders

I would like to go back to the issue of infrastructure because when people asked us to grow the economy, they talked about infrastructure. The first thing we did was announce a historic \$120-billion investment in infrastructure in the last budget. Why? It is simple. As a result of the Conservatives' historic disinvestment in infrastructure, we had to play catch-up. We believe, as do all MPs, that investing in infrastructure will lead to the economic growth that Canadians need.

When it comes to infrastructure, the minister was very smart. He has a good understanding of infrastructure. He decided to take this on in two phases. The first phase involves \$11.9 billion. Of that, \$3.4 billion will be spent on public transportation. Why? Because people and goods need to be able to travel around our large urban centres and other places more quickly. I will give a specific example. When I was in London, Ontario, I had the opportunity to meet with people in the community who informed me of a problem. The city is so spread out that there is no longer a way for people who live on one side of the city to get to the other side, where the jobs are. Imagine. In 2016, there is a city with an infrastructure problem that prevents people who want to work from getting to the other side of town where the jobs are and where there is a labour shortage. Members can imagine how much people in that city feel the need for new infrastructure.

There is an economic cost associated with all of this, a cost associated with the fact that people are spending two hours a day in their cars to get around our urban centres. That is why we have made historic investments. I just have a minute to talk about the investments that my colleague, the minister, has made so I will give some concrete examples. The members opposite talk a lot about the government's inaction, but I will tell you what real government action looks like.

The Minister of Infrastructure and Communities has been making investments since he took office. Here are some examples.

[*English*]

In Yellowknife, we have invested \$14.8 million in broadband infrastructure. In Saskatoon, we have invested close to \$15 million already in the Boychuk Drive and Highway 16 interchange. Let us look at Sudbury. We have already invested \$26.7 million in the Maley Drive extension.

Let us look at Halifax. Everyone in the House loves Halifax. There has been a transit-related announcement about Lacewood Terminal, where \$6 million has already been invested.

I will finish with Quebec City, since I come from Quebec, where we announced funding of \$11.2 million for 32 hybrid minibuses for the Réseau de transport de la Capitale. That is a responsible government.

• (2025)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as usual, my colleague delivered an excellent speech filled with facts and figures. He gave us a clear picture of how our government is dealing with infrastructure.

I think that what is bothering, surprising, and shocking the opposition is that our government is doing things differently. The Canadian Water and Wastewater Association is happy about the approach we took to infrastructure in our budget. Our approach is both ambitious and cautious. In other words, we will look at asset management before investing in major projects, to see what kinds of repairs our assets require. Then we will move forward. This is a cautious and welcomed approach.

I would like to hear my hon. colleague's thoughts on that.

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, who is a veteran member of this House from whom we can all learn. He is also knowledgeable about waste water.

I thank him for his question, because this gives me a chance to talk about a significant investment made in the latest budget. We invested \$5 billion in waste water treatment across the country. I am sure members will recall what happened in municipalities across Canada. We can see how important investments in waste water treatment systems are to our society.

As a result of the previous government's budget cuts, we had to make a meaningful but prudent investment of \$5 billion to enable municipalities to treat waste water in their communities.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He talked about his tour across Canada. He must have heard the same comments I hear in my riding, Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot. Before becoming an MP, I was a municipal councillor for many years, and the municipalities have long been saying that in programs funded equally by the three levels of government, they get the short end of the stick because some of the money goes back to the higher level of government whether in terms of labour costs or equipment. I would like to know whether a different breakdown is being considered.

The hon. member talked about the importance of helping our rural communities. I represent a riding where the largest city has a population of 53,000, and the municipalities are telling me that they think that once the big cities get their share, there will be nothing left for them. Is that true?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, who has vast experience in municipal politics.

I thank her for her comments because she truly understands the needs of the municipalities, not just in urban areas, but also in rural areas, as I do. I can tell her, and I think that the House has taken note, that the minister said that we would go up to 50% during phase one of the historic infrastructure investment program. That is quite significant compared to the position of the previous Conservative government, which was not prepared to go this far. We have taken this step because we are aware of the tax pressure our municipalities are under.

Government Orders

I would very much like to continue answering my colleague but I see that my time is up. I will have the opportunity to answer her in private.

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, the revisionist history of the current government is absolutely incredible. What the Liberals are forgetting is an economic action plan that rolled infrastructure money out the door very rapidly, but the Conservatives did not have a minister who needed to spend almost \$1 million on furniture. If they are going to roll out the infrastructure program the way they have rolled out setting up offices, Canadians have a lot to be concerned about.

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, Canadians had a lot to be concerned about. That is why they elected us after 10 years of Conservative government. That is why we are in power today.

What I can say about infrastructure is that if the previous government did such a good job, I am surprised that I have heard across Canada that we need to make an historic investment, which we are making, of \$120 billion in infrastructure. That is an investment that should have been made before and that we are committed to making for the good of Canadians.

• (2030)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak in the context of this debate, and I will let the House know right away that I plan to share my time with my colleague from Red Deer—Lacombe.

Why are we gathered here this evening? We are talking about the implementation of the budget, specifically the infrastructure file. I really need to set the record straight on some things that my government colleagues just said, which were not quite true. When people say that the Conservatives ignored infrastructure investment, that is false. Never in Canada's history has a government been so dedicated to investing in infrastructure as ours was.

The final budget introduced under the right hon. member for Calgary Heritage included over \$80 billion in investments. The difference is that we did it with a balanced budget. That adjective is missing from the Canadian Liberal dictionary. Balanced budgets no longer exist. That is the defining feature of this government, its management, and its administration. Unfortunately, our children and grandchildren will pay for this extravagance. They will pay for the Liberals' bad management.

It is also important to point out that we think investments are important, and when it comes to infrastructure, those investments need to be made under a minister. I hear the opposition members saying that there was no infrastructure minister back in the day. That is false. That is not true. The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean was responsible for economic development for the Quebec regions, among others. He was the one who allocated the sums available to Quebec. Need I remind the House that those investments in Quebec are made based on recommendations from the provincial government? We worked in partnership with the provincial government and the municipalities, and we made huge investments.

A picture is worth a thousand words. When it comes to managing public funds, the current government is unfortunately demonstrating just how ugly mismanagement can get. This begins first and foremost with the minister's own office. The current Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, who is responsible for spending the billions of dollars entrusted to him appropriately, is going about it all wrong in his own ministerial office. This speaks volumes about his ability to manage money. When he is incapable of managing even his own office properly, imagine how poorly he will manage the rest of the money that has been entrusted to him.

The fact that he spent \$800,000 to set up his office is indecent and unacceptable. Anyone who did that in the private sector, anyone who would sign off on spending \$800,000 for their own office, would be immediately shown the door. I do not know what the cost of the door would be, but we could save a lot of money there, that is for sure.

That is why I was very happy to hear the speeches given by our colleagues, particularly the member for Mégantic—L'Érable, who gave a humorous yet woefully accurate description of the reality and this government's lack of vision.

The member for Mégantic—L'Érable went to what I would go so far as to call absurd lengths to show how someone could equip an office for \$10,000 rather than \$800,000, which is what the others spent. The minister could have gotten everything he needed for 30 people in his office for \$10,000 and that would have been that, but no, this spendthrift government that is in party mode is spending money it does not have. This government has absolutely no vision when it comes to the proud and careful management of public funds, which is something that a government should have. The fact that this government spent almost a million dollars on an office is completely unacceptable.

Should we be surprised that a senior minister who is responsible for spending and carefully monitoring the billions of dollars entrusted to him spent \$800,000 on his private office? No, that comes as no surprise because that is this government's signature. This government spends recklessly. This government has completely lost its mind and lost control over public spending. This government said one thing during the election campaign and has been doing the opposite ever since it took office.

