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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 11, 2019

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of *O Canada* led by the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

CLOSURE OF BRUNSWICK SMELTER

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the voters of Acadie—Bathurst for giving me the privilege of serving them for a second term.

[*English*]

I rise today, however, to share some very unfortunate news. The Brunswick smelter in the village of Belledune in my riding has decided to close its doors. I am very disappointed in this decision, as the smelter is the largest employer in our region and this closure will result in the loss of 280 jobs and hundreds more indirect jobs. This will have a major impact on the economy of the region.

[*Translation*]

I am proud of the unprecedented investments our Liberal government has made in Acadie—Bathurst since 2015. We have shown that northern New Brunswick is an ideal home for big industry, but let us not forget that small businesses have always been some of our most important job creators. Their work is an essential contributor to the economic success of the region.

I want to reassure everyone who is affected by the closure of the smelter that they have my support and the support of the government. We are going to do everything in our power to help them.

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BELLECHASSE—LES ETCHEMINS—LÉVIS

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by expressing my heartfelt grati-

tude to the people of Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis for placing their trust in me for the fifth time in a row.

I would also like to thank our amazing team of volunteers, my family and my wonderful wife, Marie. My entire team and I are here to help the people in our riding. We are facing major challenges, but, unfortunately, the throne speech was silent on subjects such as the labour shortage, shipbuilding and high-speed Internet and cell service in the regions.

People say that election campaigns begin on election night, but in Quebec, in Canada and in my riding, Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, we are rolling up our sleeves and focusing on sustainable prosperity.

* * *

[*English*]

NEWMARKET—AURORA

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House for the first time as the member of Parliament for Newmarket—Aurora in the 43rd Parliament.

I would like to thank the good people of Newmarket—Aurora for electing me as their representative. I thank also all my volunteers, supporters and, most important, my family, especially Roxanne, my wife of 49 years.

I also wish to thank Kyle Peterson for his contribution as the former member and his dedication and commitment to our community.

I have heard very clearly that our community is concerned about climate change, affordable housing, infrastructure funding, health care and a need for a long-term fiscal plan, but not at the expense of creating a social deficit. These things will be my priorities during the upcoming term.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to make meaningful progress in the current term.

* * *

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

JEAN PAGÉ

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, some people have a much larger extended family than others in Quebec. By coming into our homes every Saturday during the hockey night broadcast, Jean Pagé became an unofficial member of many families back home.

Statements by Members

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I wish to extend my deepest condolences to his family and loved ones. The sportscaster with the unmistakable smile left his mark not only on the legendary *Soirée du hockey*, but also on Quebec television. His was also the inimitable voice of the Olympic Games. He was there to take us through all the triumphs of our athletes.

Mr. Pagé was part of the emotional moments that inspired countless young girls and boys, including my brother and me, to put on some ice skates and skate around on a lake, at a park and even in the biggest arenas in the world.

Generations of Quebeckers have not known the sports world without Jean Pagé in it. Today we thank him from the bottom of our hearts.

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43RD PARLIAMENT

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we begin this 43rd Parliament, let me first congratulate all the cabinet ministers on their appointment, as well as all the returning members. Lastly, I want to welcome the newly elected members of Parliament.

[*English*]

I am looking forward to working hard with my colleagues in the chamber in order to proudly serve Canadians, as they deserve a better country. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because the right hon. Prime Minister said, “better is always possible”.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend warm greetings and best wishes to all Canadians, and especially the people of Laval—Les Îles. I wish everyone a happy holiday season, surrounded by family and friends, and all the best for a new year filled with good health, happiness, progress and prosperity.

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TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I am making a heartfelt plea to the House on behalf of the businesses of Mégantic—L'Érable and Chaudière-Appalaches.

There is a shortage of workers in the region. Businesses are putting expansion projects on hold, and some even have to run fewer shifts because they do not have the workers they need.

Every day, my office gets calls from business owners who are at the end of their rope. Not only do they have to watch as their company's development potential erodes, but they also have to deal with the extremely challenging task of hiring temporary foreign workers. The process is long, complex and expensive for SMEs.

Businesses have no room for error. Foreign workers become numbers, and woe to those who forget to tick off a box or who miss the deadline by several days. The foreign workers will be sent back home and will have to begin the process all over again. These workers who come to Canada seeking a little bit of hope are human beings. They are people with families and dreams. They are people

who are simply seeking to improve their lives by participating in our country's development.

It is high time the government simplified and humanized this program and its administration to breathe some new life into our regions.

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[*English*]

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the most wonderful time of the year. This season is about bringing light to people around us. In my home riding of Mississauga—Streetsville, there is so much to recognize as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

As we remember the teachings of Jesus and act in the spirit of giving, there are aspects of Streetsville that make the season so special. I know Christmas is near because downtown Streetsville is filled with cheer.

Whether people are gathering around the table, in a place of worship or under the tree, I want to wish everyone in Mississauga—Streetsville and across Canada a very merry Christmas.

* * *

● (1415)

ARTISTIC COMMUNITY

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to be a guest performer last Friday at the Pia Bouman ballet school's annual performance of *The Nutcracker*. Based in my riding of Davenport, the Pia Bouman school ensures that every child who wishes to create, learn or perform dance can do so. Thankfully, I did not fall off the stage, and it was such an honour to share the stage with so many talented performers.

Being a part of *The Nutcracker* reminded me of how art brings people together, gives life to our imaginary worlds and brings out the magic of the holiday season.

Davenport is so blessed with a thriving artistic community. From the just reopened Paradise Theatre to our wealth of visual artists, galleries, world-class museums, musicians, filmmakers and theatre and dance groups, we have so many opportunities to come together.

I encourage Canadians to take advantage of the many artistic offerings in our communities that allow us the opportunity to sing our favourite Christmas carols, hear our favourite stories, be with our friends and families, and share the warmth of the festive season.

I wish everyone a joyous Christmas and a wonderful holiday season.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today for the first time in this 43rd Parliament.

I want to thank the constituents in Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek for placing their confidence in me to serve as their representative in Ottawa. With the fourth-highest voter turnout in Canada, they sent a strong message. I promise to work hard every day to ensure their voices are heard.

With the end of our session just days away and the Christmas season fast approaching, I want to take this opportunity to send Christmas greetings to my constituents, family and friends.

We have so much to be thankful for in Canada. As we celebrate Christmas, may the humility of Jesus' birth be a reminder of our duty to care for the most vulnerable among us.

To all members in this place and to all Canadians, may this season be filled with faith, hope and love, and the new year be filled with many blessings.

Have a safe and merry Christmas.

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MISSISSAUGA—ERIN MILLS

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today in the House for the first time in this 43rd Parliament to welcome new and returning members. I also congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your election.

I thank my constituents in Mississauga—Erin Mills for placing their trust and confidence in me once again to be their strong voice in Ottawa. I thank my volunteers and my team for their hope and hard work.

Over the summer, I heard my constituents loud and clear about the issues that matter most to them, from climate change, pharmaceutical and affordable housing to seniors issues, fundamental human rights and women's empowerment. Many of these issues I focused on and will continue advocating for as we proceed in this new parliamentary session.

I look forward to working with all members in this House to push the needle towards progress.

* * *

[Translation]

JEAN PAGÉ

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour one of the great sportscasters from back home. Jean Pagé passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family, knowing that he had lived a good life.

He is one of many sports broadcasters from the Saguenay region. When he was quite young, in fact just 18, he had the chance to shine at the microphone. He began by covering the 1972 Quebec Games at Lac Clair in Saint-David-de-Falardeau. His passion for sports led him to cover 12 Olympic Games, host 17 seasons of *La*

Statements by Members

Soirée du hockey on Radio-Canada and *helm 110%*, one of the most popular television shows in Quebec.

His love for the audience, which he was not afraid to show in a professional manner every time he was on air, earned “*Monsieur 110*” eight MétroStar awards and two Gemini awards. He was awarded the National Assembly medal in recognition of his contribution to Quebec.

My colleagues and I would like to extend our most sincere condolences to his wife Brigitte and his entire family.

Mr. Pagé, thank you for all the wonderful moments on television.

* * *

[English]

IRAN

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the bravery and tenacity of Iranians as they stand up against one of the world's most oppressive regimes, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Their protests began on November 15 and continue today, despite the regime's violent response, which has resulted in over 1,000 deaths, 4,000 injured and another 12,000 detained. This heartless regime is even demanding payment from families for the bullets that killed their loved ones before releasing their bodies.

Yesterday was international Human Rights Day. The Liberal government must do more than a pitiful five-sentence press release to condemn the human rights violations happening right now in Iran. Canada has the tools in place to take real action by finally sanctioning the Iranian officials responsible for these atrocities under our Conservative Sergei Magnitsky Law.

Conservatives will always support the people of Iran in the pursuit of freedom, democracy and human rights.

* * *

● (1420)

STUDENT DEBT

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank my friends, supporters and volunteers, my family, my mom and dad and my partner, but I need to especially thank the people of London—Fanshawe for putting their trust in me to be their voice in the House. For the past year, I have listened to their concerns, their struggles, their hopes and dreams. It is my promise to fight for them and to continuously be their voice in this chamber.

Young people worked on my campaign, students like Jesse, Alyssa, Reenya and Nate, but they are being denied access to education. They are being forced to give up on their dreams because they cannot pay skyrocketing tuition. Young people are struggling under the weight of crushing student debt at the very time when they should be excited about planning their futures.

Oral Questions

Instead of writing off billions in large corporate loans, the government could make accessing education a reality for Canadians. It is time to eliminate interest rates on student loans. It is time for the federal government to stop profiting from student debt.

* * *

[Translation]

MUNICIPALITY OF SAINT-PHILIPPE

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to pay tribute to the city of Saint-Philippe, which just wrapped up its 275th anniversary celebrations.

On Saturday, December 7, the people of Saint-Philippe joined together for a massive Christmas party, which was the culmination of a very successful year-long celebration.

I want to congratulate Saint-Philippe; its mayor, Johanne Beaulac; and the entire city council for giving people a chance to discover or rediscover this city's history and for creating unique opportunities for families to celebrate.

I also want to recognize Marie-Josée Roy, the director of the recreation department, who masterminded a full year of events for the public to enjoy.

Congratulations to everyone near and far who participated in this very special year. Happy 275th birthday to Saint-Philippe.

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[English]

EMPLOYMENT IN ALBERTA

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a strong Canada is a unified Canada. The concerns of every single province do and should matter. Right now, 20% of young men in the province of Alberta are unemployed. I am not just talking about stats, I am talking about faces. I am talking about real life stories.

Joshua, a 24-year-old IT graduate, is one of 33,000 young men in the province currently looking for work and finding nothing. Sean had to leave the province in order to find work and now makes \$3 an hour less than a working wage. Tyler is 24 years old, drives three hours to work and barely makes enough money to support his two young girls. This is unacceptable.

Alberta once thrived. Young people would come from the east and go to the west, looking for adventure, work and a future, but not now. Now the unemployment rate has doubled in the last seven months, and the last time this happened was in 1983 under the last Trudeau.

This is a crisis, and it demands the attention of the current Prime Minister, and not tomorrow, not next week, but today.

* * *

[Translation]

VETERANS

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

Take two minutes, would you mind? It's a pittance of time

For the boys and the girls who went over
...
...may we never forget...
It's a pittance of time

[English]

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Italian campaign. I had the honour to be a part of the delegation following the path of our 93,000 courageous Canadian soldiers who helped liberate Italy from Fascist occupation. Each row of crosses I saw in each of the war cemeteries visited and the appreciation expressed by the Italian citizens brought me immense feelings of pride and gratitude for our Canadian soldiers.

Nearly 6,000 Canadian soldiers paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Italian campaign for the value of freedom we hold so dear. As we travelled down these Italian roads with our 15 World War II veterans, we finished our song:

[Translation]

But two minutes I will bide. It's a pittance of time
...
In peace may they rest,
may we never forget why they died.
It's a pittance of time

[English]

Lest we forget.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1425)

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has already capitulated repeatedly on NAFTA, and yesterday we learned that the Prime Minister wanted Canadians to give up even more.

Can the Prime Minister explain exactly what concessions he made on Canadian aluminum?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. The new NAFTA, including the amendments we signed yesterday, is a win for aluminum workers.

We are very proud of our record of standing up for aluminum workers, and we will continue to stand up for them.

We are now ensuring that 70% of the aluminum used in North American automotive production will come from North America, and most of that will come from Quebec.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday a senior Democrat said that Canada “conceded to just about every point that we asked for” on the new NAFTA deal, and that is after senior Republicans said last year that the Prime Minister gave very graciously. While Democrats and Republicans do not always agree on everything, they do seem to agree that the Prime Minister has failed Canadians when it comes to the new NAFTA negotiations.

Will the Prime Minister finally admit that what he came back with from Washington was a more weakened NAFTA than he had when he first went down there?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to take this moment to congratulate heartily the entire Canadian team for the great negotiation, and particularly our Deputy Prime Minister, the member for University—Rosedale.

We strengthened environmental protections, we strengthened support for workers and we moved forward on strengthened intellectual property and automotive rules of origin. We have ensured that access to our most important trading partner is solid for years to come. That is the work the Canadian team did in achieving the new NAFTA.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we are talking about being honest with Canadians, it is quite clear that the Prime Minister is attempting to bury the news that he still has absolutely no plan to balance the budget and that his high-tax, high-regulation policy is weakening the Canadian economy.

Will the Prime Minister commit to tabling a long-term economic and fiscal projection in Parliament this week, and will he take the steps needed to protect Canada's economy from the negative headwinds?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made a very different choice than the Conservatives did. Instead of the cuts and austerity that the Conservatives put forward, we based our economic approach on investing in Canadians, on investing in their communities, on understanding that building a stronger future means giving everyone a real and fair chance to succeed. That is the choice we made as the Liberal Party. We got Canadians' support in 2015 and in 2019 to keep moving forward with a plan that invests in them for a brighter future for everyone.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad he said that they made the choices, because let us look at the results from their choices. Last month, 71,000 Canadians lost their jobs, 48% of Canadians are within \$200 of not being able to pay their bills and foreign direct investment into Canada has fallen by 56%. While other countries are seeing greater growth than Canada, the current Prime Minister has created the conditions for a made-in-Canada recession.

Will the Prime Minister abandon this course of action?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to talk about what we have been able to do for Canadians. We watched Canadians create over a million new jobs over the past four years. Our policies that invested in Canadians and their families have actually lifted over 900,000 Canadians out of poverty, including 300,000 kids.

We recognize that there is more to do, and that is why we are going to keep investing in families, supporting Canadians, building for a brighter future every day through working with Canadians in communities right across the country.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House voted to take the crisis between Canada and the Government of China seriously by establishing a special committee to look at all aspects of the government's handling of that relationship. After China's unlawful imprisonment of two Canadians, after China put blocks on our exports of canola and other products, the Prime Minister still has not stood up for Canadians.

Will the Prime Minister at least take the very practical step of withdrawing Canada's funding for the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past year, we have been working at all levels to ensure the safety of the Canadians being detained, and indeed continue to advocate for their release as we stand up for our canola farmers, as we protect our beef and pork exporters and as we continue to engage with this important trading partner, while at the same time standing up for human rights every step of the way.

We recognize there is an opportunity to collaborate further on the special committee on China. We just certainly hope the opposition parties will be careful not to play politics and endanger the lives of those Canadians with it.

* * *

*[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we feared the new NAFTA would be a disaster for Quebec's aluminum industry. Today, we know for certain.

Aluminum gets none of the protections that steel does. Worse still, the agreement states that there will be no protections for aluminum for at least 10 years. Let me read out a quote: “Ten years after entry into force of this Agreement, the Parties shall consider appropriate requirements that are in the interests of all three Parties for aluminum to be considered as originating under this Article.”

Did the Prime Minister decide to abandon the workers?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to set the record straight, because the hon. member across the way does not have his facts right.

NAFTA is a win for aluminum workers. From now on, under this agreement, 70% of the aluminum used in North American automotive production will come from North America. As we know, much of that comes from Quebec. This will be good for aluminum workers. We are always happy to stand up for aluminum workers.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one of us does not have his facts right, that is for sure. I am not sure which one.

I read an excerpt from the document the government posted online that states beyond any doubt that, for 10 years, Canada is prohibited from protecting aluminum the way it protects steel.

I think it is pretty clear, and I want to know what the Prime Minister has to say to the workers in Quebec's regions regarding that sacrifice.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new NAFTA represents a net gain for aluminum workers. We stood up for them not only by getting the punitive section 232 tariffs lifted, but also by defending access to American markets. We made sure that at least 70% of the aluminum used in North American automobile production will come from North America. We know this will benefit Canadian workers.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, without actually protecting workers or the environment, the Liberals rushed to see the new NAFTA signed. American politicians did the work the Liberals should have done.

[Translation]

Without seeking protections for the environment and our workers, the Liberals were prepared to sign away our future.

Instead of relying on the Americans to stand up for our workers, will the Prime Minister commit to improving the process moving forward?

[English]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agreed to improvements to the new NAFTA that strengthened environmental protection, strengthened labour protection, improved the automotive rules of origin, improved the protection of intellectual property and settled a stronger state-to-state dispute settlement. These are all improvements we made to the deal. The NDP has already said that the new NAFTA was the best deal possible.

Indeed, the members of the NDP attending the Unifor reception highlighted that this was a much better deal than the deal that was signed 24 years ago. That was from Jerry Dias, the head of Unifor. We know this is a good deal for Canadians.