Look no further than the budget and the astronomical deficits that this sad government has announced. Let us remember that during the election campaign, the current Prime Minister travelled all over Canada telling people that his party was going to run only small deficits.

• (2035)

[*English*]

He said that it was a tiny deficit of \$10 billion, nothing more, nothing less. He said that it would be only \$10 billion and that three years from now, everything would be set. There would just be three difficult years of \$10 billion, and after that, we would get back on track.

That is all wrong. For the first year, it is \$30 billion. That is the reality. That is the signature of the Liberal government.

Government Orders

[Translation]

The government announced a small \$10-billion deficit, but the deficit will actually be \$30 billion. Now we see how the Liberals can afford to spend \$800,000 on an office. They are living beyond their means, but there is nothing there.

My colleague from Shawinigan keeps saying that we need to put money back in people's pockets. During the election campaign, the Liberals said that their tax changes would not cost anything. In reality, the deficit for the tax changes alone is \$1.7 billion.

The Liberals said that they needed to give money back to families, as though we had done nothing. Does the UCCB not ring a bell? They do not seem to remember that last summer, Canadian families had access to the universal child care benefit. That was money for families. It was our program, and it was managed in a balanced way.

Now, the Liberals say that they want to give more money to parents for their children, in a balanced way. We end up with a \$1.4-billion deficit. That is what we get under Liberal management. The Liberals say that this will be done in a balanced way, but what we are seeing is the complete opposite.

That is why we have a minister who is responsible for spending billions of dollars but ends up spending \$800,000 on his office. The Liberals have completely lost control of government spending. They are living beyond their means, but so what.

Some of my colleagues opposite are looking at me sideways. I want to remind them that spending \$800,000 on an office is not acceptable. The minister could have followed the lead of the current Minister of Finance, who set up a new office for \$1,400. That is pretty good.

It is true that the Minister of Finance had just been appointed and that, in a previous life, he was an experienced businessman who knew how to manage things properly. Unfortunately, he lost control of public finances. Members will recall that he wrote a very interesting book about the sound management of public funds entitled *The Real Retirement: Why You Could Be Better Off Than You Think, and How to Make That Happen*.

As an experienced businessman, he said in this book that it was an excellent idea to increase the retirement age to 67, among other things. That is unfortunate. Now that he is a Liberal minister, he is rolling back the retirement age to 65. That is the kind of Liberal management that is leading us into a black hole. It is not the right thing to do.

Last week in Quebec City, the Minister of Families, a member from Quebec, was proud to announce a \$10-million investment in the Diamant project.

[English]

Do not get me wrong. We have nothing against the Diamant project, but the point is this: Where was it in the campaign?

[Translation]

During the election campaign, the Liberals did not say anything about a \$10-million investment in that project. That is a fact.

However, although they are investing \$10 million in a project that they did not commit to, they scrapped the funding promised to the INO and the amount that should have gone to the Institut nordique du Québec. Furthermore, they have completely turned their backs on the Quebec Bridge file.

The Liberals make big announcements, boast about their fine principles, and say that they are proud to invest \$10 million in culture in Quebec City. I have nothing against that, but once again, they need to have the means to pay for it. Can they assume their responsibilities and keep the election promises they have broken? They need to be careful.

When I became a member of Parliament, there was a lot of equipment in my riding office. I took only what I needed and donated the rest to charitable organizations in my riding.

If I had known that the Liberals were about to spend \$800,000, I would have asked the minister to come to my riding office and take whatever he needed. That would not have cost anything. However, the government has decided to live beyond its means. That is unacceptable.

• (2040)

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague is talking about deficits, but he has a short memory. The Conservatives left us with not one, not two, not three, not four, but seven deficits. They added an extra \$150 billion to the debt. Why? Does my colleague want to see the results? They left \$750 million in partisan ads.

The hon. member was not here at the time, but we had gazebos by the shovelful, a fake lake with fake ducks that went quack quack, a sidewalk that ended at a tree, and washrooms for the delegates 12 kilometres away from the conference centre. That is the legacy of the Conservatives.

Seriously, the Conservatives had the opportunity to invest, but lost two construction seasons. Why?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I invite my colleague to show some restraint. I would ask him to have a less dramatic style. Having a more contained response is always best.

I would like to invite my colleague to remember the reality of the facts. Where was he in 2008, 2009, and 2010? I presume he was on planet Earth. What was happening at the time on planet Earth? It was the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Fortunately it was the Conservatives, under the leadership of the right hon. member for Calgary Heritage, who were in charge. Imagine what state Canada would be in if by some misfortune those people were in government 10 years ago. We would really be in the hole. Fortunately we were the ones at the helm.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Government Orders

As everyone knows, Canadian household debt levels are worrisome, and that makes families acutely aware of the impact of debt on a budget. What I hear every week when I go back to my riding, Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, is that people are worried and the government needs to know. Every week, I meet people who are worried about this government's spending. People tell me that they are concerned about the future of their children and grandchildren. They feel compelled to express that concern.

I would like to know if my colleague has been hearing the same kind of thing.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, that is precisely the difference between our vision and this government's.

This government is living on credit, and our great-grandchildren, who are not even born yet, will have to pay for this government's over-spending and bad management. How nice that they can hand out money to everyone and that nine million Canadians will have more money in their pockets. Nobody is against that, as long as the government has the means, which is not the case right now.

A \$30-billion deficit means that our grandchildren will have to pay that \$30 billion back later on. This is like someone with a net household income of \$50,000 spending \$55,000. Eventually, it stops working, it backfires, the system breaks down. They can let loose for a night, but they cannot do it for four years. Unfortunately, this government is leading the country into a disastrous situation for our public finances. I urge the government to change course.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend for Louis-Saint-Laurent for his very enlightening speech and for educating us and reminding us of some of the past troubles that the Liberals have had. I am glad he brought up things like the ad scam and Shawinigate.

As we are talking about the \$825,000 office of the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, I would ask my colleague if this reminds him a little of David Dingwall's statement that Liberals are entitled to their entitlements.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, my colleague is very right, because unfortunately the government failed to recognize the reality of how to deal correctly with the public finances of the people.

Also, it reminds us of the dark years under the Liberal government, especially the 1970s when we lived so much higher than expected that we have to pay today for the expenses of 40 years ago under the leadership of the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the father of today's Liberal Prime Minister.

• (2045)

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of my constituents of the brand new riding of Red Deer—Lacombe. I am happy to have the opportunity to represent such great hard-working people.

I wish the Liberals would get out of the way of some of the economic things that are holding us back when it comes to pipeline approvals and so on, because there are a lot of folks in central Alberta who would love to get back to work and pay their fair share of taxes. The deficit might not be so high if we did.

The motion that we have before us today deals with the Minister of Infrastructure and his lavish spending. I want to be clear for the record so that Canadians who are watching right now understand what this is about. This is almost \$1 million in renovations for 32 staff members. I went on to the government employment site. According to that there are only 12 people in the minister's office and six people in the deputy minister's office. Those numbers to me total 18. If the minister says there are 32, I will give him the benefit of the doubt. We know what a Liberal job creation program looks like. It is just about taxes and hiring people to work for the government. We will see that time and time again over the next four years.

The renovation costs for the minister's own office amounted to \$204,889. The renovation costs for the deputy minister's office amounted to \$138,673. The cost of furniture for both offices came to \$486,378. This gives us a grand total of \$835,252. That is money that we had to take out of hard-working taxpayers' pockets just so the new Minister of Infrastructure could have a lavish office, a minister who comes from Edmonton where politicians ought to know that when they start spending taxpayers' dollars on lavish entitlements for themselves and things like the sky palace that Alison Redford had and now sky palace 2.0 for the Minister of Infrastructure, Albertans for sure do not tolerate this kind of behaviour.