• (1435)

[Translation]

PHARMACARE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, those fine words are not backed by action for Canadians. Yesterday, the Prime Minister promised to bring in a national and universal pharmacare program.

[English]

However, the reality is the Liberals have been promising universal pharmacare since 1997. Canadians should not have to wait, and in fact they do not need to wait. The Liberals can get to work right away.

What is the timeline? When will all Canadians have their medications covered?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no Canadian should have to choose between paying for prescription drugs or putting food on the table. That is why we have not waited. We acted right away and have done more than any government in a generation to lower drug prices in this country.

Now it is time to take the next step toward national universal pharmacare, and that involves sitting down with the provinces to talk about how we are going to move forward on things like high-cost drugs for rare diseases and moving forward on a national Canadian drug agency that is going to create a national formulary. There are many steps we are embarking on right now, because we know Canadians deserve a health care system that works for everyone.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the second time the Liberal government has announced a final agreement on NAFTA. Each time Canada is at the negotiating table we seem to give away more. Maybe we should just accept this before we give away the farm. Wait, the Liberals already did that with dairy.

With the auto industry and manufacturing growing in Mexico, why would the government give away our opportunity to sell more and more aluminum to Mexico in the future?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that this is a recent development, but I recommend that the member opposite take a little closer look at what actually was negotiated, because this is actually a significant—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I realize I am getting older, but the noise gets amplified. I am supposed to hear members from here, but I had a hard time. I just wanted to let the members know in case they were wondering why I stood up. It does get kind of noisy at times, but I want to let the hon. Prime Minister answer the member for Durham's question.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, this new NAFTA accord represents a significant gain for aluminum workers and steelworkers across Canada as we move forward with guaranteed percentages of 70% in the North American automobile industry for North American steel and aluminum. This provides predictability and stability for our workers across Canada.

We are going to continue to work hard to defend our workers, as this government has done for the past four years.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the U.S. ways and means committee thanked Canada for conceding on all the new NAFTA amendments. This is after the Liberals gave graciously in the original deal. We know the Liberals have conceded on aluminum, impacting thousands of workers in Quebec. The Prime Minister's latest concessions come just weeks before the plant closure at GM Oshawa.

How can the Prime Minister call this a win when workers in Quebec and auto workers in Ontario will lose?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite is saying is simply mistaken. This is an improvement for workers across this country, particularly steel and aluminum workers. We worked very hard with all parties, with our Mexican counterparts, with the Democrats and the Republicans, to ensure that this was a win-win-win for all three countries. I can highlight that the improvements we achieved in this most recent and final version of NAFTA are significantly better for Canadians.

We will always stand up for Canadian workers and for our most important trade deals with the Americans.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unless we were to abandon NAFTA, there could be no worse free trade agreement than the one Canada just negotiated. It is simple: the United States and Mexico had a game plan and we did not. According to Jean Simard, president and CEO of the Aluminium Association of Canada, Mexico has become China's backyard. The Prime Minister has failed our workers.

Are there any solutions to help the industry export more of our Saguenay aluminum, the greenest in the world?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new NAFTA agreement is a win for aluminum workers.

I understand that our colleagues in the House are more concerned with playing political games and fearmongering, but the reality is that we are here to stand up for aluminum workers. We made gains in the agreement we are signing.

Anyone who votes against this NAFTA agreement is voting against aluminum workers in Saguenay and elsewhere in Quebec and Canada.

[English]

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the United States and Mexico continued to negotiate a better NAFTA for themselves, the Liberal government again sat on the sidelines. This is a missed opportunity for the Liberals to help indus-

tries such as aluminum and softwood lumber. The forestry sector is hurting. Mills are closing. People are losing their jobs.

Why would the Prime Minister agree to a deal that does nothing for aluminum producers or our forestry workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this new NAFTA deal has significant gains for our aluminum workers. On forestry workers, we remain extremely concerned with the difficult situations they are facing. We will continue to work very hard with our American counterparts alongside Canadian premiers, standing up for our forestry workers and encouraging the United States to come to an agreement on softwood lumber.

[Translation]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the opposition showed the Prime Minister that he has lost control of the House. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister signed the new NAFTA without consulting the opposition. According to the media, the Democrats were clearly in the know and practically negotiated the agreement. The Conservatives will not rubber-stamp it.

When will the Prime Minister understand that he needs the opposition's approval before making important decisions?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were very pleased to earn the confidence of the House yesterday to continue to move forward with our plan to help Canadians, invest in communities and serve Canadians across the country.

We will always work with our colleagues in the House of Commons to effectively represent Canadians. We know that this new NAFTA will help Canadian workers, including those in the steel and aluminum sector. They will have better job security and stronger growth in their communities.

[English]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only did the Prime Minister not inform members of Parliament in Canada about the new NAFTA, but he has sheepishly accepted the terms put forward by our trading partners. According to senior Democrats, the Prime Minister conceded to just about every point that was asked for in this most recent final agreement.

Is this not the final, final agreement? When will the Prime Minister realize that here at home he does not have control of Parliament and he needs the support of opposition before finalizing major decisions?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to highlight the fact that we actually gained throughout this final process. We have significant advantages to Canada with the final text negotiated between Canada, the United States and Mexico. We are representing strong outcomes for Canadian workers, for Canadian businesses and for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

We look forward to debate in the House on the ratification of NAFTA, and I am sure all parliamentarians will support this deal that is good for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, before he has a chance to give me the same answer yet again, I urge the Prime Minister to listen.

Steel must come from North America to be used in the manufacturing of goods sold in North America. Aluminum from anywhere in the world can be used to manufacture aluminum goods sold in North America. The protections are not the same.

Could the Prime Minister confirm this interpretation of the facts as they were signed?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that the hon. member does not have his facts straight.

We made sure that our aluminum sector was protected. We made sure to protect our aluminum workers. Seventy per cent of the aluminum used by the North American auto sector will have to come from Canada, or rather, North America. This is a positive thing for our workers.

• (1445)

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that was a very revealing slip of the tongue.

It can come from anywhere, but definitely not from Canada and Quebec.

Does the Prime Minister realize that by giving up the ability to protect aluminum for at least 10 years, he is inviting companies and aluminum plants to invest elsewhere than Quebec?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the hon. member is mistaken in his interpretation of what was signed yesterday with the United States and Mexico.

This agreement is a win for the aluminum industry of Quebec and Canada, and we know that with projects like AP60 and Elysis, the aluminum industry is truly an industry of the future for Quebec and Canada.

We can be very proud of that, and we will always stand up for our workers and our aluminum industry.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite what the Prime Minister has been saying since the beginning of question period, yesterday we learned that an important sector of the Quebec and Canadian economy paid the price of the Liberal negotiations in the new NAFTA. I am talking about the aluminum sector, which is what we have been talking about from the beginning.

The Liberal government refused to stand up for these workers, who make the greenest aluminum in the world thanks to our hydro-electricity.

Can the Prime Minister tell us today what he intends to do to ensure that aluminum workers throughout Quebec and Canada are protected?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me try again.

This agreement is a win for aluminum workers. Before we signed this agreement, there was no guarantee that any North American aluminum would be used in auto production. Now, with this agreement, 70% of the aluminum content will be from North America.

That is an enormous gain for aluminum workers, whom we will always stand up for.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is the only person who believes that version of the facts. Republicans, Democrats and people in the aluminum industry all recognize that the industry in Quebec and Canada took a hit.

The Bloc saved the government by supporting a throne speech that failed to address Quebec's specific demands. Bloc members must be kicking themselves for that now.

First it was dairy producers; now it is people in the aluminum industry. What will he do to protect those workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new NAFTA is a win for aluminum workers. It requires automotive manufacturers to source at least 70% of the aluminum they use from North America. Before the new agreement, that percentage was zero.

This will provide better protection for aluminum workers in the Saguenay and across Canada, and we are very proud of that.

* * *

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we have yet another casualty of the Liberals' war on Canadian energy. In my home province of British Columbia, media reports confirm that Chevron is pulling out of the largest private sector investment in Canadian history, the \$40-billion Kitimat LNG project. This comes just one day after the Minister of Environment and Climate Change publicly cast doubts on the future of LNG in Canada.

When will the government get serious and support Canada's energy sector and LNG in B.C.?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were pleased to draw in the largest private sector investment in Canadian history with \$40 billion in LNG in Canada. We recognize that LNG is an important element—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Prime Minister can continue, please.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: We recognize that natural gas is an important element as we move forward to a lower-carbon economy. That is why we are pleased to be investing in LNG projects and partnering to see more LNG projects right across the country. We understand this is an important step toward that net zero we are going to hit in 2050.

• (1450)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the largest private sector investment in Canadian history is now at risk due to the actions of the Liberal government. Now the disparaging comments by the environment minister toward liquefied natural gas have put the future in doubt, as we now see Chevron pulling out of the project in Kitimat.

We need a Canadian government that stands up for Canadian jobs. Changes are required to Bill C-69 to ensure that pipelines and facilities can be built.

Does the Prime Minister agree with his senior B.C. minister that belittling Canadian energy is the right thing to do?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is well positioned to become a major player in the global energy industry. We have proposed projects both in the west and in the east and have strong measures in place to attract investment while also reducing emissions.

Thousands of jobs have been created with the single-largest private sector investment in Canadian history—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I have to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister for a moment. I am trying to hear the answer and I am having a hard time. I want to make sure everyone can hear.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we will continue to take action to ensure that Canada is on track to become the world's cleanest producer of LNG and reach global markets.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, between the 1950s and 1980s an estimated 20,000 indigenous children were stolen from their families and communities during the sixties scoop. There are reports of sexual, physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual abuse at the hands of adoptive families. A settlement was awarded, but the application process is riddled with issues and some survivors still have not been informed about what they are owed. Victims deserve justice.

Without stalling payment for those who have applied, will the Prime Minister extend the application date, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the sixties scoop represents a dark and painful chapter in our history. The court-approved settlement agreement process has begun

Oral Questions

to compensate survivors. The settlement includes a \$50-million foundation for healing, commemoration, education, language and culture.

We know there are other claims left unresolved, so we are working to address harm suffered by other indigenous children as a result of the sixties scoop.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for seven months the body of 16-year-old Devon Freeman hung on a tree 35 metres from the group home where he disappeared and nobody found him. What a sad symbol that is for this nation.

First nation families are losing their children all the time to what the Human Rights Tribunal has ruled the wilful and reckless discrimination in systemic underfunding by this government.

I ask the Prime Minister to stop with the honey-dripped words and call off the lawyers. Will he commit to meet with Cindy Blackstock to ensure that the Human Rights Tribunal ruling is respected so that no more children die on his watch or our watch?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we strongly agree that we must compensate indigenous children harmed by past government policies.

We want to ensure that indigenous people harmed under the discriminatory child welfare system are compensated in a way that is both fair and timely. We want to work with all parties to address this issue. We have demonstrated our commitment to addressing the long-standing child and family service needs of first nations, Inuit and Métis children.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time that I rise in the House, I would like to take this occasion to congratulate you on both of your elections and thank my neighbours in Milton for the opportunity to serve in this room.

Canadians understand the importance of having privileged access to our neighbouring markets. Two million Canadian jobs depend on our trading relationship with our largest partner, the United States.

Could the Prime Minister update the House on how the most recent changes to the new NAFTA will benefit and help Canadian workers and families, like my neighbours in Milton?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the member for Milton and his strong progressive voice to the House of Commons.

Yesterday, Canada, the United States and Mexico took important steps towards the ratification of the new NAFTA. This agreement will help keep advanced medicines affordable for Canadians, improve labour protection, go further to protect the environment, and strengthen the state-to-state dispute settlement.

This is a win-win-win that is progressive and will benefit workers, middle-class families and the Canadian economy.

* * *

● (1455)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is not a win for Canadians is the state of the economy right now. Canada's economy is showing signs of weakness. Unemployment rose last month to nearly 6%.

Last month, 71,000 Canadians, including 45,000 Quebecers like me and the Prime Minister, lost their jobs.

What message would the Prime Minister send to these 71,000 breadwinners who are looking for a job today?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know how tough it is for families when someone loses their job. That is why we are here to help.

Over the past four years, Canadians have created over one million jobs, but there is still more to do. That is why we are going to keep investing in families, in communities, in our children and in our seniors, while helping create economic growth across the country. This is a priority for us, and we are going to keep working hard every day to help these Canadians.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that all sounds good, but it does not create jobs for the 71,000 Canadians who lost their jobs this month. It does not help that half of Canadian families who are within \$200 of insolvency.

No one here has this problem. Not the Prime Minister, not me, not anyone. Just two months ago we were given good jobs, and we are not \$200 away from insolvency—but half of Canadian families are.

What does the Prime Minister have to say to them, aside from rhetoric?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the national housing strategy is more than just rhetoric. The Canada child benefit is more than just rhetoric. It gives tens and hundreds of thousands of Canadians a better future, on top of the food and support they need now.

We recognize that our work is not done, but we are on the right track. We will continue to invest in families and help them. We will continue to stand up for our workers and help them. We will continue to create economic growth by working hand in hand with our partners across the country.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is still stuck with the same self-serving triumphant talking points as before. It is like he did not even notice that 71,000 people lost their jobs last month, that half of Canadians are less than \$200 away from insolvency, that those insolvencies have reached decade-long highs.

Will the Prime Minister put aside his self-praise for just a moment and get out of the way so that Canadians can get back to work and get ahead?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that even with the good news and the numbers over the past years, there are still far too many Canadians facing real difficulties. That is why we are going to continue with our anti-poverty strategy. That is why we are going to continue investing in families and supporting Canadians who need help, including by increasing the Canada child benefit for children under one, including by supporting our seniors with increases to their old age security once they reach 75.

We know there is much more to do and we are going to remain focused on supporting Canadians right across the country, because that is what this government does.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if self-praise could build economies and create jobs, then we would not have lost 71,000 of those jobs last month. We would not have a higher unemployment rate than across the average of the G7. We would not have higher unemployment than the U.S., the U.K., Germany and Japan. We would not have hundreds of thousands of people in energy, forestry and manufacturing who have lost their jobs.

Will the Prime Minister stop making rhetorical love to himself and get out of the way so Canadians can get back to work?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while members opposite choose to play politics, we are going to stay focused on Canadians.

We are going to continue to invest in families who need help. We are going to continue to move forward on the national housing strategy, which includes a portable Canada housing benefit that will allow Canadians to have more choices and better help in terms of their families and their housing needs. We are going to continue to invest in the kinds of things that tangibly help families facing difficult times to be able to get back on track and move forward.

While the parties opposite choose to sling mud and play politics, we are going to stay focused on families.

Oral Questions

• (1500)

*[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify for the Prime Minister that there is a country in North America called Mexico. That country does not produce aluminum but imports it from China. There is also a nation in North America called Quebec, which produces 90% of all of Canada's aluminum. I know this because it is made in my region of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

It is a lie that this is not going to impact our region.

Would the Prime Minister tell us why he is still using Quebec as a bargaining chip when negotiating international agreements?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to be very clear once again. The new NAFTA is a win for aluminum workers. It forces automakers to use at least 70% of aluminum produced in North America. Before this new agreement that percentage was zero.

We will always stand up for all Canadian workers, including those in the aluminum sector.

The Speaker: Before we continue, I would remind hon. members that, in the House, they must endeavour to use language that respects parliamentary rules to ensure that what they say is not taken the wrong way. They must also refrain from accusing others of doing something that is unwise. I invite members to think carefully before calling someone names or suggesting they are doing something unparliamentary. I know we are in a new Parliament and that many people are new here, so let us all use this opportunity to learn together.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the Prime Minister does not understand what he is signing, and that is scary.

If we are talking about aluminum, we are talking about the men and women of Lac-Saint-Jean. These are people, moms and dads, not numbers in accounting ledgers. The people, the industry and the unions now know that Quebec aluminum was sacrificed in favour of steel.

Instead of pretending that everything is fine, can the Prime Minister stop for two seconds and spare a thought for aluminum workers? There is genuine concern in my region.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand the concern. I have had several meetings with workers in the aluminum industry in Saguenay, Quebec.

I understand that innovations such as the Elysis and AP60 technologies represent a strong future for these workers, but I also know that it is important to reassure them about the path we are on. That is why I say to them that we ensured that 70% of the aluminum used by the North American auto industry has to be sourced from North America. Before the agreement that percentage was zero. That is a good thing for aluminum workers.

[English]

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a final meeting on Australia's World Trade Organization challenge to the federal excise exemption for 100% Canadian-made wines concluded last week. A loss in this case puts 9,000 Canadian wine industry jobs at risk. The Australians have indicated they are open to negotiating a settlement, but for some reason this has not happened.

When will the Prime Minister pick up the phone, call his counterpart in Australia and fight for Canada's wine industry?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had direct discussions with my Australian counterparts on the issue of protection of the Canadian wine industry. We will continue to work with the WTO, with all of our trade allies around the world to ensure protection for Canadians while we uphold the rule of law and the rules-based trading system.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is my first time standing in the House. I would like to thank my family, volunteers and constituents of Calgary Skyview who have placed their trust in me.

The Prime Minister's attack on the energy sector has hit Alberta particularly hard. He refuses to amend his no-pipeline bill, Bill C-69. The Prime Minister thinks male construction workers have a negative impact on rural areas. Yesterday, we learned that unemployment among young men in my province is at 20%.

Is this what the Prime Minister wanted when he was talking about gender impacts?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take very seriously the situation faced by workers in the Prairies, including in Alberta and Saskatchewan. That is why I was pleased to sit down with Premier Kenney yesterday and talk about various initiatives we can work on together to solve and support some of the challenges faced by workers in Alberta. We are going to continue to roll up our sleeves and work hard to make sure that we are supporting Canadians right across the country and creating opportunities for people in the west.

Oral Questions

• (1505)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the current government voted over a year and half ago to immediately list the Iranian government's IRGC as a terrorist entity, and the listing process does not take this long. The IRGC is a tool of widespread oppression. In Iraq, hundreds of protestors have been murdered as they sought to resist Iranian regime influence. The government has once again failed to stand with people seeking freedom, and is instead appeasing their oppressors.

Will the government come clean today and admit that it actually has no intention of listing the IRGC in its entirety?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentioned the protests in Iraq. We strongly condemn the escalating violence in Iraq that has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of protestors and injured thousands more. We urge all parties to exercise restraint and refrain from violence. We support the people of Iraq, who deserve stability, prosperity and security. Human rights, including the right to protest and freedom of expression, must be protected. We continue to work closely with our allies and partners to follow the situation and play a constructive role.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first time rising in the House, I would like to thank my family, volunteers and constituents for giving me the honour and privilege to serve.

This week, the government tabled a notice of ways and means motion that proposes to lower taxes for the middle class and increase working capital by increasing the basic personal income to \$15,000 by 2023.

Can the hon. Prime Minister tell this House what this change means for middle-class families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Brampton East. I know he will serve his constituents well.

As the very first order of business, we are lowering taxes for the middle class and for people working hard to join it. Starting in 2020, this will put more money back in the pockets of Canadians. It will lift tens of thousands of people out of poverty and families, including single parents, will save nearly \$600 every year. We hope all other parties in the House will support these measures.

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more MVNOs will have an impact in Canada. Recent rulings, which could allow for more MVNOs, are being heavily appealed. It is a heated issue, with extensive lobbying being placed on many members of the House.

Given the importance of this issue, can the Prime Minister tell the House his vision for MVNOs in Canada, if he thinks they are important or not, and his government's position on recent related rulings that he is being requested to intervene in?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment in the last election to decrease cell-phone bills by 25% for Canadians. That is something that we will do by working with the industry. If they do not bring down their prices, we will bring in significant measures around more competition in the industry to provide better options and opportunities for Canadians. This is a commitment we have made. It will save Canadian families thousands of dollars. We know that lowering cell-phone prices is a priority for Canadians that we are going to take up.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is taking Canadian ranchers decades to recover from the bovine spongiform encephalopathy crisis. That recovery was given a stunning setback when the Liberal government missed a deadline to apply to the World Organisation for Animal Health for negligible risk status. As a result of that, Ontario farmers, because of lack of process capacity and their inability to sell their fed cattle to the United States, are suffering the consequences of this Liberal failure.

Can the Prime Minister please explain to Canadian farmers why he failed to apply to the World Organisation for Animal Health for negligible risk status for BSE?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to stand up for Canadian agricultural producers, including our beef and pork farmers. We were pleased to re-secure access to the Chinese market after a period of time. We are going to continue to demonstrate world-class protections of our agricultural processes and ensure that people around the world know that Canadian products are world class, the best in the world, and should be encouraged and accessed everywhere in the world.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the current government's new jury selection rules have already been found to be unconstitutional in Ontario. Further, courts have been split on whether to apply the changes on a go-forward basis or retroactively. This confusion, created solely by very poorly drafted Liberal legislation, could have the impact of nullifying more than 30 guilty verdicts, including in a murder trial.

How will the Prime Minister fix his mistake to ensure that murderers do not walk free?

• (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the confidence Canadians have in our justice system must always be strengthened. That is why we are continually looking at ways to improve the administration of justice and the fairness of our justice system across the country. We will continue to work with experts, with partners. I commend our Attorney General for the extraordinary task he has of making sure that every day we improve our system of governance and judicial oversight for Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last election, Canadians made it clear that they want their federal government to take steps to fight climate change. They made it clear that we must not only put a price on pollution but also invest in infrastructure projects that can help us fight climate change and mitigate its effects.

Would the Prime Minister update the House on the government's past and future investments in green infrastructure?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Sherbrooke for her question, and I congratulate her on winning her seat.

Green infrastructure is crucial to securing a sustainable future for our country. We allocated \$30 billion to green infrastructure specifically. Projects have been approved across the country, and that includes flood mitigation projects. We know we must do more. In the years to come, we will invest in our country's future by supporting projects designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build more resilient and sustainable communities.

* * *

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government paid \$4.5 billion for an old pipeline. The Liberals said they would make money on the deal, but today, the Parliamentary Budget Officer reported that Canada is actually losing money on the operation of the pipeline, giving oil companies a break worth billions. Economist Robyn Allan has shown that the tolls Canada charges on the pipeline cover only one-third of the actual cost.

Instead of giving oil companies billions of dollars in subsidies, why do the Liberals not use that money now to invest in a low-carbon economy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize how important it is to get our resources to new markets other than the United States. Indeed, for 10 years, the Conservative government was unable to do just that, which is why we are moving forward with the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

Tributes

At the same time, we recognize how important it is to invest in renewable energies and in a cleaner future for everyone, which is why all the profits from the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion will go into nature-based solutions and new technologies that will allow us to continue to grow our economy and create new jobs well into the future right across the country.

The Speaker: There have been discussions among representatives of the parties in the House, and I understand that we will now proceed to a tribute to our former colleague, the hon. Deepak Obhrai.

I now recognize the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

* * *

HON. DEEPAK OBHRAI

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sometimes the House of Commons can be a harsh and unfair place, and the 42nd Parliament was particularly cruel. Between the election of 2015 and the date six months ago on which the Commons rose, we lost a number of colleagues. We lost Jim Hillyer, who was only 41 years old when he passed away at his Hill office in March 2016.

[Translation]

Mauril Bélanger, whose dream of becoming the Speaker of the House was crushed by ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease, was taken from us on August 16, 2016.

[English]

Arnold Chan's promising career was cut short by cancer in September 2017. Gord Brown was taken from us by a massive heart attack in May 2018. Mark Warawa passed away just days before the House rose in June of this year.

When we left here, there was at least one fixture on the Conservative side of the House who seemed eternal. In June, Deepak Obhrai, the member for Calgary Forest Lawn and the dean of the Conservative caucus, was seemingly as healthy as he had been in years. He was on his way back to serve what would have been his eighth term in office.

Within days of the final sitting of the 42nd Parliament, Deepak was informed by his doctor that he had terminal liver cancer and within a few weeks of that announcement he was gone. Deepak was deprived of the tribute that we give to fallen comrades who leave us while they are still in service.

Tributes

For those colleagues who are new to this place and who have never seen it before, a bouquet of white flowers is placed at the member's desk, along with a glass of salt water to symbolize tears and a lemon to signify bitterness at his untimely departure. It is a testimony to the fundamental decency of this place that the House leadership of all parties granted us the time today to give tribute to Deepak.

Deepak had a huge personality and no one ever forgot the experience of meeting him and his remarkable wardrobe of scarves for the first time, but for the benefit of new members, here is the Coles Notes version of Deepak Obhrai's extraordinary life.

He was born in Africa in what was then the British colony of Tanganyika on July 5, 1950, and was educated in India and England, becoming an air traffic controller and later an accountant. At the age of 27, Deepak immigrated to Canada, eventually landing in Calgary, where he became a successful business owner.

After dabbling in municipal politics and provincial politics, he was elected the MP for Calgary East in 1997. Deepak served as an MP for more than half of all the years he lived in Canada. There are not many countries in the world where that kind of thing can happen.

Deepak was a pioneer. He was Canada's first Hindu member of Parliament and a member of the first generation of Indo-Canadian MPs, whose legacy today is that numerous Canadians of South Asian origin, both first-generation and Canadian born, representing a diversity of faiths, are serving right now in this place under multiple partisan banners.

In opposition, Deepak served in too many roles to enumerate here. In government, he spent nearly a decade as parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, travelling the globe on behalf of Canada. As someone who had called three continents his home before he came to Canada, he brought a uniquely cosmopolitan perspective to this job. He was helped in this regard by the fact that he spoke three languages, in addition to English.

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, French was not one of them, despite Deepak's heroic efforts.

[*English*]

He was an eminently quotable man. Much of what he said was wildly politically incorrect and might perhaps best not be repeated in the House of Commons by a white guy, but I can draw everyone's attention to his most famous utterance.

Deepak is justly famous for advising the government to "wake up and smell the thing". Now that Deepak is gone, I am never going to be able to ask him what "the thing" actually is, but here is a guess.

Maybe the thing is to remember that we are here today and gone tomorrow. Maybe the thing is that our sojourn here, whether in Parliament or on earth, is brief. Maybe the thing is that while we cannot all have parliamentary careers as long and as illustrious as

Deepak's was, we can nonetheless each strive to make a contribution as large as the one that he made.

Let us take Deepak's advice and wake up, realize that now is the only moment that exists and work every day, as our beloved colleague did, to make this Parliament and this world better, starting this very day.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured and I feel deeply privileged to rise in the House today on behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal caucus to remember and pay tribute to the Hon. Deepak Obhrai.

His sudden death on August 2 took my breath away, and I think that is true of everyone who sat with him in the House. I offer our deepest condolences particularly to the members of the Conservative caucus, who feel this loss most deeply. They are, however, not alone in mourning this loss of a valued colleague and a dear friend to all of us.

My last conversation with Deepak happened just four weeks before his untimely death. It was, as might be expected, at the Canada India Foundation's annual Global Indian Award dinner. Deepak walked into the room that night with both a deep and genuine humility and, at the very same time, as if he owned the room. He wore his trademark scarf. He extended warmth to both friend and stranger, humour to all and the occasional jab to me and the one other Liberal who was there.

We were after all honouring the former prime minister, Stephen Harper, so our side was justifiably under-represented. Deepak took great pleasure that night in the award offered to Mr. Harper, but I was quick to tell him that the CIF award and honour belonged as much to him as to the former prime minister for his constant care and attention to both India and to Canadians of Indian descent.

Deepak was an internationalist. An air traffic controller by profession, he seemed happiest getting on a plane to represent Canada and the government in literally almost every country of the world. He brought with him strong diplomatic skills, a passion for human rights and a deep and abiding care for the world's poor and those needing Canadian development assistance. This was genuine, persistent and important to him.

It was a long journey from his birthplace in Tanganyika, or Tanzania as it is now called, his education in India and the U.K. to his true home, which he found in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

The member for Ottawa South told me today that while Deepak was a great citizen of the world, he was even more a grateful Canadian whose love of this country fuelled every day of his life as a parliamentarian.

Dean of the Conservative caucus at the time of his death, he loved his party and the opportunities that it gave him to succeed personally as a newcomer to this country, and to remind all of us of the tremendous gifts that immigrants and refugees bring to this country. He was passionate about inclusion, insightful about discrimination and had an innate sense of fairness and generosity.

Tributes

When I was appointed parliamentary secretary to the minister of foreign affairs, I went to him for advice. He had a lot of it to give. He had held that position longer than any other parliamentarian and he was generous with it. He loved to tell me stories of his travels and meetings with world leaders, not to promote himself as much as to entertain me. He loved to tease and even torment me, taking great glee in his gentle but persistent partisan ways.

The member for Scarborough—Guildwood reminded me this morning he was not shy about media attention and happily used the moniker “Deepak from CPAC”.

There were many firsts in his life. He was proud to be the first Hindu elected to the Canadian Parliament. He was proud of both his African and his Indian heritage. He was proud of his many election victories and of becoming dean of his caucus. He was proud to become a member of the Queen's Privy Council.

However, I think he was most proud of the voice he provided for newcomers to this country, encouraging them to follow in his footsteps to take their rightful places in leadership, in community, in business, in Parliament, in professions and in government.

Deepak, you befriended me as a new member of Parliament, an opposition critic for multiculturalism, a novice committee chair and neophyte parliamentary secretary. Many in this House had the privilege to call you friend.

• (1520)

Today, we all remember you with fondness. We commit this day to maintaining your passion for justice, human rights and inclusion. We especially give thanks to your beloved wife, Neena; your very proud children Priti, Kaajal and Amman; and your adoring grandchildren Davin Jacob and Evasha. They shared you with the people of Calgary, Calgary East, Calgary Forest Lawn, the people of Canada and the people of the globe, and allowed you to offer your gifts to make this world a better place.

Thank you, Deepak.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, we are paying tribute to the memory of Deepak Obhrai. His passing this summer left all parliamentarians reeling.

Mr. Obhrai served the people of Calgary Forest Lawn for 22 years. Working in federal politics for 22 years takes a sincere willingness to serve one's constituents, a love of one's community and a lot of availability. It also involves many sacrifices on the part of the member and even more on the part of the member's family. Often families agree to lend their loved one to the country not knowing whether they will be able to make up for the time he or she dedicated to the common good.

Mr. Obhrai was well known for his sense of humour and his inclusiveness. I have wonderful memories of him, mainly from serving with him in committee in the 2000s. He was always well prepared and respectful. What is more, he was an excellent communicator.

Two or three years ago, he said to me in joking that I should retire before the next election because he was tired of just being the longest-serving Conservative and wanted to be the dean of the House of Commons. Whenever I saw him, he would tease me about the fact that I am the dean of the House.

His rise from 20-something Tanzanian immigrant to senior figure in a major federal party is sure to inspire younger generations. At the age of 69, he passed away from cancer, which carried him off in a matter of weeks. His death reminds us that we still have a long way to go in battling this terrible disease, which took away a dedicated colleague, father, grandfather and husband.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois members, I offer my deepest condolences to his family, his friends and his colleagues in the Conservative Party. The great French author Alexandre Dumas once said that those we have loved may not be where they used to be, but they are with us always, wherever we may be.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House as the dean of the New Democratic caucus to pay tribute to the late dean of the Conservative caucus.

I know that Deepak planned on running again and was looking forward to the campaign in the hopes of returning to the chamber this fall. His sudden illness and passing shocked us all. I wish to extend our deepest condolences to his family, his friends, his colleagues and the people of Calgary.

As we have heard from the tributes in the House, we have lost a remarkable colleague. His accomplishments were significant.

Deepak Obhrai served the House with distinction for 22 years. He was elected seven times, becoming the longest-serving MP of South-Asian descent. Over the years, Deepak served as parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, international co-operation and international human rights. He represented Canada ably on the world stage. The New Democrats may not have interpreted the world the same as Deepak, but we respected him and his service, as did all of us, for our Canada.

When Deepak was appointed to the Queen's Privy Council by former prime minister Stephen Harper, he was proud to have “The Hon.” title and never shy to remind anyone, especially during hallway debates in the parliamentary corridors.

The story of Deepak is not only about a Canadian's service to his country. It is also the story of perseverance by a Canadian who faced racism in all aspects of his life, including his professional and political life. In fact, he ran for the leadership of his party because it was important for him to send a message to Canadians that every Canadian, irrespective of his or her ethnic background, should have an equal opportunity to participate in every facet of Canada's political process.

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During this campaign, media characterized his campaign as “The Fun Uncle Who Keeps Stealing the Show” and “charmed”.

We are fortunate he lived long enough to see a racialized Canadian elected as a leader of a major federal party. While he rarely agreed with the NDP, he understood and appreciated the importance of a diverse House of Commons that respected all.

We will miss his trademark scarves. The one I wear today has the saying, “Deepackage” on it. I wear it with humility and pride for a man who showed us great respect in the chamber. We will miss his humour and his laughter.

Parliament and all of Canada lost our “Fun Uncle”, but not before he mentored us all.

• (1530)

The Speaker: I invite hon. members to stand to observe a moment of silence in honour of our dear colleague, the Hon. Deepak Obhrai.

[A moment of silence observed]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

APPROPRIATION ACT NO. 3, 2019-20

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (for the Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, on behalf of the Minister of Justice, in both official languages, the charter statement for Bill C-2, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020.

* * *

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, five reports of the Canadian Delegation of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association: the report of the Defence and Security Committee meeting, held in Hawaii, United States of America, from March 19 to 21; the report of the 2019 spring session, held in Bratislava, Slovakia, from May 31 to June 3; the report of the meeting of the Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities, the DSCFC, held in Beijing and Shanghai, China, from June 10 to 14; the report of the joint meeting of the Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council, the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships and the Officers of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security, held in Lviv, Ukraine, from June 24 to 25; and finally, the report respecting its participation at the 65th annual session, held in London, United Kingdom, from October 11 to 14.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, five reports of the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly: the report of the 18th winter meeting

of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Vienna, Austria, from February 21 to 22; the report of the presidential election observation mission of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Kiev, Ukraine, on March 31; the report of the 2nd round - presidential election observation mission of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Kiev, Ukraine, on April 21; the report of the 28th annual session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Luxembourg, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, from July 4 to 8; and the report of the parliamentary election observation mission of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, held in Kiev, Ukraine, on July 21.

• (1535)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas to the 11th gathering of ParlAmericas gender equality network and the 48th meeting of the board of directors of ParlAmericas, held in Mexico City, Mexico, from June 18-20.