I want to put things into perspective as to what \$835,000 or almost \$1 million would get us.

In my riding of Red Deer—Lacombe, previously the riding of Wetaskiwin, the town of Bentley had a memorial park playground for \$465,000 for Canada 150 that it applied for. Everybody in the community could have used this playground for many years to come, not an office for a couple of bureaucrats in downtown Ottawa.

Ponoka Splash Park wanted to upgrade to make it safer. They asked for a mere \$28,150. Ironically, that is about the same as the cost of one of the offices for the 32 staff members. If we divide \$800,000 by 32 that gets us a safe splash park or an office for one staffer who is likely only going to be there for four years.

The Ponoka Ag Event Centre had a request for a digital sign, a storage shed, permanent seating for the wonderful events it puts on there, indoor roping events and so on with horses and dressage, all these kinds of things. It is looking for \$242,000. I am sure taxpayers in Ponoka in central Alberta would have much rather seen their tax dollars come back to their constituency to be spent on infrastructure investments for them not on a minister's office.

The sewer system and lagoon in the town of Bentley would cost \$190,000. The Lacombe Athletic Park wanted \$210,000. We could have repaved the whole village of Clide for about \$500,000. The Thorsby Seniors Club building renovation only wanted \$20,000. The Calmar Arena upgrades would cost \$500,000 so the kids could play hockey for many years to come. Instead, the newly minted Minister of Infrastructure needed a nice new office.

Government Orders

In fact, the Ponoka splash park, the Bentley sewer system and lagoon reconstruction, the Lacombe Athletic Park, the Thorsby Seniors Club, the Ponoka Ag Event Centre, and the Mirror and District Museum projects would have all been funded for \$700,000. That is less than what the Minister of Infrastructure spent.

The money comes out of the pockets of the taxpayers who live in these communities. It should go back to these communities in the form of investments, but no, it is going into the minister's office.

The next question I have is this. What could we do with \$1 million? What would we do with \$1 million if we had to make a decision like the Minister of Infrastructure did? Thankfully, we do not have to ask everybody. We just have to ask the Barenaked Ladies, because the Barenaked Ladies back in the eighties published a song entitled *If I Had A Million Dollars*. If I had a million dollars, what would I do?

If I had a million dollars
Well, I'd buy you a house.

It turns out that the average cost of a home in the minister's riding is \$283,000. He could have bought three homes in his riding, putting homeless people in his riding inside a home, but no, he has a nice office.

● (2050)

If I had a million dollars
I'd buy you furniture for your house
Maybe a nice Chesterfield or an ottoman

We know there are nice chesterfields out there. For about \$15,625 per office suite, they have brand spanking new furniture, and I am sure there are a couple of ottomans thrown in there. By the way, the average Canadian household spends about \$2,000 a year on new furnishings, so this is looking pretty good for those 32 lucky people who are going to have those pretty swanky new renovated offices to work in.

If I had a million dollars
Well, I'd buy you a K-Car
A nice Reliant automobile

In its prime, the K-car went for \$5,880 brand new. That is 142 K-cars that the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities could have bought for Canadians who had transportation needs, but no, we are not going to get that from the minister.

I'd build a tree-fort in our yard

Five hundred dollars built me a tree fort for my kids. It was not quite that lavish, but that is 1,670 tree houses. Does a tree house not remind everyone of a sky palace, or sky palace 2.0 perhaps?

...you could help
It wouldn't be that hard

He should be asking John Baird for help, because John Baird as minister spent \$42 billion on things that Canadians actually needed. He did so with complete approval from the Auditor General, not a

questionable expense, and he did it in his half-time role as the minister of infrastructure. It is kind of ironic that a fully dedicated minister could not find a cheaper way to do it than a half-time minister could.

Maybe we could put a little tiny fridge
In there somewhere

They could have pre-wrapped bacon and sausages laid out.

But they don't have pre-wrapped bacon. However, bacon goes for about \$1 for 100 grams. Therefore, we could have bought 83,500,000 grams of bacon or 42 tonnes of bacon. The minister could have brought home 42 tonnes of bacon with that money, but no, he just has a nice office.

If I had a million dollars
Well, I'd buy you a fur coat
But not a real fur coat, that's cruel

I do not necessarily subscribe to that point of view, but an average fur coat costs about \$2,000. Therefore, we could have lavishly outfitted some homeless people who were looking for coats. We could have done it for 417 people, nice seal skin coats to keep them nice and warm, but no, the minister needed new office renovations instead.

Well, I'd buy you an exotic pet
Yep, like a llama or an emu

Did everyone know that a llama today is about \$50. We could have bought 16,700 llamas. We could be the llama capital of North America if only the minister had some vision that went beyond his own immediate needs of putting together a very lavish office for himself.

The song goes on to talk about John Merrick's remains. I have nothing funny to say to that, so I am going to pass.

However, if the minister had \$1 million, he would not have to walk to the store. It actually costs about \$20,000 to stock a convenience store, by the way. That is 41 stores worth of products that we could put out there for Canadians' needs, but no, we are not going to do that.

He could take a limousine because it costs more. He is a Liberal. I expect he will be taking a limousine everywhere he goes.

If I had a million dollars
We wouldn't have to eat Kraft Dinner

Kraft Dinner goes for \$1 a box or about 25¢ a meal. That is 3,340,000 meals of Kraft Dinner that we could have fed people who needed to go to food banks, or whatever the case might be, but no, instead we got some nice furniture for the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

We could have even got the fanciest ketchup, Dijon ketchup. That is 240,000 bottles of ketchup.

Well, I'd buy you a green dress
But not a real green dress...

Government Orders

No, Statistics Canada says household expenses on clothing are about \$3,500. We could have clothed 238 homes with that money.

Well, I'd buy you some art
A Picasso or a Garfunkel

If he is getting Art Garfunkel to perform at the taxpayers' expense, I need to know.

Well, I'd buy you a monkey
Haven't you always wanted a monkey?

A monkey at a pet store costs about \$2,500, which is 334 monkeys. That is one for every member of Parliament: a monkey for that member, a monkey for that member, that member, and that member. We could all have monkeys. As a matter of fact, I think the folks at home watching this right now might actually say something about that. The point of the matter is that there are so many more things we could do with this money.

The last line of the song says:

If I had a million dollars
I'd be rich!

It is pretty rich that the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities spent \$834,000 on his own office.

• (2055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member's colleague from Quebec City must be very disappointed because I agree with him. This is a serious debate. I understand that my colleague wants to have some fun, but we are talking about important and serious matters here.

I would also like to mention that he seems to have a selective memory. I spoke a little earlier about how the Conservatives spent money on fake lakes, fake ducks, gazebos, and sidewalks leading nowhere. If my colleague is asking us to imagine what can be done with a million dollars, I would like to ask him to imagine what could have been done with the \$750 million his party spent on partisan advertising.

What could have been purchased with that money? What could have been purchased with the \$21 million that had to be spent auditing the senators appointed by the former government? What about the \$16 glasses of orange juice for Conservative ministers? The member did not mention any of that. He seems to have a selective memory.

My question remains the same. The Conservatives had the opportunity to make serious investments in infrastructure. Why did they not do so?

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, at least I was part of a government that could be proud to advertise a program that was worth delivering to Canadians, one that actually balanced the budgets, one that kept taxes the lowest in 50 years, one that delivered

more infrastructure program spending than any other government in Canadian history.