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your recent victory. Since I have the floor, I would also like to thank the good people of Sault Ste. Marie for returning me to the House. It is a great honour and privilege.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, a report of the Canada-China Legislative Association and the Canada-Japan Interparliamentary Group respecting their participation at the 40th general assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, held in Bangkok, Thailand, from August 25-30.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) Mr. Speaker, there are two motions I would like to present at this time.

There have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That,

a. for the duration of the 43rd Parliament, the Standing Orders be amended as follows:

1. Standing Order 104(1) be amended by replacing the words “10 members” with the words “12 members”.

2. By replacing Standing Order 104(2) with the following:

104(2) The standing committees, which shall consist of the number of members stipulated below, and for which the list of the members are to be prepared, except as provided in section (1) of this Standing Order, shall be on:

- (a) Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics (11 members);
- (b) Agriculture and Agri-Food (12 members);
- (c) Canadian Heritage (12 members);
- (d) Citizenship and Immigration (12 members);
- (e) Environment and Sustainable Development (12 members);
- (f) Finance (12 members);
- (g) Fisheries and Oceans (12 members);

*Routine Proceedings***FIRST NATIONS CHILD WELFARE**

- (h) Foreign Affairs and International Development (12 members);
 - (i) Government Operations and Estimates (11 members);
 - (j) Health (12 members);
 - (k) Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (12 members);
 - (l) Indigenous and Northern Affairs (12 members);
 - (m) Industry, Science and Technology (12 members);
 - (n) International Trade (12 members);
 - (o) Justice and Human Rights (12 members);
 - (p) National Defence (12 members);
 - (q) Natural Resources (12 members);
 - (r) Official Languages (12 members);
 - (s) Procedures and House Affairs (12 members);
 - (t) Public Accounts (11 members);
 - (u) Public Safety and National Security (12 members);
 - (v) the Status of Women (11 members);
 - (w) Transport, Infrastructure and Communities (12 members); and
 - (x) Veterans Affairs (12 members).
3. Standing Orders 104(5), 104(6)(b), 114(2)(e) and 114(2)(f) be suspended; and
4. Standing Order 108(1)(c) be amended by adding after the word "subcommittees" the following: "composed of members from all recognized parties,";
- b. The Clerk of the House be authorized to make any required editorial and consequential alterations to the Standing Orders, including to the marginal notes.

• (1540)

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) Mr. Speaker, once again, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be appointed to prepare and report lists of members to compose the standing and standing joint committees of this House, and that the committee be composed of: Ruby Sahota, Kevin Lamoureux, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Kirsty Duncan, Churence Rogers, Mark Gerretsen, John Brassard, Blake Richards, Eric Duncan, Corey Tochor, Alain Therrien, and Rachel Blaney.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP) Mr. Speaker, at the outset, let me formally congratulate you on the important role of the Speaker, representing the wonderful region of northern Ontario, and my next-door neighbour. I want to welcome you in your new chair.

I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for this motion:

That the House call on the government to comply with the historic ruling of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ordering the end of discrimination against First Nations children, including by:

(a) fully complying with all orders made by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal as well as ensuring that children and their families don't have to testify their trauma in court; and

(b) establishing a legislated funding plan for future years that will end the systemic shortfalls in First Nations child welfare.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

IRAQ

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling two petitions today, both about the situation in Iraq where peaceful protesters have taken to the streets seeking an end to corruption, sectarianism and foreign interference. They want a strong, peaceful, pluralistic Iraq. Their response has been met with terrible violence.

The first petition calls upon the House of Commons and government to strongly condemn the use of violence against protesters and asks the Government of Canada to pressure the Government of Iraq to investigate and stop this violence while bringing those accountable to justice.

The second petition calls upon the government and the House to engage with the Iraqi government to promote pluralism and national unity. It also asks the Government of Canada to impose Magnitsky sanctions on those in Iraq who have committed gross violations of human rights.

This is a critical human rights issue, and I look forward to reading the government's response to these petitions.

*The Address***QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

• (1545)

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

SOFTWOOD LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 52, I am rising to seek leave for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing an important matter requiring urgent consideration.

As members know, British Columbia is facing a crisis in the softwood lumber industry. Communities across my province are reeling from the mill closures and layoffs that have occurred over the past several months. At least 20 mills have been shut down or have curtailed production. As a result, thousands of people across 27 communities in B.C. are out of work, and we understand that further layoffs are expected before the Christmas holidays.

As reported by the Financial Post, the Council of Forest Industries said that the industry has been a “cornerstone of the B.C. economy for more than 100 years and the well-being of 140 communities is closely linked to the health of the sector. It said forestry supports about 140,000 jobs and generates about \$4 billion in revenues annually for the province.”

Despite the crisis, Canada still has no softwood lumber agreement with the United States, and Canadian companies are facing devastating tariffs. Further, softwood lumber is absent from a revised version of the USMCA signed on Tuesday and continues to be left in limbo.

Canada's Deputy Prime Minister told the House of Commons on December 6, 2019, that the federal government is taking the issue of increased tariffs to the World Trade Organization. However, yesterday we learned that the future of the WTO's appellate body is in serious jeopardy because the United States continues to block new appointees and that panel no longer has quorum.

I am sure members will agree that the softwood lumber crisis is a prominent issue facing the House this winter. It is the number one issue facing the impacted workers, their families and their communities, yet there has been no opportunity to debate actions undertaken

en by the Government of Canada. There is no clear plan of action presented to the House to support workers, communities and the industry.

Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate your attention to this matter, especially as we head into the Christmas break. I am hoping that you will consider this request.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for her intervention. I must inform her that it does not meet the requirements of the standing order.

I would point out that the House is presently debating the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. The debate is a very large one and permits the raising of issues of importance for hon. members, and I am sure this will be one of them.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

* * *

CONSERVATIVE PARTY CAUCUS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 49.8(5) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I rise to discharge my obligations to inform you of the recorded votes of the first Conservative caucus meeting: whether sections 49.2 and 49.3 are to apply in respect of the caucus, yes; whether section 49.4 is to apply in respect of the caucus, yes; whether subsections 49.5(1) to 49.5(3) are to apply in respect of the caucus, no; whether subsections 49.5(4) and section 49.6 are to apply in respect of the caucus, no.

I believe this fulfills my obligation as national caucus chair for the recognized Conservative Party in the House to inform you of the recorded votes under subsection 49.8(5) of the Parliament of Canada Act.

Mr. Speaker, I trust that the other recognized parties will follow suit and their caucus chairs will inform you of their vote results in the House.

The Speaker: Duly noted.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[*English*]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from December 10 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, a gentleman with whom I served on Barrie City Council. I am happy that he has joined us in the House.

The Address

Tributes have already been done for the hon. Deepak Obhrai but I want to say how much he will be missed not just by our party but by all parliamentarians. A member mentioned that he was quite quotable. Every time Deepak would speak, I used to sit here in amazement at how many times he would say “Mr. Speaker” or “Madam Speaker”. I think he said that more in his speeches than the content, but it certainly showed the level of respect he had for Parliament and for the Chair.

Since this is the first time that I have been up to speak in this 43rd Parliament I have a few people I would like to thank.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the people of Barrie—Innisfil for electing me for a second term. I am humbled. I am appreciative. I certainly will continue to work hard and smart on their behalf.

I also want to thank all of my volunteers who helped throughout the campaign, and my campaign manager. Most importantly, I want to thank my family, my wife Liane, and my children for their unwavering support and understanding for what I do as the member of Parliament for Barrie—Innisfil. I appreciate all of their support during the election campaign and their ongoing support as well.

As I rise today to speak about the Speech from the Throne, what I am going to focus on more than anything are the things that were not in the Speech from the Throne. There were a lot of things, a lot of platitudes and a lot of words, but there are issues that are facing this nation that were not in the throne speech and I am not quite sure why, because those issues that were not in there are issues of significant importance to this country. These are issues like national unity.

Coming from a province like Ontario, I do not think the people of Ontario really understand the magnitude and the depth of what is going on in western Canada. Obviously, we work with colleagues from western Canada and we hear on a daily basis what is going on there, and it is dire.

What we did not see in the Speech from the Throne from the government is how we are going to deal with the situation with respect to natural resources and how we are going to get our products to market. How are we going to deal with some of the legislation that was passed in the previous Parliament that is going to continue to affect our natural resource sector? This is causing significant unity issues.

Just this week the Premier of Alberta brought a delegation to Ottawa. We have heard the Premier of Saskatchewan and others speak about just how dire the situation is and yet the government is seemingly not paying as much attention as it should. Certainly it is not doing what it should and that is to repeal some of the pieces of legislation that are impacting our colleagues and our friends in western Canada.

Other things that were not in the throne speech were issues of economic and fiscal policy. There was no end in sight, nothing mentioned with respect to debt and deficit situations and the fact that the Liberal government will continue to spend. Although the Liberals call it investing, they are continuing to spend billions and billions of dollars. That is increasing not only the debt but also the deficit. In a minority situation, we will be under tremendous

amounts of pressure from the other opposition parties to increase that debt and deficit situation. That is quite concerning as well.

What concerns me the most and I know coming out of the election what concerns the people of Barrie—Innisfil is our fiscal capacity to deal with a downturn in the economy. That is going to be one of the biggest challenges. By all indicators the economy is stalling. We saw that there were 71,000 job losses last month. Canada's position in the G7 is diminishing in terms of the debt-to-GDP ratio. We are quite concerned about the government's ability to deal with that going forward if we do face those strong economic headwinds.

• (1550)

Our role in the world was not addressed in the throne speech. The Canada-China crisis is worthy of attention, but that was not mentioned in the throne speech, and it took an opposition day motion to move the government in the direction we need to deal with those issues.

Those are some of the things that were not in the throne speech that caused me concern. The amendments that were put forward by the Leader of the Opposition will address a lot of the issues that were not addressed in the throne speech. These include economic and fiscal policy, natural resources and how to work to make sure that we see an uptick in the economy of Alberta and western Canada and Saskatchewan. I am asking that the government take very seriously the amendments that were put forward in order for us to deal with those situations.

What we did see was a government that seemingly went all-in. Just as if it was a game of poker, they went all-in and splashed all their chips onto the table on the issue of climate change. There is not one person in this House or one person across Canada who does not believe that man-made climate change is having an effect. The challenge we are having right now is that we need to have a national conversation about it.

In the election there was a lot of rhetoric and political posturing of the parties with respect to climate change. I agree with the former premier of New Brunswick, Frank McKenna, on this issue, that if we are going to go to a zero-based carbon economy, we need to understand what the implications of that are on not just Canada's economy, but also Canada as a place around the world and how it can impact a global change.

The Address

Canada, quite frankly, is punching above its weight when it comes to the issue of climate change. We need to be free of that rhetoric. We need to get back to having a discussion of what that impact is going to look like and how we are going to position Canada to be economically competitive going forward when seemingly the rest of the world is not moving in that direction. That is a conversation that we should have and could have in this minority Parliament. Looking at the rest of the world, just recently China built a rail system. The sole purpose of that rail system is to move coal to coal-fired electrical plants. One of the things that we talked about throughout the campaign was that Canada has the ability to impact the global climate crisis. Even the Prime Minister acknowledged the fact that even if we were to go to a zero-based carbon economy tomorrow, it would have zero impact around the world, unless and until Canada leads the way when it comes to the type of technology and innovation that we can offer.

The other thing that I was disappointed in is the fact that during the campaign, one of the ministers came up to Barrie and announced that the Liberals were going to invest \$40 million into Lake Simcoe. This was after the Conservatives had already promised an investment into Lake Simcoe and to reinstate the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund. I want to make sure that the government is aware of how important the health, vitality and sustainability of Lake Simcoe are to central Ontario and our ecosystem. We are going to continue to push the government on that.

Finally, the voters of Barrie—Innisfil asked me to represent them here. I am asking that the government listen to the voters of not just Barrie—Innisfil, but across Canada to protect our national unity, to protect our economy, protect our environment, protect the energy and agricultural sectors and keep life affordable for Canadians. I ask the government to support our amendment going forward so that we can move forward.

● (1555)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I neglected to do this earlier, but I should have said in my first intervention a couple of days ago that I am very happy to be back here to represent the folks of Fleetwood—Port Kells in Surrey.

A thought that came up about our oil and gas sector is that the problem a lot of people have with it is when we use those products for energy, when we burn them. Their contribution to greenhouse gases and climate change is something that we may differ on the extent of, but we know that it does exist.

I wonder if my colleague could speak to the other uses that we could put those products to. The fact that we can use compound plastic to 3-D print a house in a day suggests that we have opportunities here to open up new markets, new products and new ways of using what Alberta produces so well in a way that does far more productive things.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, one of the things that we talked about throughout the course of the campaign was using Canadian ingenuity, technology and innovation around the world to help reduce global emissions and combat climate change.

The challenge that we have is this apparent attack on the energy sector. It is speaking to our economic competitiveness. Any thought

that the world is going to move away from fossil fuels or natural gas is foolhardy. There is an insatiable demand around the world that will involve not just fossil fuels and LNG but clean technology as well, including solar and wind power.

It is not a question of one or the other; it is all of the above. Canada can lead the way with respect to innovation and ingenuity and make sure that we export them around the world so that we can help other countries reduce their emissions.

As I said during my speech, we are punching above our weight when it comes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

● (1600)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Barrie—Innisfil. We have worked together on standing up for veterans, those people who have put their lives on the line so we can enjoy the freedoms we have today.

With respect to the Speech from the Throne, there was very little mention of veterans. The government made a commitment to end homelessness for veterans in June. It was supported unanimously in the House. It also supported an NDP motion to end lapsed spending a year ago November. We still have not seen it honour that commitment.

My question is about homelessness and ending veteran homelessness. We have a place called Cockrell House in Victoria that is serving veterans who have fallen through the cracks, making sure they have a safe place to live. It receives no money from Ottawa. It might be a good idea for the government to use all lapsed spending not just to meet the 16 service standards it is not meeting, but to end veteran homelessness for good and to use that money to build housing for veterans.

Would my colleague in the Conservative Party support that idea?

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, the member for Courtenay—Alberni and I have worked together on the veterans affairs committee, and I know he is a passionate advocate on behalf of veterans and their families. It is important to remember as well that their families are a part of this situation.

There are many community groups and veterans advocate groups across the country that are working on the issue of homelessness. I happen to believe that the first priority of any government should be to look after its most vulnerable. We can include a significant and broad range of people, from seniors to veterans, in that category, but the issue of veterans' homelessness is an important one and I was glad yesterday to meet with the veterans ombudsman to talk more about this issue and the work that is going on.

The Address

A country cannot look after its most vulnerable unless it has a healthy economy and is competitive, and these depend on revenues that are created as a result of the growth of the economy. That needs to be a priority for the government. Everything else will fall into line. We will look after our most vulnerable, including veterans in this country, if we have a rich country that is sustainable and can be developed for years and generations to come, and we can do that. We can do that without the types of policies that the Liberal government has enacted and continues to enact.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil for sharing his time with me today. I served many years on council with him. He has been a great mentor to me. I look forward to spending the next four years here together in Ottawa, or maybe not quite four years. We will see how long it is going to be.

As I rise to speak in this 43rd Parliament, I wish to extend my gratitude to the residents of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, who placed their trust in me to represent them in the House of Commons. It is a great honour to represent the people of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte in the House of Commons and I commit to represent and help everyone to the best of my ability.

I would also thank my campaign team, especially Matthew Kelman, Marisa Breeze, and the hundreds of volunteers and friends who helped me get elected.

I would also like to acknowledge my predecessor, Alex Nuttall, for the fine work he did for four years, and wish him the best of luck in his new endeavours and in spending more time with his family.

Last but not least, I would like to also thank my wife Lisa and our two sons Wyatt and Luke, who put up with my being away from home for the long hours needed to run a successful campaign and are supporting me in my new endeavours in Ottawa.

At the beginning of the 2019 election, my team and I decided that we would run a positive campaign. Never once did we engage in personal attacks against our opponents. We kept the message clean. We knocked on an overwhelming 70,000 doors during the campaign. One thing we continuously heard from residents was that they were fed up with the constant negative campaigning coming from all politicians.

At the end of the campaign, I believe that all the candidates in Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte campaigned in good faith, and we have all remained on friendly terms because of that. We may have differed on specific policies, but at the same time, we all wanted to make Canada and our communities an even better place to live. Therefore, it brings me great joy that when I come to Ottawa, the buzzwords in everyone's speeches that I am hearing are "co-operation", "collaboration", "congeniality" and "teamwork". The people of our respective ridings elected us to get things done for them, not to bicker among ourselves in Parliament and trade petty name-calling with each other in the media. We must work together across party lines to realize the greatest dreams of the Canadian people.

Climate change was a big issue during the election, and I think there is a consensus among the parties that this is an issue the Gov-

ernment of Canada is going to have to deal with. The environment is a non-partisan problem, and I believe we will be able to find much common ground when it comes to tackling climate change in Canada and abroad. I know we can work across party lines because on October 9, during the election campaign, not two weeks after the Conservative Party publicly announced that it would bring back the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund, the then minister of foreign affairs, now the member for University—Rosedale, came to the shores of Lake Simcoe in Barrie and announced that the Liberals would bring back the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund after cancelling it in 2017. It was great to see the member for University—Rosedale in Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte.

When the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund was created in 2007, Lake Simcoe was in a miserable state. Fish populations and species were dwindling and phosphorus levels were very high, causing destructive algae blooms to prosper and spread.

Since the cleanup fund was created, it has funded over 200 community-based clean water projects and planted over 72,000 trees and shrubs along the lakefront and nearby farmland. It has restored fish and wildlife populations native to Lake Simcoe and reduced the amount of harmful sewage and phosphorus entering the lake. The cleanup fund was a cost-effective, measurable way to improve our environment and combat climate change. It is in the spirit of co-operation and collaboration that I look forward to seeing the funding restored for Lake Simcoe in the upcoming 2020 budget. I look forward to the member for University—Rosedale coming through with her announcement.

We need to stop making easy political decisions. This brings me to the topic of gun control. The words "military-style assault weapons" in the Speech from the Throne were used in bad faith to whip up fear against law-abiding firearms owners in Canada. We don't have a military-style assault weapon problem in Canada: Most of the gun crime in Canada is committed with illegally purchased handguns that have come across our southern border. Just because a handful of criminals commit criminal acts does not mean that politicians should start going after law-abiding citizens.

• (1605)

Fully automatic weapons are already banned in Canada and have been for decades. What exactly is a military-style assault weapon? The Liberal government has yet to define this term. These semi-automatic rifles do not have the same functionality and capacity as the firearms our great soldiers use on operations. At best, anyone using the term "military-style assault rifles" is woefully ignorant, and at worst, they are purposely whipping up public fear to distract from their inability to properly address the problem that exists.

The Address

Worst of all is that for all the rhetoric, the proposed new firearms laws will not address the root cause of gun violence, which is gangs, crime and poverty in our major urban centres. The solution to illegal gun crime is not targeting law-abiding farmers and firearms owners; the solution requires getting tough on the criminals using illegal handguns and addressing the root causes.

In Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, there is the Barrie Gun Club. This club has around 1,000 members, and I have to say that these are some of the nicest, most law-abiding people I have ever met. It makes me wonder why the Liberal Party is trying so hard to vilify them and treat them like criminals. This must end.

The government is not only responsible for our public safety but also has a large role to play in the economic lives of our citizens. While knocking on doors, I heard time and time again that times are tough. Essential items are becoming less and less affordable. A shocking statistic is that 46% of Canadians are only \$200 away from insolvency. We are currently at a decade-long, all-time high for insolvency. This year, 2019, saw a dramatic increase in bankruptcies for both individuals and businesses. Personal debt is at a record level.

To make things even worse, it was just released last week that in November, Canada lost another 71,000 jobs. I would like to applaud the Liberals for rushing to bring in their middle-class tax cut. It is much needed, but it will not solve the economic situation. All of us here know that we need a strong, healthy economy in order to provide the social safety nets that are essential to those less fortunate.

I would like to relate an incident that occurred during my campaign. One day I received an email at my campaign office from a local doctor who worked in a palliative care unit at Royal Victoria hospital. The email stated that there was a patient in Royal Victoria hospital who would like to meet with a Conservative in the hospital. I had some things on that day, but I dropped everything I was doing and I went to the Royal Victoria hospital to meet with this gentleman, named Antonio. I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I thought perhaps he was not happy with his health care, the Conservatives or something else, so I was a little apprehensive. Obviously, if a gentleman is in palliative care, it is something that needs to be attended to immediately.

I dropped everything and went to meet with this gentleman in the hospital. I went by myself. When I arrived there, I walked into his room and introduced myself. He was with his two grown grandchildren. I explained to him that I was running for the riding of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte. Antonio, who was still of sound mind, explained to me that the reason he wanted to meet with a Conservative was that he had concerns about the state he was leaving Canada in to his children and grandchildren. This was a gentleman in palliative care, on his deathbed. He could have asked to see a clergyman or for his favourite meal or a lot of other things, but he asked to see a Conservative. I went there that day not knowing what to expect, and it turned out to be a call to arms for my campaign.

When I left, I promised him I would do everything I could to win that day. I won my riding, but we were unsuccessful in forming government. To this day, there is still a sign in my office that says,

“Win it for Antonio”. When times get a little tough, we remember him. I made a promise and commitment to him. After doing that with someone literally on his deathbed in palliative care, I hold that near and dear to my heart and I will never forget that moment.

● (1610)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my two points relate to the economy.

We have heard a lot from opposition members about the 71,000 jobs in November. We would never mitigate what Canadian families are going through right now, but I am hoping that the member opposite will recognize that there has been an overall net gain in employment in 2019 from this government, and it is almost 30,000 jobs. I hope the member opposite will recognize that this has not been a great month for Canadian workers, but overall the job numbers are up.

The second point is about climate change. I applaud the members opposite for talking about the importance of this issue. It is very positive that the opposition benches are talking about the need to move forward. We talked about using Canada's international record. The price on pollution is a way to work in an international framework to put pressure on some of the larger emitters in the world. Why do the Conservatives not believe that a price on pollution would work in an international framework to help the whole international community?

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, with regard to climate change, the Conservative Party has never considered that putting taxes on people is going to help.

We do not want to tax people who are going to be driving their kids to hockey. I am a hockey coach and am dealing with 17 parents all the time. We do not want to be taxing mothers who are driving their kids to soccer games. We do not believe that is the way to do it.

We believe in technology, and we are going to help the world help that issue. It is not just a local issue. It is a global issue, and we want to encourage companies to create technologies and take it worldwide.

Regarding the economy, 71,000 people lost their jobs recently. The past is the past. The economy is slowing down now and people are starting to lose jobs, and there are 71,000 people who need jobs today. I am hearing about this in Barrie. People are struggling to make ends meet and need to get by. We need to make life more affordable for them.

● (1615)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my friend and colleague on his election and I welcome him to the House.

The Address

I am glad to hear him talk about the environment, especially what is at stake when it comes to our waterways. He lives on the Great Lakes and he knows that I live in coastal British Columbia. As more carbon dioxide is released, we are seeing the greenhouse effect come into play.

As we know, the Great Lakes and the oceans are absorbing about 90% of the heat from the warming planet. We just learned from the report that came out in Madrid from the IUCN that oxygen is decreasing at 2% right now in our oceans, which is putting tuna, marlin and sharks at risk. It is a scary time.

If we do not take aggressive action and have a regulatory body in place to make sure we meet the targets, set out by the IPCC report, to reduce our emissions by 45%, we are not going to be able to save our oceans and our waterways.

Does the member support having an external regulatory body to make sure that we meet those set targets?

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for welcoming me to the House.

The Conservative Party believes that it is a global effect. Global warming is not just in Canada but is going on all over the world. It is not just a local issue.

We are dealing with more local issues in Barrie. We are really going to hold the feet to the fire and are looking forward to the Lake Simcoe fund being reinstated, which is something that the Liberal Party cut back in 2017. We need it reinstated. We need Lake Simcoe to be clean and fresh. It is a driver for our economy in the local area, and we are looking forward to the government bringing back that fund, hopefully soon.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was the Liberals' comments that spurred me to rise and join this debate. It is important to know that there are 100,000 energy workers in Alberta who are unemployed right now. We have seen some really shocking numbers in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia on employment. I would like to give the member a quick moment, if he would like, to comment on how dire the job situation is in Canada right now.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, Canada was formed on its resource base, and right now our resource base is being hit very hard. There are many people losing their jobs. I am hearing this every day through my former members, especially in the west, who are suffering in the energy sector.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park.

[*Translation*]

This throne speech addresses my priorities.

Canada is an attractive destination for investors. Sure, there are some challenges, such as a labour shortage. During the election campaign, a number of my constituents told me that they have a hard time finding skilled labour. The people of Sherbrooke are welcoming people and they are open to immigration to address the labour shortage and enrich our communities.

[*English*]

When it comes to social challenges, there is no group as large, as diverse and as important in economic and everyday life as women. As we recalled earlier this month the 30th anniversary of the Polytechnique massacre, the status of women in Canada and around the world continues to evolve and continues to be challenged.

It is certainly true that women excel in any and every field that they enter, be it engineering, academia, athletics or politics, to name only a few. However, women continue to face barriers to their entry and advancement in their careers. They have fewer opportunities and wage gaps relative to their male counterparts, and experience verbal and physical bullying and harassment and violence in all forms.

[*Translation*]

If we really want to tackle the social challenges in Canada and around the world, we must promote gender equality.

With respect to the environment, our government wants to achieve carbon neutrality. To do this, our government made the ambitious decision to put a price on pollution. Furthermore, our government has a clear plan to protect nature and eliminate single-use plastics. Climate change is not specific to Canada. Our government has worked with local and international colleagues on fighting climate change, and it continues to do so.

Our country wants to work with its allies on countering the forces that want to disrupt or destroy the rule-based international order. That is why our government wants to renew its commitments to the international community, in particular its NATO allies.

Given that Canada is a large country with diverse realities, national unity will always be an important issue. We cannot unite the country if we do not work on reconciliation between the Crown and indigenous peoples.

Our government will be taking measures to co-develop and introduce a bill to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We will also continue our work to eliminate long-term drinking water advisories on reserve and we will introduce a bill to ensure that indigenous people have access to high-quality, culturally adapted health care.

The Address

As far as economic development is concerned, we are working with our partners and businesses to ensure that Canada is a world leader in creating green technology companies. In the meantime, it is important that we be able to bring our natural resources to international markets and that we support workers in the natural resources sector as we make the transition to clean energy.

Lastly, our government wants to help the middle class and people working hard to join it. We will do so by investing in affordable housing, increasing the Canada child benefit, assisting first-time homebuyers, making child care more accessible and more affordable, and increasing benefits to and investments in our seniors.

Our government's throne speech is unifying, which is important to note in view of the current political climate. The throne speech also addresses priorities that are important not only to me but also to the people of Sherbrooke.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a concern about the part of the throne speech that said the government is going to put more into the mental health of our veterans. I had a veteran call me just this week to say that his wife was receiving psychiatric care, and her doctor informed her that it was good that she came in because the program through VAC was going to be ending in December.

This is funding that is available for family members, spouses and children of veterans who have PTSD. The member may not be aware of this but, because of what went on in the last sitting, an individual who was incarcerated for killing a policewoman has received VAC funding in prison, when there is funding available to him to deal with his PTSD.

The way the government is dealing with this is to shut down the entire program while it creates new criteria, leaving veterans' families in an untenable situation when we already know there are 40,000 backlogged cases in VAC already.

How is it that the government is saying it is going to be doing more for mental health for our veterans and their families in the throne speech when this is the kind of thing that is going on within VAC?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her intervention.

We reopened several Veterans Affairs offices across Canada. We invested more than \$10 billion in our last term. We will always be there for veterans and we will make decisions in their best interest.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased we are discussing the issue of catastrophic climate change and the need to mitigate. There is not a greater symbol of climate in the north than the polar bear. We see in James Bay region where polar bear habitat has been affected.

That is why the work of the Canadian Polar Bear Habitat is so important as a research facility, to give understanding of where we

need to go in protecting polar bear climate habitat and also to mitigate the effects of climate change.

In terms of the government's position, are the Liberals willing to support science-based regional opportunities to work to mitigate the effects of climate change, particularly when it comes to something as important as the Canadian Polar Bear Habitat?

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

It is important to listen to the voices that are speaking out and asking us to make good decisions for the environment, and that is what our government is doing. It is making good decisions and moving forward.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, the speech given by my colleague from Sherbrooke was interesting because it reminded us of the government's priorities.

However, there were some things missing. I am thinking about respect for provincial jurisdictions, respect for the environmental protection and land use laws of Quebec and the other provinces, the increase in health transfers, the taxation of web giants and the protection of our farmers through legislation on supply management.

Does she agree with those priorities and why would she not then vote accordingly?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Quebeckers are well aware that the government is always working for them and their interests, to move forward on all those issues and to ensure that they are handled in Quebeckers' best interests.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like the member to provide some additional thoughts on the importance of one of our first initiatives, which was to reinforce Canada's middle class by giving a tax break.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As we heard in the House, the government proposed a tax cut, an increase in the basic personal amount for all Canadians. That will put a lot more money in their pockets. What is more, the Canada child benefit has lifted many people out of poverty.

The Address

[English]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am absolutely delighted to be here, re-elected as the member of Parliament for Scarborough—Rouge Park, to speak for the second time in the 43rd Parliament.

I want to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered here on the traditional land of the Algonquin people. I recognize the historical responsibility that rests on this Parliament to advance reconciliation.

I am indebted to so many people who worked so hard to get me elected. Permit me, Madam Speaker, to acknowledge them.

First and foremost I want to thank the voters in Scarborough—Rouge Park, all 31,360 of them, for entrusting me to represent their interests in Ottawa. I pledge to work for everyone living in Scarborough—Rouge Park and I look forward to working for them each and every day.

I want to thank my campaign team: those who knocked on doors, those who cooked for us, those who donated, those who made calls and those who installed signs, cleaned up and did everything to ensure that our message went out to the people of Scarborough—Rouge Park.

I want to thank all my volunteers for their tireless work and our staff for all they have done to support me. I want to thank my campaign manager, Tharani Rameswaran, and campaign director, Gowthaman Kurusamy, for their exceptional work in leading the team to attain the highest margin of any winning candidate in Ontario.

Walking in here last week, I realized the enormous sacrifices we all make to be here. It is an incredible honour to be here each and every day, but there is a cost. For me it is the sacrifice of my family. Every day that I am here I am away from them. I know that Bairavi and Sahanah, my daughters, know more now than they did in 2015 of the work that we do here. In fact, Bairavi was part of the climate action rally and speaks to me about the need to address climate with an urgency. They are the reason I am here, as many members with kids can probably attest, and I am part of a government that makes this world a better place. I cannot thank them enough for all their sacrifices and will work each and every day to ensure that we leave a better future for them.

As many know, Harini, my partner, is my rock. I am so fortunate to have her candid advice, support and unwavering love. I thank Harini.

I wish to thank all members who served in the previous Parliament and to welcome the new ones from all parties who have taken their seats with the determination and resolve to work for their constituents. While I may not agree with their viewpoints on some issues, I pledge to work collaboratively to make life better for all Canadians. I am so excited to be able to work with the Scarborough caucus, all six of us, to advance local priorities for the people of Scarborough.

I am very proud of the Speech from the Throne and the priorities outlined by our government. I know that many of my colleagues

have spoken in support of the throne speech, and I agree with all of their sentiments.

I want to highlight some priorities for our government and for me personally in the work I do in Parliament.

Our government fulfilled a commitment to establish the Rouge National Urban Park. It is 79.1 square kilometres and was established fully in the last Parliament. We have a management plan. We will continue to ensure that ecological integrity is front and centre in all the decisions that are made relating to the park.

There are so many organizations that worked hard to establish the park, and I want to thank them for their tireless efforts. We cannot even contemplate the depth and breadth of the park once it fully comes to life. Much of the work has been done in the last five years, but there is much more work to do. For their work and collaboration, I want to thank the Toronto Zoo and the City of Toronto and all the surrounding municipalities for their support in establishing and expanding the park.

As part of our commitment during the campaign, we committed to planting two billion trees. I hope at least a million will be planted in the Rouge National Urban Park.

During the election campaign, there was a recurring theme at the door: Why has our government not moved fast enough to address climate change? Over the past several weeks, I visited several elementary, middle and high schools. Our kids in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 and in high school kept asking why we are not moving fast enough. They are challenging us to do more. In fact, Canadians as a whole have challenged us to work together to do more to address climate change.

● (1630)

Our government intends to do just that. Building on our climate action plan that places a price on pollution, our government is committed to attaining net-zero emissions by 2050. We will ban single-use plastics by 2021. We will protect 25% of our shores and 25% of our land mass by 2025, and that number will be 30% by 2030. Attaining net-zero emissions will not be easy. It will require enormous commitment from everyone to ensure that we are able to reach this target by 2050.

Finally, I will highlight several very important human rights issues that I have been working on. I will start with Sri Lanka, where recent developments have brought into question the challenges the country is facing.

The Address

This year is the 10th anniversary of the end of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka. Last June, Parliament unanimously passed a motion asking the United Nations to undertake an investigation into genocide on the island. Sadly, Sri Lanka has returned a war criminal to power with his cohorts of despotic military leaders, who have sent chills down the spine of civil society actors on the island and worldwide. Now more than ever truth, peace, accountability and reconciliation on the island seem far out of reach.

I am deeply saddened to hear that media personnel are muting their voices and their reporting. It pains me to see lawyers and civil society activists self-censoring and limiting their advocacy. I am shocked to see that embassy staff are intimidated by the Sri Lankan secret service. I am extremely offended that Shavendra Silva, accused of international atrocities, continues to lead the Sri Lankan military. I am stunned that Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who was the minister of defence and in charge of the Sri Lankan army forces during the brutal final phase of the armed conflict in 2009, has become its president, and that his brother, who was the president in 2009, is now prime minister. Sadly, respect for pluralism, diversity, tolerance and justice cannot be found on the island.

Sri Lanka and similar countries, like Myanmar, have enjoyed international impunity from prosecution for atrocities committed, and their leaders have come to power notwithstanding their past behaviour. Sadly, a democracy where the rule of law on the island is in shatters, where strict majoritarianism prevails and where the international community has failed to seize its responsibility to prosecute perpetrators of atrocities cannot last forever. While history has taught us that justice may be delayed, I am absolutely certain that similar to what is happening in Myanmar today with the International Court of Justice, Sri Lanka too will face justice.