I am very proud of that record. I have nothing to apologize for, insofar as that is concerned.

What have the Liberals actually got, after 10 years? There was \$750 million spent on advertising; that was completely legitimate. There was a \$16 glass of orange juice, and \$93,000 that was inappropriately paid back to the taxpayers.

We can just wait and see what we are going to see with these guys at the end of four years.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, “If I had a million dollars”, I would buy a hospice that could give palliative care to Canadians; I would buy youth shelter infrastructure for \$350,000, which we need in Sarnia—Lambton.

I am offended. When the offices were given out, we had to wait for the party whips to give all of the Liberal government their offices before we were awarded our offices. With five office buildings, I certainly got a fine office that would have housed them.

I wonder if the member can comment on whether his office is fine.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, my office is more than fine. I have been there for about 10 years and, God willing, I will be there for a few more. However, the point my colleague makes is well taken.

All kidding aside, taxpayers work very hard for their money. I remember picking rocks and roots out of the field when I was a kid on the family farm. We bought a quarter section of land and cleared it. When I came in, the only white thing on me was my eyes and my teeth. I was covered in dirt from doing back-breaking work when I was a teenager, growing up on that farm.

I have laid tile. I was a tile-setter. I spent hours on my hands and knees, laying tile until there was sweat on my brow and my back was aching, so that I could pay taxes, just to have them squandered by decisions like this.

I am not saying that every decision the Liberals are going to make will be a bad one, but our job in the opposition is to point out a bad decision when we see one. It is regrettable that I have to shame the minister this way, but I have to do my job as a critic and as a member of the opposition to make darn sure that these kinds of lavish expenses are not made again.

That office could have been furnished a lot cheaper. We know that is true, because we have never had to do it when we were in government. All the other ministries that had to change as a result of the change of government did not have to do it. Why this one?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez: Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke about spending, but there are some things he is forgetting. I said that the Conservatives left us not one, not two, not three, not four, not five, not six, but seven deficits. My colleague is also forgetting that the Conservatives left a \$150-billion debt for future generations.

My colleague said that the Conservatives had to make investments, but the truth is that they invested only once in infrastructure. They did so only because we forced them to because they were going to prorogue Parliament. That was the most undemocratic action ever taken in the history of this Parliament.

My question remains the same. Why did the Conservatives not invest in infrastructure after they promised to do so?

• (2100)

[English]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, I was here when that happened.

Here is the recollection I have. In 2008-09, we saw the start of the global financial crisis, the worst financial crisis in modern history. I remember when the leader of the Liberal Party, the leader of the Bloc Québécois, and the leader of the NDP made a three-way pact to take the reins of government away from the duly elected government at the time, because they were not spending enough money.

They wanted more money to be spent. Then, after they got what they wanted, all they did was complain about the deficit. Which one is it?

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

It being 9 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

Call in the members.

* * *

• (2130)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—INTERNAL TRADE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion relating to the business of supply.

The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

• (2140)

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

(Division No. 90)

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif
Albrecht

Albas
Allison

Ambrose
Angus
Ashton
Barlow
Bergen
Bezan
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher
Boutin-Sweet
Brousseau
Calkins
Caron
Chong
Christopherson
Clement
Cullen
Deltell
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseau
Egliniski
Fast
Garrison
Genius
Godin
Hardcastle
Harper
Hughes
Jolibois
Kelly
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Lebel
Liepert
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Nater
Nuttall
O'Toole
Poilievre
Raitt
Rankin
Reid
Richards
Saganash
Saroya
Schmale
Shiple
Sorenson
Stetski
Strahl
Sweet
Trudel
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Zimmer — 131

Business of Supply

Anderson
Arnold
Aubin
Benson
Berthold
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block
Boulerice
Brassard
Brown
Cannings
Carrie
Choquette
Clarke
Cooper
Davies
Diotte
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Falk
Gallant
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Harder
Hoback
Johns
Julian
Kenney
Kitchen
Kwan
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Leitch
Lobb
MacGregor
Malcolmson
Mathysen
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nantel
Nicholson
Obhrai
Paul-Hus
Quach
Ramsey
Rayes
Rempel
Ritz
Sansoucy
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stewart
Stubbs
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arya
Badawey
Bains
Baylis
Beech
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Bratina
Brisson
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Ayoub
Bagnell
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bennett
Bittle
Boissonnault
Boudrias
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger

Business of Supply

Champagne	Chan
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Dion
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Foote	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCallum	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Nault
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Paupé	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Plamondon	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schieffe	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Ste-Marie	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Thériault	Trudeau
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewskyj
Young	Zahid — 184

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

[Translation]

MAIN ESTIMATES, 2016-17

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1—INFRASTRUCTURE CANADA

The House resumed consideration of Motion No. 1.

The Speaker: The next question is on vote 1.

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 yea.**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:*

● (2150)

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

(Division No. 91)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Aubin
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Benson
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Bratina	Breton
Brisson	Brosseau
Caesar-Chavannes	Cannings
Caron	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chan	Chen
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
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus

Business of Supply

Fillmore
Fisher
Foote
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Fuhr
Garrison
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardcastle
Hehr
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jolibois
Jones
Jowhari
Kang
Khera
Lametti
Lapointe
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Leslie
Lighthound
Long
Ludwig
MacGregor
Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef
Moore
Murray
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Sahota
Samson
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Shechan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Spengemann
Stewart
Tan
Trudeau
Vandal
Vaughan
Weir
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid— 219

Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Garneau
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Johns
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Khalid
Kwan
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Lemieux
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCallum
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Morrissey
Nantel
Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rioux
Rodríguez
Rota
Ruimy
Saganash
Saini
Sangha
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sorbara
Stetski
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudel
Vandenbeld
Virani
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Ambrose
Arnold

Albas
Allison
Anderson
Barlow

Barsalou-Duval
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Boudrias
Brown
Carrie
Clarke
Cooper
Diotte
Eglinski
Fast
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Harder
Hoback
Kenney
Kitchen
Lake
Lebel
Liepert
Lukiwski
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nicholson
Obhrai
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Raiit
Reid
Richards
Saroya
Schmale
Shiple
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Stubbs
Thériault
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Zimmer— 97

Beaulieu
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher
Brassard
Calkins
Chong
Clement
Deltell
Dreeschen
Falk
Fortin
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Harper
Kelly
Kent
Kmiec
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Leitch
Lobb
MacKenzie
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Nater
Nuttall
O'Toole
Pauzé
Poilievre
Rays
Rempel
Ritz
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 carried.

[*English*]

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.) moved:

That the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, except any vote disposed of earlier today and less the amounts voted in Interim Supply, be concurred in.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

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:

Business of Supply

● (2200)

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

*(Division No. 92)***YEAS**

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chan	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Footo
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Lighbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCallum	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Medicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
Nault	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez

Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Trudeau
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid — 177

Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Samson
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

NAYS

Members

Aboutaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Brown	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cullen
Davies	Deltell
Diotte	Donnelly
Dreeschen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Eglinski
Falk	Fast
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Harcastle	Harder
Harper	Hoback
Hughes	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kelly	Kenney
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kwan
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebel	Leitch
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poilievre	Quach
Raitt	Ramsey
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saganash	Sansoucy
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski

Business of Supply

Stewart
Stubbs
Thériault
Trudel
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Zimmer— 139

Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga

Blair
Bossio
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chan
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Dion
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Gameau
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardie
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jones
Jowhari
Khalid
Lametti
Lapointe
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCallum
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Soeurs)
Monsef
Murray
Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Ratansi
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Trudeau
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid— 177

Boissonnault
Bratina
Brisson
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Chen
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Foote
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Hehr
Housefather
Hutchings
Joly
Jordan
Kang
Khera
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Lemieux
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Maloney
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Morrissey
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Qualtrough
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Samson
Sarai
Schieffe
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Scott Brison moved that Bill C-19, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, be read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Hon. Scott Brison moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

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:

The Speaker: The hon. chief government whip is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote.