I work with a number of very important human rights organizations, and I want to highlight the work of the Scholars at Risk program. There are currently 23 post-secondary institutions in Canada working to support scholars and academics whose lives are at imminent risk. I support the work of SAR and hope we will have an opportunity to support it in this Parliament.

I came to Canada as a refugee when I was 10 years old. For me, the issues of refugees have always been important and at the centre of the work I do. In the last Parliament, like many of my colleagues here, I took part in welcoming refugees from Syria as they landed at our airports. Like many others, we were supporting them.

Today, there are 70 million people who are displaced and 26 million refugees. While we as country have done a lot, there is a lot more we need to do.

The very important unfinished business we have from the last Parliament is the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I look forward to working with all of my colleagues here to implement UNDRIP.

There are many more things from a human rights perspective that I wish to advance in this Parliament. As I said yesterday on Human Rights Day, human rights is not a partisan issue. It involves all of us and is fundamental to this Parliament. I look forward to working with each and every one of my colleagues to advance human rights both locally and internationally.

• (1635)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my friend and colleague on his re-election.

We heard the Liberals talk about their commitment to tackling climate change, yet we have seen very little action. We are grateful that they mentioned plastics in the throne speech and will do their part in tackling and combatting plastic pollution.

The member joined me in supporting my motion in the last Parliament, Motion No. 151, with a set of targets to tackle plastic pollution. However, the government has been very slow to act. It made a commitment to ban single-use plastics by 2021, yet we have not heard what it will ban. It has not funded organizations like the Coastal Restoration Society on the west coast of Vancouver Island. It is removing plastics, from the streams and rivers, that are infecting salmon. There is still no funding for groups like this.

What will the member do to make sure the government takes real action to combat plastic pollution to protect our iconic salmon, and other species like it and our waterways?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, I congratulate my friend from Courtenay—Alberni on his re-election. I assure him that climate change is a fundamental issue this government will advance. We are taking action on a number of fronts, including banning single-use plastics.

I believe today is our fifth sitting day, and in the days and weeks to come we will be bringing forward sufficient examples of how we will address climate change. I look forward to working across party lines to ensure that proper legislation is in place to advance many aspects of our programs.

• (1640)

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I again want to applaud my colleague for the incredible work he has been doing for the last several years on the human rights file. You have again outlined some of the concerns I share with you on the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member to address questions and comments to the Chair and not to the individual member.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, thank you for the reminder.

With the great work he has been doing on the human rights file, could the member explain, especially for new parliamentarians, how parliamentarians can exercise their voice and opportunity here in a more effective way to fight for human rights around the world?

The Address

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, I thank my good friend and mentor from Humber River—Black Creek for her ongoing support and her great work in advancing human rights around the world.

As parliamentarians, we sometimes do not recognize the enormous responsibility and path we are given in Parliament to highlight issues that may not be very popular or may not be known. If we look at the history of Parliament, whether in regard to apartheid, fighting racism or fighting sexism, parliamentarians have individually taken incredible action over the years to advance the issues. That is why I invite all of the new parliamentarians to advance issues that are important to them, because many Canadians share those values.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank our hon. colleague from Scarborough—Rouge Park for the work he did in the last Parliament as parliamentary secretary to preserve our indigenous languages. I worked with our hon. colleague specifically with regard to the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, our host first nation in the community of Prince George, when our elder, Mary Gouchie, passed and took with her so much knowledge. Our hon. colleague did a lot of work on that so I thank him.

I ask for the same work he did on the protection of indigenous languages. We are going to need a strong voice on that side for our forestry sector and the out-of-work forestry workers in British Columbia. Could I ask for the same tenacity for them?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Cariboo—Prince George for his kind words. I assure him that I support all workers in Canada and the right of Canadian workers to have employment. Through advocacy by our government, we will ensure that all of our workers in any industry are supported.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I will be sharing my time with the member for Edmonton Centre.

It is a pleasure to stand today and address the Speech from the Throne, but before doing so please let me thank the voters of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon for putting their trust in me. To my core campaign team, Jeff Wilson, Alison Rachel, Baljinder Brar, Marc Vella, Christopher di Armani, Jagjit Toor, Jalen Kropf and Sukhpreet Kang, I am thankful for their efforts and contributions. To all my volunteers and donors, I thank them for their time and generous financial support. My wife Kathleen has sacrificed and given so much to allow me to stand in this House. I thank her from the bottom of my heart.

I thank my two boys, Declyn and Nicholas, for their sacrifices and the sacrifices to come. Their dad is here to serve, set an example and fight for a better future for all Canadians. They are both young, but if they learn anything from my time here and what it took to get here, it should be to fight for what they believe in, be relentless in their efforts for excellence and do it all for the glory of God.

Turning to my riding of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, it is an enormous riding, encompassing parts of the Fraser Valley Regional District, Thompson-Nicola Regional District, and Squamish-Lillooet Regional District. My riding is one of the most beautiful

regions in all of Canada, with endless potential. It is rich in natural resources, fisheries, rail transportation and agricultural land. The area is a world-class tourist destination and a nature lover's paradise. We are home to world-class river rafting in Lytton. Rugged Lillooet hosts the award-winning Fort Berens Estate Winery and a burgeoning agricultural sector. There is the Sasquatch ski resort in Harrison Mills. Ashcroft features the vital Ashcroft Terminal, a key component of Canada's Asia-Pacific gateway and a key interior port for the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railways.

The Fraser Valley boasts the richest and most productive agricultural land in all of Canada. We have the highest farm gate sales per capita. The community of Yale is intricately tied to the history of British Columbia, the gold rush and the foundation of our province. First nations have inhabited these lands since before recorded history, and all have a common connection to the Fraser River. The Stó:lō people, for example, are the people of the river.

Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon is 22,000 square kilometres of ruggedness and complexity that literally spans climates and cultures, between the Fraser Valley and Fraser Canyon regions. This brings me to the challenges that we face today on the Fraser River, challenges that our salmon, sturgeon, steelhead, eulachon and many other species face as well. These challenges were not even touched upon during the Speech from the Throne from the Liberal government. Pacific salmon are an iconic feature of British Columbia, and the Fraser River is one of the most productive river systems, if not the most productive river system, in the entire world. The future viability of some of the most threatened populations of these once-vibrant salmon species is under threat.

The Address

This brings me to the Big Bar landslide. Satellite imagery confirms that over a year ago, a landslide occurred on the Fraser River, just north of Lillooet B.C. in the northern part of my riding near the Big Bar ferry crossing. A large rock slab calved off upstream in a narrow portion of the river, creating a significant blockage and resulting in an over 16-foot high waterfall. However, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans only became aware of the Big Bar landslide last June. Since then, to its credit, it has been working with provincial and indigenous partners to address salmon passage around and over the obstruction. Sadly, this is too little and too late for many of the salmon that attempted to return to their natal spawning grounds this fall. Approximately 60,000 fish were captured, stored in tanks and transported past the obstruction by helicopter or other means, while others made it through when water levels subsided. However, Fisheries and Oceans has said that the majority of the fish that did make it through were too stressed to spawn, and it has yet to release the mortality numbers of those transported around the slide.

In a year of already record-low returns, this will devastate future generations of salmon in the upper Fraser.

• (1645)

There could very well be a total collapse of the salmon stocks above the slide. That is not fearmongering. In fact, scientists from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans reported to the Pacific Salmon Commission that there is “a meaningful chance of extinction” for three salmon runs as a direct result of the Big Bar landslide.

Despite this, the federal government only issued an emergency request for information to the private sector to solicit plans and solutions for how to solve this crisis on November 26 of this year. That was two weeks ago, for a landslide that occurred in October of 2018 and that has been on the radar of the authorities since June 2019. That is simply not fast enough for the many indigenous communities, hunters and anglers who rely on these fish for their commercial, ceremonial and cultural well-being.

I have heard directly from numerous concerned individuals and share the frustration of those who have demanded and continue to demand quicker action to save our iconic wild salmon in British Columbia. Just this week, the Pacific Salmon Foundation called this a salmon crisis, and I join with the first nations leadership council in British Columbia in calling on the federal government to declare a state of emergency. If the work to remove the slide debris and remediate the area is not completed now, over the winter months, when water levels are lowest, then next season's returning salmon will again be impacted and threatened with extinction.

As a side note on British Columbia history, a natural slide occurred during the construction of the railway in British Columbia in 1914, and it took over 50 years for the fish to maintain their stocks after that slide.

Therefore, I call on the federal government to take whatever immediate, extraordinary action is necessary to get workers and resources to the site, declare a state of emergency and free up the funds necessary to immediately solve this crisis and save the fish.

I would like to thank my NDP colleagues, including the member for Courtenay—Alberni who has raised this issue in response to the Speech from the Throne. I look forward to working with all sides of this House to address this crisis. This is not a political issue, it is a Canadian issue that we must work on together.

After question period, I met with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and she is aware of this crisis and is doing her best as a new minister to address this. I will be holding her to account to make sure our fish are saved.

I wish I could say that the Big Bar landslide is the only major threat to the Fraser River watershed and the wildlife that call this ecosystem their home, but unfortunately that is not the case. In the southernmost part of my riding, between the cities of Abbotsford and Mission, the District of Mission has been working tirelessly to replace its sewage pipeline, which crosses beneath the Fraser River to the sewage treatment plant in Abbotsford. Close to 50,000 people rely on this critical piece of infrastructure. The existing pressurized pipe is over 30 years old, at capacity and at risk of imminent failure. According to Mission's engineers, it is not a question of “if” but “when” this sewage pipeline fails. The environmental devastation of raw sewage lining the banks of the Fraser River would be unprecedented.

In 2017, the District of Mission was allocated \$6.9 million from senior levels of government, but only a small portion of that funding has actually been transferred to date. Since that time, construction costs have skyrocketed, and government review after government review has bogged down the process with red tape. An immediate cash injection is needed to see this project through. This will provide an essential service to an expanding community and ensure our environment is protected for future generations, as the District of Mission in the Fraser Valley continues to grow at an accelerated pace. I cannot stress enough the importance of moving quickly on this critical infrastructure issue.

In conclusion, the health of the Fraser River ecosystem is far too important to leave to chance. As previously mentioned, this year's salmon returns were already troublingly low. Faced with development pressure, warming waters, climate change, poaching and overharvesting, our salmon cannot afford additional stressors. There are viable, timely solutions to these looming challenges, but only if the federal government and this Parliament take action now. I stand ready, as a member of the Conservative Party, to work with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of Environment on these pressing issues.

The Address

• (1650)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the time is up but maybe the member would be able to finish up during questions and comments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member has brought forward a number of issues. No doubt MPs from all sides of the House have concerns related to things that are happening within their ridings. It is always interesting when MPs bring to the floor of the House some concerns, not only from within their ridings, but of interest to all Canadians and our country.

We have brought through legislation such as amendments to the Oceans Act. We have spent hundreds of millions of additional dollars to protect our waterways and so forth. There is room for improvement and we have recognized that.

I appreciate the fact that the member brought forward these ideas. Does he have some specific examples that he would like to see put in place?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, what we can do today is work with the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to ensure that boots are on the ground at the Big Bar landslide, not next week, but this week, beginning the work to remediate the situation and ensuring that the rockslide is cleared before spring freshet.

Everyone in British Columbia tied to the Fraser River wants action on this now and I will be working with the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to ensure that is in fact taking place.

• (1655)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon identified priorities that should not be partisan. When it comes to protecting wild salmon, it should be everybody's issue.

Returns on the coast this year were despite the Big Bar slide. We had half the lowest return in recorded history in the Fraser. We had record low returns in the Skeena. In Clayoquot River we had 300 returning chinook salmon in all of our tributaries. These are tributaries and streams that normally produce thousands of fish. We are seeing fish die off and we are seeing a lack of resources.

We need an emergency package from the government. We need a restoration package of funding equivalent to what the government would spend on a forest fire in Alberta or a flood in eastern Canada. This is a national emergency. We need staffing resources in the department. We need a record amount of money in the salmon enhancement program. We need EI for fishers because they are losing their homes. The commercial fleet did not even set sail until the end of August.

Would my colleague join me in calling on the government to come up with a rescue package, an emergency package, for coastal British Columbians in light of this crisis that is happening right now?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I share the concerns of my colleague from Courtenay—Alberni that we are facing an emergency situation as it relates to Pacific salmon that spawn on the tributaries by the Fraser River.

This is an emergency. Immediate action is necessary to remediate some important issues to ensure that we have wild salmon for future generations.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to offer my congratulations to the member. He will do right by the people of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. Being a fellow British Columbian, I congratulate him on his election.

The member also mentioned the need to work with municipalities. I am wondering if he could express a bit more about the needs specifically around the infrastructure project, the sewage one, that goes under the Fraser River as that is an important topic and I want to keep it top of the government's mind.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, the mayor of Mission, Pam Alexis, has been working tirelessly to coordinate between our provincial and federal governments to ensure that Mission receives the necessary funds.

During the steel and aluminum tariffs, the cost of construction rose so quickly that the District of Mission did not have the resources to get this project moving as it should. It was also bogged down by some environmental provincial regulations that need to be addressed as well.

I am going to work tirelessly with the District of Mission and with my federal colleagues on all sides of the House to avoid another environmental catastrophe on the Fraser River.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to give my first speech in this great chamber as the member of Parliament for Edmonton Centre. I want to take a moment to thank the constituents of my riding for putting their trust in me to voice their concerns in this important institution. My promise to them is to represent their interests forcefully, with the utmost integrity and conviction.

This opportunity would not have happened without a dedicated group of volunteers who knocked on over 70,000 doors, many who have helped me for over six years. To the hon. Laurie Hawn who first approached me to serve, I thank him for his belief in me and his service. I will not let him down.

I want to express my profound gratitude to my family for their endless dedication and selflessness in helping me get here today. My wife Debbie has supported me in every adventure I have travelled on for over 37 years. I thank my kids Garrett, Taylor and Kennedy, son-in-law Steven and granddaughter Maya. Dad and Papa C will make the family proud.

I would like to give a special shout-out to my son Garrett. He has inspired me every day as I watch him reach his goals as he overcomes the challenges of living with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Garrett gives me the energy and resolve to fight for what is right every day.

The Address

I now want to discuss the nothing burger that the Liberal government across the aisle served us last week. It was badly cooked, had a stale bun, lacked Alberta beef and had just a sprinkling of condiments that left us completely unsatisfied.

All in all, the Liberals' Speech from the Throne was full of platitudes and not much else. It did not touch on healing our regional divides, strengthening our position on the world stage or getting prairie Canadians back to work.

Instead, we got a whole lot of grandstanding with no actual plans to do anything for small business owners struggling in this declining economy. This was a disappointing experience for me as a newly elected member hearing my first throne speech.

As an Albertan, I was also disappointed that the economic engine of our country was ignored. The plight of 170,000 unemployed Albertans has been continuously treated with indifference by the party across the aisle. My constituents of Edmonton Centre recognized this and responded accordingly in the last election, and I will not take their trust for granted.

This past fall, I met a family in my riding in the neighbourhood of North Glenora where the husband had lost his job with a drilling company that had redeployed capital to Texas. He has since found a new job, but his income was reduced by \$5,000 a month. In order to get by, his kids moved in to help pay the rent. There are thousands of other stories similar to this one that the Liberals do not care about when they throw around their space-time continuum nothingness.

The leader of the official opposition recently appointed me as shadow minister for small business and export promotion. In that capacity, I want to make some remarks about the missed opportunities in the Liberals' Speech from the Throne.

As a lifelong entrepreneur, business leader and former Chamber of Commerce CEO, I have heard and experienced what impacts small business success over the years. I am grateful that I can use what I have learned and put that expertise to use in this chamber.

The Liberal government has so far completely ignored the plight of small businesses across the country, and the difficulties they face as the private sector tries to create more jobs and expand during these uncertain times. Small business owners are risk-takers and hard-working entrepreneurs. They need to be respected, which the government has failed to do, even to the point of calling them tax cheats, which I find to be a great insult.

The throne speech did not touch on the massive job losses, personal bankruptcies or the regular flight of capital that businesses across the country, especially in Alberta, are battling. In fact, just last week, Statistics Canada announced that over 71,000 jobs were lost in November, which brings the overall unemployment rate to a high of 5.9%, the biggest increase in a decade. In October alone, over 13,000 Canadians became insolvent. That is a 13% increase, which is a 10-year record.

● (1700)

In 2018, the Fraser Institute reported that the amount of money Canadians invested abroad increased by 74%. Business investment in Canada also declined 2% in recent years, and foreign direct in-

vestment dropped by 55%. Investments in intellectual property are also down. These are just some of the reference points to give my colleagues an indication of how bad the situation in the private sector is, and why our economy is bleeding.

Where were all these losses? They were in the private sector of course, which is the main driver of our economy and which the government continually fails to support and encourage. Small businesses cannot grow and create jobs if the Liberal government continues to burden them with higher payroll costs and a carbon tax that increases the input costs on everything. Compliance costs and regulations are also issues that kill businesses' ability to compete.

There was virtually no discussion around lessening the burdens on competitiveness in the throne speech, which begs the question why the Prime Minister and his government are behaving like this. Why do they not take pride in Alberta's energy sector? It is respected and admired all over the world for its ethical labour standards, regulatory compliance, environmental conservation efforts and community commitments.

If given the opportunity to export our energy and technology, we could grow the Canadian economy and lower global emissions at the same time.