The Speaker: It that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 93)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arya
Badawey
Bains
Beech
Bibeau

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Ayoub
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Bittle

Business of Supply

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Brown	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cullen
Davies	Deltell
Diotte	Donnelly
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Egliniski
Falk	Fast
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Harper	Hoback
Hughes	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kelly	Kenney
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kwan
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebel	Leitch
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Quach
Raitt	Ramsey
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saganash	Sansoucy
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shiple	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Thériault	Trost
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vecchio
Viersen	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weir	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 139	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole. I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mr. Bruce Stanton in the chair)

[Translation]

The Chair: The House is now in committee of the whole on Bill C-19.

(On clause 2)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poillievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Chair, I wonder if the President of the Treasury Board can confirm that the supply bill is in its usual form?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Chair, the form of this bill is in the same form as that which was passed in the previous supply period, which was in its proper form. I want to thank my hon. friend for his continued interest in my figures. I can assure him that everything is in the proper form.

● (2205)

[Translation]

The Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 7 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Business of Supply

Some hon. members: On division.
(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Preamble agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Title agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.
(Bill agreed to)

[*English*]

(Bill reported)

Hon. Scott Brison moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Speaker: 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 yea.

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:

[*Translation*]

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find agreement to apply the results from the previous vote to the current vote.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(*Division No. 94*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chan	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Foote
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Gameau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McCallum	McGuinty
McDonald	McKenna
McKay	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Mendicino
Mendès	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Mihychuk	
Soeurs	Morrissey
Monsef	Nassif
Murray	O'Connell
Nault	Oliver
Oliphant	Ouellette
O'Regan	Peschisolido
Paradis	Petitpas Taylor
Peterson	Picard
Philpott	Qualtrough
Poissant	Rioux
Ratansi	Rodriguez
Robillard	

Business of Supply

Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Trudeau	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Zahid — 177	

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Brown	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cullen
Davies	Deltell
Diotte	Donnelly
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseau
Duvall	Eglinski
Falk	Fast
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Harper	Hoback
Hughes	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kelly	Kenney
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kwan
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebel	Leitch
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Quach
Raitt	Ramsey
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saganash	Sansoucy
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shiple	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski

Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Thériault	Trost
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vecchio
Viersen	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weir	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 139	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[Translation]

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Hon. Scott Brison** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.**The Speaker:** 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 yea.**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:*

[English]

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the result from the previous vote to this vote.**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 95)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)

Business of Supply

Chagger	Champagne	Albrecht	Allison
Chan	Chen	Ambrose	Anderson
Cormier	Cuzner	Angus	Arnold
Dabrusin	Damoff	Ashton	Aubin
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal	Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Dhillon	Di Iorio	Beaulieu	Benson
Dion	Drouin	Bergen	Berthold
Dubourg	Duclos	Bezan	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Dzerowicz	Easter	Boucher	Boudrias
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Ellis	Erskine-Smith	Brassard	Brosseau
Eyking	Eyolfson	Brown	Calkins
Fergus	Fillmore	Cannings	Caron
Finnigan	Fisher	Carrie	Chong
Fonseca	Foote	Choquette	Christopherson
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)	Clarke	Clement
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland	Cooper	Cullen
Fry	Fuhr	Davies	Deltell
Garneau	Gerretsen	Diotte	Donnelly
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale	Dreeshen	Dubé
Gould	Graham	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Grewal	Hajdu	Duvall	Eglinski
Hardie	Hehr	Falk	Fast
Holland	Housefather	Fortin	Gallant
Hussen	Hutchings	Garrison	Généreux
Iacono	Joly	Genius	Gladu
Jones	Jordan	Godin	Gourde
Jowhari	Kang	Hardcastle	Harder
Khalid	Khera	Harper	Hoback
Lametti	Lamoureux	Hughes	Johns
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Jolibois	Julian
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Kelly	Kenney
Lefebvre	Lemieux	Kent	Kitchen
Leslie	Levitt	Kmiec	Kwan
Lighthound	Lockhart	Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Long	Longfield	Lebel	Leitch
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Liepert	Lobb
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Lukiwski	MacGregor
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	McCrimmon	MacKenzie	Malcolmson
May (Cambridge)	McGuinty	Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
McCallum	McKenna	May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)	McColeman
McDonald	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
McKay	Mendicino	Moore	Nantel
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	Nater	Nicholson
Mendès	Morrissey	Nuttall	Obhrai
Mihychuk	Nassif	O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Soeurs)	O'Connell	Pauzé	Plamondon
Monsef	Oliver	Poilievre	Quach
Murray	Ouellette	Raiitt	Ramsey
Nault	Peschisolido	Rankin	Rayes
Oliphant	Petitpas Taylor	Reid	Rempel
O'Regan	Picard	Richards	Ritz
Paradis	Qualtrough	Saganash	Sansoucy
Peterson	Rioux	Saroya	Scheer
Philpott	Rodriguez	Schmale	Shields
Poissant	Rota	Shipley	Sopuck
Ratansi	Ruimy	Sorenson	Stanton
Robillard	Sahota	Ste-Marie	Stetski
Romanado	Samson	Stewart	Strahl
Rudd	Sarai	Stubbs	Sweet
Rusnak	Schiefke	Thériault	Trost
Saini	Serré	Trudel	Van Kesteren
Sangha	Shanahan	Van Loan	Vecchio
Scarpaleggia	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Viersen	Wagantall
Schulte	Sikand	Warawa	Warkentin
Sgro	Sorbara	Waugh	Webber
Sheehan	Tabbara	Weir	Yurdiga
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Tassi	Zimmer — 139	
Sohi	Vandal		
Spengemann	Vaughan		
Tan	Whalen		
Trudeau	Wilson-Raybould		
Vandenbeld	Young		
Virani			
Wilkinson			
Wrzesnewskyj			
Zahid — 177			

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif

Albas

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Business of Supply

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

[English]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2016-17**Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)** moved:

That the Supplementary Estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, be concurred in.

[Translation]

The Speaker: 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 yea.**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:*

• (2215)

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

*(Division No. 96)***YEAS**

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chan	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Foote
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale

Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCallum	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Socurs)
Monsef	
Murray	Morrissey
Nault	Nassif
Oliphant	O'Connell
O'Regan	Oliver
Paradis	Ouellette
Peterson	Peschisolido
Philpott	Petitpas Taylor
Poissant	Picard
Ratansi	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rioux
Romanado	Rodriguez
Rudd	Rota
Rusnak	Ruimy
Saini	Sahota
Sangha	Samson
Scarpaleggia	Sarai
Schulte	Schieffe
Sgro	Serré
Sheehan	Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sohi	Sikand
Spengemann	Sorbara
Tan	Tabbara
Trudeau	Tassi
Vandenbeld	Vandal
Virani	Vaughan
Wilkinson	Whalen
Wrzesnewskyj	Wilson-Raybould
Zahid — 177	Young

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	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	Donnelly
Dreeschen	Dubé

Business of Supply

Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Eglinski
Falk	Fast
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genius	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Harper	Hoback
Hughes	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kelly	Kenney
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kwan
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebel	Leitch
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Quach
Raitt	Ramsey
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saganash	Sansoucy
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Thériault	Trost
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vecchio
Viersen	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weir	Yurdiga
Zimmer— 139	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Hon. Scott Brison moved that Bill C-20, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017 be now read the first time.