When will the government start focusing on policies to bring this country together rather than pull it apart? This is why more Albertans sent us to Ottawa, to voice their concerns and frustrations and make Liberal members across the aisle hear what is going on in that part of the country that they so frequently overlook and downplay.

This is why our Conservative caucus now forms the strongest ever official opposition in Canadian history. We will hold the government to account and stand up for our constituents and Canadians across the country.

The Liberals were given a humbling mandate to work collaboratively with the members across the aisle. However, I am skeptical, given the promises in the throne speech. Compared with their 2015 draft, this recent one was double the length, which did not mean more policies were put in, just more platitudes and empty promises and far fewer sunny ways, as members might have noticed.

The Address

We can all see that sunny ways and Care Bear economics led to an unemployment rate of 5.9% across the country and to tens of billions added to our deficit, not to mention sky-rising economic debt and the ballooning of government spending of taxpayer dollars with no return to balanced budgets, which is a big concern both for my constituents and for small business owners too.

In fact, government spending during the first half of this fiscal year compared with the same period last year increased by 9%, which is staggering. We all know that we cannot spend our way to oblivion. Someone, somewhere down the line, will be paying the price for the unstoppable spending habits of the Liberal government. That means we will all be chipping in to correct this damaging behaviour sooner or later.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate my gratitude to my family, volunteers and community for putting their trust in me. I look forward to representing their interests and concerns and serving in my roles, as member of Parliament for Edmonton Centre and shadow minister for small business and export promotion, in this great place.

• (1705)

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is my first time standing in the House of Commons. I am very proud to represent the people of Thunder Bay—Rainy River. I would also congratulate all members for having been elected to the House of Commons.

We have already heard a number of stories about everybody going door to door and what they were hearing. What I heard, going door to door, was a lot of people kind of cynical about politicians and the fact that they heard so much bickering between the parties, so much heckling and so much hostility. People want us to work together for the betterment of this country.

In my brief few days in the House of Commons so far, I have not gotten the impression that the opposition is really interested in working together with us for the betterment of the country. My fellow member of Parliament from Edmonton perhaps underestimates the concern of some of us in our party for the people of Alberta.

A lot of people from Thunder Bay go out to Alberta to work, at least part of the time. A lot of friends of mine live in Alberta. We certainly are sympathetic to you and we welcome the opportunity to work with you should you feel able to work—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): First of all, I would remind the member to check, to see the signal that I will give to wrap it up and ask the question. The other thing I will ask the member is to make sure he addresses his questions to the Chair and not to individual members.

The hon. member for Edmonton Centre can respond accordingly.

• (1710)

Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, I am a bit confused if there was a question in there, which I do not think there was. However, I can tell you that this side of the House is completely prepared to work with the other side if you start to produce policies that deal with some of the issues that I spoke to in my speech.

There are over 150,000 people unemployed in Alberta. I described the worker who had his kids move back into his house be-

cause he can barely afford to pay the rent. When you start, on the other side, producing some policies that can help these people and help businesses, you will get all kinds of co-operation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Once again, I want to remind the member that he is to address the questions to the Chair and not individual members.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to welcome my friend to the House. I listened with great interest. I do represent a resource region, but we need to start talking about ever-rising emissions. I think that is one of the fundamental problems with what I have heard from the Conservative Party.

My family and my wife are from Alberta. Her family all worked in the oil patch. When I door-knocked throughout the election in blue-collar neighbourhoods, I heard people who were very concerned about the crisis of catastrophic climate change.

Year in and year out, Canada's emissions continue to rise. If we are going to find a solution, it is a national solution and Alberta is part of that. The problem is to start addressing the ever-rising emissions that are coming from that sector. We are not hearing anything from Jason Kenney, certainly, and we have heard nothing from the present Conservative leader.

How will my hon. colleague and his party bring this to the House so that we can start to deal with the issue of needing Canada to finally start lowering emissions?

Mr. James Cumming: Madam Speaker, already Canada is in a position where we produce some of the lowest-emitting ethically produced oil in the world. If we really want to make a difference with global emissions, then why would Canada not have a strategy, within Canada, to use our own resources and stop importing oil from those countries that do not do it to the standard that we do?

Further, we should be able to take technology that we have produced in Canada and reduce emissions elsewhere. LNG and technology that has been developed in Alberta could be exported throughout the world.

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Humber River—Black Creek.

Let me begin by thanking the people of Etobicoke North for once again putting their trust in me, giving me the privilege of serving them and for fighting for what is important to them in this place.

The Address

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on your new role, as well as all members of Parliament and returning colleagues on their success. I look forward to working with colleagues, particularly on the issues that matter to Etobicoke North: strengthening the middle class, protecting the environment and keeping our communities safe.

I love serving our wonderful Etobicoke North community and families. Etobicoke is home. It is where I was born and raised. I went to Dixon Grove Junior Middle School and Kipling Collegiate, schools where many of our Etobicoke North students attend. Etobicoke is where I have chosen to live my life and serve the people I care deeply about.

Etobicoke North is proudly one of the most diverse communities in the country. Over half our population is first generation and another third of the population is second generation. They, like my own family that came from Scotland and Ukraine, came to Canada to build a better life and particularly a better life for their children. I want to thank our Etobicoke North families for teaching me their beautiful languages, cultures and religions. I want to thank them for including me in the family celebrations at our churches, gurdwaras, mosques and mandirs.

I also want to highlight some of the many organizations that do important work in our community: the Albion Neighbourhood Services; the life-saving work done at the Ernestine's Women's Shelter; the Rexdale Community Health Centre; the Rexdale legal clinics; the Rexdale Women's Centre; and the Youth Without Shelter.

I would like to recognize the work of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 286 and 23 Division of the Toronto Police Service.

The people of Etobicoke North work hard for their families, many work two and three jobs and many work six and even seven days a week. They tell me that the middle-class tax cut our Liberal government introduced makes a real difference in their lives. The Canada child benefit helps even more. In fact, the CCB is helping 25,000 children in our community.

However, our government also understands that there is more work to be done to make life more affordable for families. Therefore, our very first order of business is to lower taxes for the middle class and people working hard to join it.

Starting in 2020, this change will put more money back in the pockets of Canadians by increasing the amount of money they earn before paying federal income tax. Once fully rolled out, nearly 20 million Canadians will benefit, saving a single person close to \$300 a year in taxes. For a couple or family, including families led by a single parent, the savings would be even greater, close to \$600 a year.

The people of Etobicoke North and Canadians understand that climate change is real and that it is happening now. It is the most pressing environmental issue we face. It is important to point out that in this election a majority of Canadians voted for serious action on climate change.

Our Liberal government has already put in place 50 important measures to tackle climate change. While we are making real progress, we know there is much more work to do. We are working

collaboratively with provinces and territories to take even stronger action to reduce pollution and invest in a cleaner future. We will plant two billion trees over the next 10 years, reach net-zero emissions by 2050 and protect 25% of our land and oceans by 2025.

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous advocacy of our Etobicoke North youth council on fighting for climate change and environmental action.

● (1715)

The last issue I would like to raise is the need for stronger gun laws.

The 23 Division of the Toronto Police Service serves Etobicoke North and is one of 17 divisions in the city of Toronto. Tragically, the area served by 23 Division has had the second-highest number of shootings since 2004.

I have been fighting for real action on guns and gangs since I began serving as the member of Parliament for Etobicoke North. While in opposition, I spoke repeatedly to ministers and obtained funding to help our youth exit gangs. I brought grieving mothers to Ottawa to meet with members of Parliament from all parties and held a vigil on Parliament Hill for our children. I also brought all levels of government, along with dozens of organizations, together in Etobicoke North to address the violence and so we could all take real steps to end it.

Let me explain why. When I attend a meeting of 100 or so people in our community, it is common for mothers to tell me that they are the parent of one of the young men who has been gunned down. These violent killings are one of the most devastating traumas parents can experience. They are left suffering emotionally and psychologically. Devastated families must be supported, and our communities must receive support in building resilience.

Grieving mothers and community elders say, "These were the children who were supposed to bury us. No one asks about our pain because no one wants to know."

Grieving mothers in our community have reached out to other bereaved mothers to establish groups, such as Positive Change, for mutual support, to take real action to stop the violence and to improve the lives of other youth. Positive Change's brochure says, "50 sons, brothers, grandsons, friends lost. Together let's stop the violence."

The Address

Our Liberal government has worked hard to keep illegal firearms off our streets by passing legislation that ensures better background checks and sensible licence verification, best practices in record-keeping and safe transportation of firearms. However, gun crime is on the rise. In Etobicoke North, the availability of guns and the prevalence of gangs are the key causes of violent crime.

Elsewhere, and all too often, people are killed or injured because criminals have used military-style assault weapons. These guns are designed to inflict mass casualties and have no place in Canada. Our Etobicoke North community is tired of excuses and know that “thoughts and prayers” do not make our community any safer.

As promised in the recent election, we will ban military-style assault rifles. For more than four decades, police chiefs in Canada have been advocating for restrictions on assault weapons. We have listened and we will act. We will also work with provinces and territories to give municipalities the ability to further restrict or ban handguns. We will continue to fight gang-related violence by investing an additional \$50 million a year, for five years, to help municipalities meet the needs of communities at risk. As well, we will ensure that the Canada Border Services Agency and RCMP have the resources they need to detect and stop the flow of weapons at our borders.

I have spoken at length about the violence that affects our community because I am always going to work to make our community safer. However, I want to make it clear that I could not be more proud to come from our community and to serve our wonderful hard-working families. I love to see these families in our schools, at their events and in their homes. Families make our communities strong and our country better.

I would like to wish all my colleagues a very merry Christmas, happy holidays and best wishes for the new year.

● (1720)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Madam Speaker, congratulations on your role.

I congratulate my hon. friend across the way. We did get to spar a bit in the last Parliament, which was fun. However, I was a bit surprised at her speech. We did spar over science quite often. The Speech from the Throne did not mention a lot of science, other than the space-time continuum. We did not hear any science in the member's speech either.

A lot of viewers out there were probably curious as to what happened to science in the newest iteration of the government. Come to think of it, sport is not in there either. I do not know if she did the job so well in the last Parliament that the Liberals now no longer need those departments or they just decided that it was politically astute at the time and now it is maybe not so important. What happened to the science?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan: Madam Speaker, let me be very clear. Our government has committed to science, research, evidence-based decision-making and supporting our world-class researchers and our students. That is why we reinstated the long-form census. That is why we created the position of Canada's chief science advisor. That is why we have made the largest investment in research in Canadian

an history, a \$10-billion investment in research, a 25% increase to our granting councils.

That is in stark contrast to what we saw under the Conservatives when research funding stagnated, when government scientists were cut and when we had researchers protesting on parliament about the death of evidence.

● (1725)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague talked a lot about science. In the Speech from the Throne, the Liberals commit to a carbon-free economy by 2050. The science says that is too far out. The science is saying, from the IPCC report, that by 2030, in the next 11 years, we have to reduce emissions by 45%. That is what the science says.

If the government is paying attention to its own science or to international scientists around the world, it would be taking urgent action to move toward a carbon-free economy, not by 2050 but by 2030. That would mean we would have to reduce emissions by 4.5% a year. We are not seeing that. The government is investing in fossil fuel infrastructure instead of clean energy.

We need the government to take this emergency, this climate crisis seriously. I hope the member will listen to her government's science and act on it.

Hon. Kirsty Duncan: Madam Speaker, climate change is real. It is happening now. It is the greatest environmental threat we face and we have to take action for our children and grandchildren.

I am glad my hon. colleague mentioned the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I served on that panel for two reports. I was a lead author for North America for climate change and human health. I have devoted the last decades of my life fighting for action on climate change.

I remember under the Conservatives, when climate change was not even accepted as real. The then environment minister did not accept that climate change was real until about 2012.

We accept the science. We are taking action, with 50 different measures to tackle climate change and more work to do.

The Address

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge your position and thank you for stepping forward, letting your name stand, going through the process and being the Chair. I appreciate your doing this.

The hon. member talks about the possibility of doing it municipality by municipality. Being a former mayor and looking at the patchwork that could exist of legislation from one town, one city, one municipality, developing different laws and different rules, I would find that a nightmare for a municipality and the police enforcing it. Criminals would have a field day, saying, “Oh, we can’t do it here, so we’ll go over there.”

That patchwork that the Liberals talk about of municipalities and rules is a problem.

Hon. Kirsty Duncan: Madam Speaker, I cannot stress enough that while I love my community, we are suffering under the violence. Between 2004 and 2018, we had 458 shootings in our community. We had 61 shooting deaths. Thoughts and prayers are not enough and we are tired of going to funerals.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, congratulations on your appointment. We are pleased to see you. You have been a fixture up there for the last several years and it is always pleasant to have you. Also you always remind me to speak through you and through the Speaker, but somehow in the House we have a habit of looking at each other and forgetting that.

I am thrilled to be back. It is 20 years that I have been here and it is as exciting today to be here and speaking as it was when I was first elected 20 years ago. I continue to enjoy what I do and I am so honoured to be elected again by the constituents of Humber River—Black Creek. It is such an honour and I love them very much and look forward to having a few years to make a difference in their lives.

It is such an honour and a privilege for me to listen to my colleagues, especially the first-time ones. We all came here to make the world a better place and there are lots of opportunities for us to do that. Listening to my fabulous colleague from Etobicoke North and the commitment that she has brought to the House and the work that she has done over her many years is an example for many of the new members to follow. Passion and caring are things that matter and she continues to be re-elected because of the very same things that she commented on. She cares about the people that she represents and continues to fight against the gun violence that many of us in the Toronto region unfortunately have to deal with.

Since we are in the process of changing Speakers, I am going to congratulate our other new Assistant Deputy Speaker. I welcome you to that chair, Madam Speaker. Remember that the first time you sat in that chair was the first time I spoke in this Parliament, so that makes it extra special for me.

I want to thank my husband and family and my staff and all of the volunteers for the tremendous work they did in the last election. We had a great campaign and it was a tribute to each and every one of them. I would be remiss if I did not congratulate each and every member in the House. We all came here for the same reason. We are from different parties, but they are just party labels. We are all

here for one reason, to try to push an agenda that makes a difference for all of us and to make sure that we are doing the right things.

Regarding the comments by the member for Edmonton Centre, he talked about his desire to make sure that small business is represented here and so many issues. There are opportunities for him and others to do that work here. I really look forward to working with everyone to advance the agendas that we all care about.

The throne speech is a road map that will guide us to making a better Canada, because it can always be better. We try to bring in policies that are going to affect the residents of Humber River—Black Creek and to give them an idea of what our plans are on this side of the House, and I would hope many of these ideas are shared by the opposition parties so that we can advance these issues together.

We are talking about climate change and what a serious issue it is. The world has now woken up to the fact that climate change is severely eroding our quality of life. It does not matter what part of Canada we come from, whether there are forest fires or floods, it is having a significant impact on the infrastructure of our country as well as the lives of Canadians being driven out of their homes by tremendous fires throughout different parts of Canada. Climate change is a serious issue. Clean air and clean water are the basic fundamentals that I know we all care about and it is critically important that we are investing in this. When we talk about infrastructure and concerns about how we are doing it, we have to make sure that climate change is number one as we move forward.

• (1730)

There are new technologies, as the member for Edmonton Centre mentioned. There are many new technologies coming forward constantly, and it is important that we maximize the opportunity with them to ensure that we are doing everything we can do reduce emissions and improve air quality for Canadians. Our government cares, as do all of the opposition parties, about a cleaner and safer environment for all Canadians.

Cutting taxes is something we all talk about and would like to see happen. If we can do that, we can make the lives of Canadians better. However, in my riding of Humber River—Black Creek, there are a tremendous number of challenges, whether we are talking about small businesses and their desire to advance themselves or about single-earner families struggling to make a living, keep a job and advance their family.

Of course, our Canada child benefit was a tremendous help to thousands and thousands of residents in my riding, as I can tell members after the recent election, when I was knocking on doors and talked with many single mothers. Having that extra money deposited into their bank account at the end of the month allows them to ensure that they have better meals on the table. It is not for frills. It is not put away in a bank account for someone. It literally changes the nutrition that those children get every day. Children are getting better lunches and they are eating better.

All of those things sound simple, but to some of the families that I represent in certain parts of Humber River—Black Creek, there is a real challenge to provide the very best they can within a limited income.

Affordable housing is another major challenge facing Humber River—Black Creek, as it is all across Canada. One gentleman who came to see me gets \$1,080 a month in disability, but his rent is \$1,000 a month, because it was increased. Dealing with these kinds of issues is extremely difficult. I asked that individual how he managed if he was paying \$1,000 and was left with only \$80. He said, “I live off of food banks.” Looking at this gentleman, I would never have imagined that he had to live off food banks, but that is the reality.

Really, a lot of what we are trying to do is make a difference in the quality of life of the people we represent and throughout Canada. It is a fairness issue for people to have those opportunities as they continue to move forward, young families in particular. The fact that we have lifted over 300,000 children out of poverty is a tremendous thing. It is important for each and every one of us to carry that on as we move forward, and make sure that families have that money right away. There is also the maternity and parental benefit. A lot of the policies we put forward are about affordability and quality of life.

In the case of seniors, I was thrilled to hear the platform announcement of the increase in OAS by 10% for those over 75. This will be my favourite. I, along with all of my colleagues, will fight to make sure that is a reality. We see that many seniors at 75 years of age have increased expenses, and they find it much harder to manage. They may need additional home care that they have to pay for, for example, so that 10% increase will be a significant help to them and for many of the seniors that I talked to.