(Motions deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

Hon. Scott Brison moved that the bill be read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

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:

[*Translation*]

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, if you were to seek it, I believe you would find agreement to apply the results from the previous vote to the current vote.

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

Hon. members: Agreed.

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

(*Division No. 97*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chan	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Foote
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCallum	McCrimmon

Business of Supply

McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Soeurs)
Monsef
Murray
Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Ratansi
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Trudeau
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid— 177

McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Morrissey
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petipas Taylor
Picard
Qualtrough
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Samson
Sarai
Schieffe
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Nater
Nuttall
O'Toole
Paupé
Poilievre
Raitt
Rankin
Reid
Richards
Saganash
Saroya
Schmale
Shiple
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Stewart
Stubbs
Thériault
Trudel
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Zimmer— 139

Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nantel
Nicholson
Obhrai
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Quach
Ramsey
Rayes
Rempel
Ritz
Sansoucy
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stetski
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to committee of the whole.

I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mr. Bruce Stanton in the chair)

[English]

(On Clause 2)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Chair, I want to assure the President of the Treasury Board that my question relates strictly to the figures within the bill and whether they and it are in their usual and proper form.

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am glad the hon. member cleared that up. The form of this bill is the same as that passed in the previous supply period, which was in its proper form.

The Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

NAYS

Members

Aboultouf
Albrecht
Ambrose
Angus
Ashton
Barlow
Beaulieu
Bergen
Bezan
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher
Boulerice
Brassard
Brown
Cannings
Carrie
Choquette
Clarke
Cooper
Davies
Diotte
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Falk
Fortin
Garrison
Genuis
Godin
Hardcastle
Harper
Hughes
Jolibois
Kelly
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Lebel
Liepert
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)

Albas
Allison
Anderson
Arnold
Aubin
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Berthold
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau
Calkins
Caron
Chong
Christopherson
Clement
Cullen
Deltell
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseau
Eglinski
Fast
Gallant
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Harder
Hoback
Johns
Julian
Kenney
Kitchen
Kwan
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Leitch
Lobb
MacGregor
Malcolmson
Mathysen
McColeman

Business of Supply

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 6 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 7 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 7 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 8 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 8 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall Schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Schedule 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Preamble agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Title agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Bill agreed to)
(Bill reported)

● (2220)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Scott Brison moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Speaker: 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 yea.

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:

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you would find agreement to apply the result from the previous vote to this vote.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 98*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chan	Chen
Cornier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Foote
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale

Business of Supply

Gould	Graham	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Grewal	Hajdu	Duvall	Eglinski
Hardie	Hehr	Falk	Fast
Holland	Housefather	Fortin	Gallant
Hussen	Hutchings	Garrison	Généreux
Iacono	Joly	Genus	Gladu
Jones	Jordan	Godin	Gourde
Jowhari	Kang	Hardcastle	Harder
Khalid	Khera	Harper	Hoback
Lametti	Lamoureux	Hughes	Johns
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Jolibois	Julian
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Kelly	Kenney
Lefebvre	Lemieux	Kent	Kitchen
Leslie	Levitt	Kmiec	Kwan
Lightbound	Lockhart	Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Long	Longfield	Lebel	Leitch
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Liepert	Lobb
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Lukiwski	MacGregor
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)		MacKenzie	Malcolmson
May (Cambridge)		Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
McCallum	McCrimmon	May (Saanch—Gulf Islands)	McColeman
McDonald	McGuinty	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
McKay	McKenna	Moore	Nantel
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Nater	Nicholson
Mendès	Medicino	Nuttall	Obhrai
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Monsef	Morrissey	Paupé	Plamondon
Murray	Nassif	Poilevre	Quach
Nault	O'Connell	Raitt	Ramsey
Oliphant	Oliver	Rankin	Rayes
O'Regan	Ouellette	Reid	Rempel
Paradis	Peschisolido	Richards	Ritz
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor	Saganash	Sansoucy
Philpott	Picard	Saroya	Scheer
Poissant	Qualtrough	Schmale	Shields
Ratansi	Rioux	Shiple	Sopuck
Robillard	Rodriguez	Sorenson	Stanton
Romanado	Rota	Ste-Marie	Stetski
Rudd	Ruimy	Stewart	Strahl
Rusnak	Sahota	Stubbs	Sweet
Saini	Samson	Thériault	Trost
Sangha	Sarai	Trudel	Van Kesteren
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke	Van Loan	Vecchio
Schulte	Serré	Viersen	Wagantall
Sgro	Shanahan	Warawa	Warkentin
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Waugh	Webber
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand	Weir	Yurdira
Sohi	Sorbara	Zimmer — 139	
Spengemann	Tabbara		
Tan	Tassi		
Trudeau	Vandal		
Vandenbeld	Vaughan		
Virani	Whalen		
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould		
Wrzesnewskyj	Young		
Zahid — 177			

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.[*English*]

When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Hon. Scott Brison** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.[*Translation*]**The Speaker:** 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 yea.**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.

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Brown	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cullen
Davies	Deltell
Diotte	Donnelly
Dreeshen	Dubé

And five or more members having risen:

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you will find agreement to apply the result from the previous vote to this vote.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

(Division No. 99)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chan	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Foote
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCallum	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Soeurs	
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif

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Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Ratansi
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
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Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
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Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
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Young

NAYS

Members

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Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
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Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Brown	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cullen
Davies	Deltell
Diotte	Donnelly
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseauit
Duvall	Egliniski
Falk	Fast
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genius	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Harper	Hoback
Hughes	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kelly	Kenny
Kent	Kitchen
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Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebel	Leitch
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Quach
Raitt	Ramsey

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Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (2225)

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and address the question that I brought up a while ago about the Liberals slashing \$3.7 billion from the defence budget.

As the House knows, this is reminiscent of the time the Liberals were in power in the 1990s, the decade of darkness, when they slashed considerable money from the Canadian military. The Canadian Armed Forces had a tough time during that rule of the former Liberal government under Jean Chrétien. Interestingly, that decade of darkness followed a defence policy review that was initiated in 1993 and 1994.

During that decade of darkness we saw significant money cut from the defence budget. As the parliamentary budget officer said in his fall 2015 report:

The most significant...cuts under program review occurred from 1995 to 2004... The cumulative...expenditure over that period of time was roughly \$13.4 billion below what our modelling showed was required to maintain the existing force structure.

In the budget we know we need to invest in ships. We know we need to make investments to replace our fighter aircraft. We know our army needs to replace a number of its vehicles, including trucks. All of that has now been put on hold by the Liberals until after the next election. They have kicked military investments down the road, to the tune of \$3.7 billion, until after the next election.

That is going to impact 16 military projects that are currently under way. It includes things like Arctic offshore patrol vessels; \$173 million is being withheld on a program that already is being cut. On the future fighter aircraft replacements for our CF-18s, the

government has withheld \$109 million. If the Liberals want to talk about replacing our CF-18s, they need to make sure we have money in place so we can select the proper aircraft.

The government has withheld \$90 million from the Cyclone maritime helicopters. We just took possession of the first eight, and another 17 are on their way. The Liberals are withholding dollars for that. With respect to the modernization of our Halifax-class frigates and their life extension, the government has withheld \$71.1 million. With respect to the integrated soldier system project, the government has withheld \$39.4 million. This is just the tip of the iceberg of the \$3.7 billion that the Liberals have slashed from the budget. We are going to hear from the parliamentary secretary that it was re-profiled, but re-profiled is just another word for cut, and we know that any dollars that are moved down the road are apt to be sacrificed by the Liberal government.

Analyses are done by a lot of experts and military analysts. I love this quote from David Perry, who said, "This budget reminds me of that episode of Oprah where everybody in the audience got a car. Everyone got a car here except the Department of Defence...".

The budget shrank military spending by \$3.7 billion. We have seen a spending increase in almost every other department but for our men and women in uniform who are tasked with some very difficult jobs by the government. I would ask the parliamentary secretary and the Liberal government to put that money back in the budget and support our armed forces.

Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after a while one has to wonder how many times one has to repeat oneself.

The minister was in the committee of the whole about a month ago. He answered 130 questions over the course of four hours. No matter how many times he said that this \$3.7 billion was reprofiled for future use in order to try and match the procurement cycle and the fiscal cycle, no matter how many times he said the same thing, the Conservatives insisted on calling it a cut. It speaks to why the Conservatives still do not get the difference between postponing money and cutting money.

This is not a cut. This was asked for by the Minister of National Defence, because the projects that the Conservatives left behind were not ready for the spending. Apparently, the view of the Conservative Party is that we should spend the money before we actually have the project ready on which to spend the money.

The hon. member mentioned a number of projects.

Yesterday, I was in Halifax to see the Arctic/offshore patrol ships, and they are cutting steel. The midsection of one of the ships is well on its way. However, one does not write a cheque to the contractor before the terms of the contract have been fulfilled.

On the future fighter aircraft requirements, the previous minister of defence said in a Senate hearing yesterday, or last week, that actually they did not get the job done. The F-35, which was the Conservatives' choice, lacked capabilities and the costing was not right, and so they backed off and lost five years.

Adjournment Proceedings

When we do not spend \$109 million, it is because the project is not ready to have money spent on it. I do not know what could be simpler. Do we go around spending money on projects that are not ready? Is that the position of the hon. member?

On the Maritime helicopter project, same thing. We have received eight, and two have been sent back because we have to upgrade the systems. What does the member want us to do, go and spend money, and give the money to the contractor for not doing the job? Is that the process that the hon. member wishes us to engage in?

Maybe, just maybe, we should try and work at matching the fiscal cycles and the procurement cycles. Maybe if the previous Conservative government had not left behind such a mess, we would not have had to reprofile this \$3.7 billion.

On the frigate modernization, the frigates are almost done; however, we are not going to write a cheque until they are done.

I still do not understand the hon. member's position: spend money before the project is complete and in effect give the contractor a bonus. This is crazy financing, but for the last 10 years, that has kind of been the way business was done around here.

● (2230)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, we are not going to take any lessons from the Liberal Party or that member.

We know that during the decade of darkness the budget was frozen at around \$10 billion for 10 years. It slipped below 1% of GDP on spending. We know that during the Liberals' tenure, there was about \$13.4 billion that should have been spent that was never spent. We already see in this first budget the reprofiling, as the parliamentary secretary likes to call it, of \$3.7 billion. That is more reprofiling than we did in our nine years of government.

This is really a challenge to the government. It is really a reflection on the many Canadians, especially those who serve or have served in the Canadian Armed Forces, who do not trust the government.

Case in point is that just this past week we found out that the Liberals never took the \$400 billion that was budgeted for the life extension of our CF-18s and instead are creating a capability gap that should not exist. They are endangering the lives of our pilots of our CF-18s, and are not standing up for the Canadian Armed Forces and the proud men and women who serve in it.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, the previous government took lapsing to an art form. Over the Conservatives' decade of deception, they pretended to spend money on projects when in fact they did not spend money on projects. As a consequence, over the last four years the military has suffered collectively a \$3.3-billion cut.

As for the F-18 program, it is a good idea to get the life extension program going. It is \$450 million. It is a good idea. We like that idea, except that they only have 20 of the airplanes done. The rest are in "options analysis". We cannot exactly argue options analysis and deal with our NATO commitments, our NORAD commitments, our expeditionary commitments, and the variety of other things that are required to defend Canada and North America.

Options analysis is not a response. The minister has rightly said we have a capability gap and it needs to be addressed. It should have been addressed five years ago, but we are going to do it.

● (2235)

ETHICS

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not every evening that we are here voting past 10 o'clock. That really puts the late into late show.

The Global Transportation Hub west of Regina is a provincial crown corporation that, after receiving \$27 million in federal funding, spent a similar amount buying land from businessmen linked to the governing Saskatchewan Party for more than twice the land's publicly appraised value.

When I raised the issue in the House, the government responded in one of two ways. The President of the Treasury Board told us it is a provincial issue and the Saskatchewan government is handling it. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport assured us that federal money was only used for transportation infrastructure and could not have been used for the associated land purchases.

Since we last debated this matter, several new revelations raised more questions about both of the government's explanations. The Saskatchewan Party government claimed that the land purchases were justified by a private appraisal. On May 9, CBC reported that the Global Transportation Hub is refusing to release the private appraisal because, "Disclosure of this information could be expected to harm the reputation and cause financial loss to the preparer of the appraisal".

In terms of the documents that the Global Transportation Hub would release, it sent CBC a fee estimate of \$112,000. In addition, the provincial ministry of highways sent CBC a fee estimate of \$70,000 for another 500 pages of documents, well over \$100 per page. These fees are obviously far beyond what would have been needed to cover the cost of preparing the documents. The provincial government is clearly using access to information fees to prevent journalists and the public from accessing the information.

Why would the federal government trust the provincial government to get to the bottom of this matter? With the Government of Saskatchewan stonewalling, the Government of Canada must conduct its own investigation to safeguard federal tax dollars.

On April 6, the *Regina Leader-Post* reported that the Pinkie Road interchange, completed around the Global Transportation Hub in 2013, will have to be ripped up and rebuilt to connect to the south Regina bypass, which is quickly becoming a significant boondoggle in its own right. The Pinkie Road interchange cost \$43 million and was part of the transport infrastructure for which federal funds were supposed to be used. Even if we accept that no federal funds went into land purchases, that means federal funds were spent building an interchange that is now being ripped up.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Global Transportation Hub scandal is out of control. The people of Saskatchewan and indeed all Canadians need to know what happened to our tax dollars. The federal government must investigate. It is late, but it is not too late for the Government of Canada to start being part of the solution rather than continuing to downplay the problem.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House to speak to the issue of the global transportation hub project and our government's commitment to the utmost care and prudence in the handling of public funds.

● (2240)

[*Translation*]

This project includes the construction of transportation infrastructure in support of the global transportation hub, a premier transportation and logistics centre in Regina that involves many suppliers and retailers.

[*English*]

The Government of Canada has committed \$27 million to the province of Saskatchewan for transportation infrastructure supporting this. Let me be unequivocal on the question of land costs associated with the project. None of the \$27 million contribution was provided for the acquisition of land.

As far as the issue of land acquisition is concerned, this is clearly a provincial matter, and it is worth noting that the lieutenant governor in council in the province of Saskatchewan has requested that the provincial auditor perform a special assignment on the matter of land acquisition as it pertains to the global transportation hub project.

[*Translation*]

Although this issue falls under provincial jurisdiction, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about an underlying issue, and that is the monitoring of taxpayers' money. In fact, increased monitoring of taxpayers' money is one of the key priorities set out in the President of the Treasury Board's mandate letter. I am pleased to announce that the President of the Treasury Board has already taken measures in this regard in the supplementary estimates (C) 2015-16, which were made public on March 1.

For the first time, there is an online annex to the supplementary estimates, which provides Parliament with an early indication of the lapses expected for this fiscal year. This annex also contains a report on frozen allotments, which are funds that have been approved by Parliament but to which the Treasury Board has restricted access for a variety of reasons. This important information gives an early indication of the amount of funding that will go unused during the fiscal year.

Here is what the parliamentary budget officer had to say about the improved monitoring of Canadian taxpayers' money:

The publication of these frozen allotments a full ten months prior to the Public Accounts of Canada represents an important increase in fiscal transparency, ensuring that parliamentarians are on a less unequal footing with the Government.

[*English*]

In the 2016-17 supplementary estimates (A), we also introduced a reconciliation table to show how the budget 2016 spending forecast

was related to the planned expenditures shown in the 2016-17 estimates to date. The parliamentary budget officer, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, as well as the Senate Committee on National Finance have all acknowledged this work as an important advance in transparency and reporting to Parliament.

Our government is committed to making yet further improvements in how we plan and report on government spending and empower parliamentarians and their scrutiny over the public purse.

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, this format is called an adjournment debate. In a debate, there is some expectation that the members opposite will actually respond to the points being made. I laid out a number of new facts that had been revealed about the global transportation hub. I mentioned that the government's previous story had been that it was a provincial matter, that federal funds could not be spent on land purchases. I debunked those points. Instead, what we got from the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board was just reading those same claims over again.

It is almost insulting to the House for the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board to stand and tell us about a reconciliation table in the supplementary estimates (A) that has nothing to do with the global transportation hub scandal.

I raised some very important questions. The government has an opportunity to answer them, and we have not had any sort of serious response at all.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, this matter, raised by the member opposite, clearly falls within provincial jurisdiction. The Provincial Auditor has been asked to examine whether the Government of Saskatchewan followed appropriate procedures and received appropriate value with respect to the acquisition by the Global Transportation Hub of the land in question.

Under the gateways and border crossings fund, and consistent with all federal infrastructure transportation funding programs, costs associated with land acquisition are not eligible for federal reimbursement.

I want to congratulate the member opposite for all the work he is doing, and I hope that he will share that with his counterparts in the provincial government and the opposition in Saskatchewan. We understand that Ms. Ferguson, the Provincial Auditor, is continuing to gather all the information surrounding the deal and is aiming to have the report finished before the end of the spring sitting of the legislature. I am sure that she would welcome the member's important information.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (2245)

[Translation]

THE SENATE

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to raise a question that I raised two months ago on April 15. I raised what I think is a very important question during question period here in the House. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to ask it again, so that I can get more information and a more substantial answer than what we get in the 35 seconds we are given for the question and answer during our daily question period.

My question has to do with the requests of the Government Representative in the Senate. Two months ago, he requested \$800,000 in supplementary funding for his office's operating budget, to handle the independent senators.

I remind members that the senator in question was appointed as Government Representative in the Senate, even though the Liberals, with their supposed changes, have been calling for an independent Senate for several months or even years. There is now a government representative in the Senate. It is hard to reconcile these two facts. Many senators call themselves Senate Liberals instead of Liberal senators, or the other way around. I cannot keep it straight.

The senator was asking for \$800,000 more for his budget, so that he could have not only more resources in his office, but especially more staff. He was asking for nine employees to be able to manage the government's agenda in the Senate and to oversee the independent senators. He also wanted to appoint a whip in the Senate to try to control the senators, especially those with liberal leanings, I presume, since they were all officially removed from the Liberal caucus.

This amounts to a budget of over \$1 million a year for the senator in question. That senator is supposed to be independent, like all the others, if you follow what the government says. This raises an important question about whether the Senate is truly independent, since that senator was asking for additional resources to be able to manage the supposedly independent senators.

A lot has happened over the past two months. There has been some discussion in the Senate itself since that request was made by the independent senator. I am hoping to get an update from the parliamentary secretary, although he did respond to some of my questions on April 15, 2016, on the discussion that took place regarding the request by the senator who acts as the government's representative in the Senate.

What was the Senate's response and the government's response to that request for \$800,000 more a year for the senator's operating budget, which would mean a total budget of \$1 million to manage the supposedly independent senators?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question and the follow-through from the member, but I think it is important that we recognize that what is taking place in the Senate chamber and what happens here in the House are separate.

Much as when we have discussions and the Board of Internal Economy, for example, talks about the budget for the New Democratic Party as the third party in the House, or the official opposition, or even the government, we do not expect the Senate to ask us what we are doing with this money, why are we giving x number of dollars to the New Democratic caucus or anything of this nature. Money is allocated. The Senate and the House of Commons are independent of each other, and we need to respect that.

As a party and as a government, we have taken on the whole issue of disclosure or accountability and transparency. One only needs to look at how the current Prime Minister, the leader of the Liberal Party, has taken on the issue of proactive disclosure. If we get a sense of what has taken place there, we will get a better sense in terms of how we want to see our affairs managed in the House. The Senate is most welcome to look in terms of how it is. We have demonstrated leadership on the issue of transparency and accountability, and hopefully the Senate will come up with a mechanism to ensure it has that high sense of accountability and transparency.

If we focus our attention on what Canadians are concerned about regarding the House of Commons, I would remind the member that he was here during the time when we were sitting on that side of the chamber, in the corner. The then leader of the Liberal Party introduced and asked for unanimous consent for what we have termed as proactive disclosure on members of Parliament. I remember it quite well. I was sitting in front of where the member is sitting now when we talked about the advantages of providing more accountability and transparency through proactive disclosure. We pushed and asked for it, but time and time again it was rejected by the New Democrats and to a certain extent by the Conservatives also.

However, it was primarily the New Democrats, so we made the decision within caucus through the leadership of the Liberal Party, today's Prime Minister, that we were prepared to go alone, and that is exactly what we did. We went alone on proactive disclosure, so members of Parliament had to convey the hospitality and travel that was taking place at taxpayers' expense. It ultimately went onto the Internet.

A number of months later, the Conservative government started to follow suit, and then I think we introduced an opposition day motion where we had that motion debated and then voted on, and finally the New Democrats came onside.

I think the Prime Minister has been very clear on the issue of accountability and transparency even before he became Prime Minister.

• (2250)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I am a bit disappointed that my colleague veered so far off topic. It seems that when he does not know what to say he always comes back to the famous issue of expense reporting for each party, an issue from the last Parliament.

Adjournment Proceedings

To avoid doing the same, I would like to come back to the topic before us today. How does my colleague reconcile the Prime Minister's announcements that he would make the Senate independent with the fact that the Prime Minister appointed a government representative to the Senate who in turn appointed a government whip to the Senate and a deputy leader of the government in the Senate?

The senator in question, who was named a government representative, received \$400,000 from the Senate instead of the \$800,000 he was asking for, which is the response I was expecting from my colleague. He will be able to hire employees and bring in people from his inner circle and other senators.

How can my colleague reconcile the Prime Minister's statements about an independent Senate and the fact that the Senate has a government leader, a deputy leader of the government, and a government whip?

• (2255)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, all I can do is emphasize that we need to respect the fact that the Senate, as an independent

body of this institution, is responsible for its budget and the issue of transparency and accountability with respect to it.

Through the House of Commons, the taxpayers have given the New Democrats, when they were the official opposition and today, literally millions of dollars to operate. On the Board of Internal Economy and in discussions among the different parties in the House, they talk at great length about what it should be and how it should be made accountable and transparent to taxpayers. A consensus is reached and it goes through.

I do not believe that the Senate calls that into question. The Senate does not ask why the NDP is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on this or hundreds of thousands of tax dollars on that.

I think we have to respect the independence of both chambers.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: 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 10:56 p.m.)

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