Again, it is about trying to make a difference in the quality of life of Canadians.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to seeing you in that chair many times. I congratulate you on your recent election and on achieving this wonderful post as Deputy Speaker.

• (1735)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Conservative Party, welcome to the Chair. It is great to see you take your seat.

I also congratulate my hon. colleague. Twenty years ago, I was not thinking about coming here, but the member has certainly spent some time in this place. I will admit that I have learned a few things from her by sitting together with her on the transport, infrastructure and communities committee.

Speaking of that committee, I hope that there is still some working relationship that will continue with my role as shadow minister for infrastructure and communities.

I am hoping the hon. member can answer a quick question for me. We heard time and time again about the failures of the Infrastructure Bank, that it was not helpful to rural communities and barely got any project built or off the ground. I am hoping she can commit here today in her seat to speak to the new minister and say

The Address

that we need to put the Infrastructure Bank debacle behind us and move forward with infrastructure dollars flowing into communities that actually need it.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, the member and I had a great time on the transportation, infrastructure and communities committee in the last four years, and I very much appreciated our ability to work together in advancing these issues.

You were asking about infrastructure. I think it is critically important that we are making sure that those infrastructure investments are happening, and even more so with the pressure of climate change that we are all dealing with.

You specifically mentioned the Canada Infrastructure Bank. It may be premature to say it is going to be successful, but I am hoping the Canada Infrastructure Bank is going to be successful in order to give us the money we need for infrastructure in this country. We have a tremendous deficit in infrastructure. We will never have enough money, whether we are talking about out west or down east. We will have a tremendous challenge. We will never be able to meet the infrastructure needs based on taxpayers alone, and we are looking for other opportunities such as the Canada Infrastructure Bank. I am watching very carefully how that comes out, hoping that it is going to be a successful expedition for us.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I too want to congratulate my colleague on her speech.

A number of Liberal members are talking about the environment. They say the Liberal Party is ready to take action on the environment. All of us, especially our farmers, but also people who live along our rivers, are experiencing the negative impact of a warming climate.

Is the Liberal Party willing to set legally enforceable greenhouse gas reduction standards that are no lower than what we need to meet the Paris agreement targets, which are not all that ambitious to begin with? That would force us to comply with those standards in the future and do more than make vague promises and grand statements, which has been the norm for far too long.

[*English*]

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague. I very much look forward to working with him as well as we move forward in this 43rd Parliament.

Allow me to say, regarding climate change and the whole issue of how we are going to further protect our environment through a variety of measures, that the Liberal side of the House is very committed to making the necessary changes to protect the environment. I have already heard of over 50 different ways that we are going to be moving forward on that agenda.

I would say to my colleague to just watch and monitor the action that I hope will be happening.

*The Address**[Translation]*

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me time to comment on the latest Speech from the Throne. I will be sharing my time with my new colleague, the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

[English]

I would be remiss if I did not take the first few moments to thank the citizens of our riding of West Nova for putting their faith in me to represent them in this 43rd legislature. I also want to thank my election team and the volunteers for working so hard all summer and into the fall. They are all rock stars to me.

The election in West Nova was pretty civil, regardless of the intensity of the national campaigns. I would like to recognize my opponents for putting their names forward to represent our riding: Liberal Jason Deveau, Green Party Judy Green, NDP Matthew Dubois and Veterans Coalition Party Gloria Cook. They believed passionately in their positions and ideas, and I hope to echo some of them in my work here as a very proud MP for West Nova.

I need to thank my family, especially my wife Anne and my boys André and Alec, for allowing me to let my name stand for a sixth time. They were my bedrock during the past 16 years as a provincial politician, and I hope to make them proud during this federal adventure.

Nova Scotia rules allow an MLA to actually speak for an hour to respond to their throne speech, so it is a lot of work here to smush this into 10 minutes.

[Translation]

My riding of West Nova is quite rural. It is 300 kilometres long by 50 kilometres wide and it is located in southwestern Nova Scotia, bordering the Gulf of Maine and the Bay of Fundy.

My beautiful riding has a rich heritage, since our communities and historic sites date back to the early days of our country. For example, Port-Royal, located near Annapolis Royal, is the first permanent French settlement in the New World and was founded by Samuel de Champlain in 1605. West Nova is home to a few large Acadian communities, such as Clare and Argyle, where the language of our ancestors is still spoken, 264 years after the expulsion of 1755.

On a related note, I was very disappointed that the protection of linguistic minorities was barely touched upon in last Thursday's throne speech. I look forward to hearing the government make some real commitments to protect the French language, since the ongoing battle against anglophone assimilation is very real in all francophone minority communities back home and across the country.

I am proud to support the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse and all associations that are doing excellent work, since our language and culture face significant challenges. Every year, our language and our culture are more at risk.

As opposition critic for official languages, I will work hard to ensure that the voices of minority francophone communities in my region and across the country are heard.

• (1745)

[English]

Another point of the throne speech that needs more detail and was the number one issue at the doorsteps in West Nova is health care. People in Nova Scotia are having a tough time accessing primary care, specifically a family doctor. Currently in Nova Scotia there are 50,000 people who do not have a family doctor. This is unacceptable and causes tremendous difficulty and uncertainty, especially in our rural areas. Imagine being a senior, a diabetic or having cancer without access to a family doctor. As incredible as it sounds, it happens all the time in our area, forcing these patients to present themselves at emergency rooms, causing useless long wait times, if they show up there at all.

Health care is a basic human right and we should all ensure the dignity of our loved ones. The government has the responsibility to listen attentively to the provincial premiers, and it should, especially with their request for an augmentation in their health transfers.

[Translation]

West Nova's economy is based on natural resources, such as agriculture in the Annapolis Valley, fishing in the southwest, and forestry in all of its regions.

[English]

Agriculture in the valley is very diverse and innovative, but its core depends on supply-managed commodities like dairy and poultry. They need to see the concessions of the new NAFTA, the USMCA, so they can have a better feeling of how their industry will be going forward. Then they can have faith in their industry again and continue to invest and grow. From that base, the industry in our valley can continue to grow other commodities, like wine, apples, beef and many horticultural products.

[Translation]

Immigration is very important to our regions. Over the past 20 years, we have seen a mass exodus of talent and expertise that were once well established in our regions. Right now, small business owners are having a lot of trouble finding and keeping people who are interested in taking on and running their thriving businesses. Now more than ever, we need to focus on ideas that will contribute viable solutions and help with transfers so that we can make sure these vital businesses and services stay open and available to local residents.

*The Address**[English]*

Another important point to emphasize is that West Nova has the largest air force base in eastern Canada, CFB Greenwood, home of 14 Wing. We must continue to support our troops, making sure they have the adequate equipment needed to do their jobs. We also need to make sure that our veterans have the services they require during their service and after they have served our country with dedication and honour, which I was happy to see included in the throne speech. However, I am sure it is short some of the things we really need.

I need to talk about our fisheries. By far, the largest employer and economic driver in West Nova is our fishing industry. Hundreds of millions of dollars of fish products are landed on our shores. Scallops, groundfish, herring and tuna are landed at many of our ports, but lobster is king. Between the last Monday in November and the end of May, the worst time of year to go fishing, when the big boats are all tied up at the wharf, the little boats go out there for a billion dollars' worth of lobster, or somewhere close to it, to be caught and sold around the world.

[Translation]

It may seem like the fishing industry is going strong and is happy with the government. Nothing could be further from the truth. Fishermen are up in arms over about numerous issues involving this government.

For one thing, they are furious about the tax changes rolled out by the Liberal government, which lopped millions of dollars off our hard-working fishermen's family trusts. Thousands of fishing boats had been registered as small businesses to facilitate tax planning. That option was suddenly eliminated by the Liberal government, which also called our fishermen tax cheats. That was an outrage and an insult to them.

I am proud to be my party's critic for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and I want to make sure the government stops going after the honest workers in our industries.

- (1750)

[English]

Fishermen feel that with the economic activity they create and the taxes they pay they should have safe and modern ports to work from, but they are wrong. They have woefully inadequate facilities that cannot accommodate the larger vessels they are using, or they are actually falling into the ocean. The Liberals boasted during the election of the investment they have committed but I can assure the House that it pales in comparison to what is really needed.

I look forward to working with the fisheries minister and the transport minister to assess the real need to make our ports safe and to be able to seize the opportunity that our oceans truly are.

I could talk about a lot of other things but I am running out of time. I could talk about climate change and gun control. I could talk about MPAs. I could talk about Internet and cellphone service and the loss of our local call centre. Unfortunately, however, I do not have an hour to actually do it.

[Translation]

In closing, I am certain that all my colleagues in the House will agree with me that we have much work to do to ensure that Canada remains strong and united. The throne speech was not reassuring in that regard.

Our country is unique in the world; it is a good place to live and a remarkably welcoming country. We have a duty to ensure that all Canadians have access to adequate health care, can look forward to a prosperous future and can obtain services in both official languages.

I have been a committed citizen and politician for many years, and I will spare no effort to ensure that the government fulfills its responsibilities towards taxpayers and respects them.

[English]

Madam Speaker, I wish everybody a merry Christmas.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on becoming Assistant Deputy Speaker.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of Halifax West for returning me to the House of Commons along with so many colleagues.

[Translation]

I would like to welcome my good friend, the new member for West Nova. He is not new to politics, but he is new to Ottawa. About 15 years ago, we were both ministers, one in the federal government and the other in the provincial government. We often worked together and we got along most of the time.

My colleague has considerable provincial experience and is very familiar with the needs of the provincial governments and the challenges they face. We have recently been hearing some comments about the equalization program and that some premiers would like to change it. What are his views on that?

Mr. Chris d'Entremont: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I was Nova Scotia's health minister for three years. Federal money was often not enough, so we had to make big decisions, such as which services to offer in which parts of the province.

The regions need money to find the expertise our health system needs. Finding prescription drugs and long-term care services is not enough. What the government needs to do is help provincial governments find a way to provide better service.

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• (1755)

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, congratulations on your new post. I look forward to your rulings and your working with the Speaker to make sure this House works well.

On doorsteps during the election, I heard from people whose concerns were getting a doctor or a referral to a specialist. Those are the areas where Canadians want to see some co-operation with our provincial counterparts.

I want to focus on something the member said about connectivity. The government, in the last Parliament, really failed in its connect to innovate program. The design of the program was not well received. The government opened up a second round without even telling more than 80% of the participants whether they were accepted or if they would receive funding.

I would like to hear the member talk about his community in terms of its need for connectivity. When a community loses a mill or a call centre, this is a way for small businesses to grow and hire people.

Mr. Chris d'Entremont: Madam Speaker, Internet connectivity is important to us. Many parts of the province are under what would qualify as a wireless system. The wireless system is performing somewhere under one megabit per second. It is very difficult even to receive an email, let alone trying to connect to the World Wide Web or any other important system across the world that supports small businesses.

As a member of the provincial legislature, I saw people who moved into a little community. They were moving out of Halifax into a small community so they could bring up their kids. They built their house and then realized they could not get Internet to serve it. They could not run their heating system because it was an Internet-connected heating system.

We have a lot to do in our area to make sure that constituents have the Internet connectivity that they require.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise in the House. It gives me an opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment. I know you are a very understanding person but also very tough. I would like to personally wish you good luck and assure you of my co-operation. It is an honour to see a woman in the chair and I hope that, in the next Parliament, we might see you become the Speaker of the House. That would be an honour for the women parliamentarians here.

I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I am pleased to learn that he was his province's health minister. The question I want to ask is fairly simple. Earlier, in response to our colleague opposite, he said that the provinces needed money in order to provide health care to their residents. I completely agree. Money is needed. However, that money comes through a transfer from Ottawa to the provinces and to Quebec.

Can he explain to me why his party, when it was in power, cut Ottawa's transfers to the provinces? Can he explain, as a former health minister for his province, how he can allow Ottawa to cut provincial transfers when people are in such great need of those services? I would like him to explain that.

Mr. Chris d'Entremont: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent question.

Our health care systems took a shocking hit in the 1990s when Mr. Martin balanced his budget on the backs of the provinces. That is when it really began. Over time, our systems gradually started to change and recover.

When I was a minister, I myself faced budget cuts. We always made sure that they were not based on population. In eastern Canada, we have seniors and we have systems that other provinces do not have, which is why we need to push things a little further.

[English]

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, congratulations on your appointment.

I am very happy to be here today representing Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge. I want to thank the residents in both communities for electing me, and I want to thank all my volunteers. As all members here recognize, we just cannot do it without them. I also want to recognize my staff whom I have hired in Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge. I have Sean-Mark Gillespie, Linda Kingsbury and Nancy Nagy. Two of them have worked with me in the past. I have Jay Denney here in Ottawa, and he will be working with me beginning next month.

Most of all, I want to recognize my wife Marlene. We have been married for 34 years and she has been a tremendous support to me. When I was elected provincially, she came with me most times when I was in Victoria and she will be with me a lot of the time here. My constituents are getting two for one.

Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge are two wonderful communities. We live in a stunning part of the country and the world. People would never believe that within minutes of my communities they are lost in nature, whether it be in Golden Ears Provincial Park or Widgeon Creek, on Pitt Lake or wherever. It is one of the most beautiful places in Canada. If members do not believe it, they can please come and visit. It is very picturesque.

Both communities are growing rapidly. A lot of millennials are moving to the region into new subdivisions that are happening all over the place because they are more affordable. That is a very relative term for the Lower Mainland.

Transportation infrastructure is a need. I know the Liberals have made many promises. They promised tens of billions of dollars, but 40% of those projects have gone nowhere. It is one thing to make promises. It is another thing to put those promises into action. We are looking forward to seeing that in my communities.

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Also on the provincial side of things, the NDP has made sweet-heart deals with its preferred unions. That has made projects a lot more expensive than they otherwise had to be and it has reduced the number of projects getting done, at a much greater cost to taxpayers.

For me it has been a long journey getting here. In 2003, I attended the Teacher's Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy here in Ottawa. I am a teacher by profession. It was the best professional development experience I have ever had, and I recommend that teachers across the country apply for it. I believe the next one is in February. I saw democracy in action and it gave me a tremendous passion to get involved even more in politics.

I actually ran in the nomination for the Conservative Party when I had just joined in 2004. Sometimes we win, sometimes we lose and I lost. Randy Kamp became the member of Parliament. He won that year and he was a great member of Parliament, representing the area for many years. It was then a minority government and there was an election in 2006. I won the nomination the next time but in a different riding, Burnaby—New Westminster. I won the nomination but lost the election.

That is not the end of the story. I moved on to provincial politics. I won two terms representing Maple Ridge—Mission. It was a great experience, I enjoyed it very much and was able to accomplish a lot for my constituents. I want to give a shout-out to my former B.C. Liberal colleagues and staffers. A number of them work on the Hill on both sides of the floor. My future director of operations, Jay Denney, will also be working for me.

My heart has always been to eventually serve in the House of Commons. I have always had a vision for Canada and its place in the world. I was raised in a military family, born in Germany. My dad was in the RCAF. I lived on bases throughout Canada. I lived in Quebec in Chibougamau, up north. It is a little chilly up there but a beautiful place to live. I also lived in Valcartier, near the City of Quebec, as well as in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia and throughout the country.

- (1800)

My mother is French Canadian.

- (1805)

[*Translation*]

She was a Beaudoin. She was one of 18 children in her family, which was originally from near Kapuskasing, in northern Ontario. In the 1940s, the family moved to northern Alberta, near Falher, which is well known for its bees and great honey.

I have hundreds of cousins, aunts, uncles and nephews who are part of the Franco-Albertan community.

[*English*]

On my mother's side I am French Canadian, but on my father's side I am Métis. I trace my roots to the Red River Colony in the early 1800s and with the Cree in the Lesser Slave Lake area. My indigenous roots are very important to me, my brothers and sisters and my grown children. One of my roles in the B.C. legislature was as parliamentary secretary for aboriginal relations.

Canada's indigenous population is the fastest-growing population in Canada, as well as the youngest. It is a vital and integral part of Canada's present and Canada's future.

My constituency of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge is a bit of an anomaly in the Lower Mainland. It has a growing population of Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Farsi and Indo-Canadian people, but the largest minority is the indigenous population. I want to recognize the Katzie First Nation and Kwantlen First Nation peoples, and I look forward to having a good relationship with them and working with them.

I am a member of the Golden Ears Métis Society, GEMS, which is a vibrant association affiliated with Métis Nation British Columbia that is under Clara Morin Dal Col as its president.

When I was a teacher, I led exchange trips to Quebec. I felt it was important for students to experience our country, grow an appreciation for the wonderful country we live in and discover what a beautiful place Quebec is. It was good to have students from Quebec visit British Columbia to see what a beautiful country they are a part of.

[*Translation*]

National unity is extremely important to me. I take no pleasure in hearing people complain about Quebec. I adore that province and its people. I like their joie de vivre and their passion.

[*English*]

However, I also feel similarly about Alberta, where I have deep roots and graduated, as well as for British Columbia and all of Canada. I have travelled from coast to coast to all of the provinces and two of the territories. We have an amazing country.

[*Translation*]

I am disappointed and truly troubled by the way the Liberals are governing our magnificent country.

[*English*]

For the Liberals, it seems to be all about politics and trying to stay in government regardless of the tremendous stress and negative impact their policies are having on this great nation of Canada. There is a reason the Bloc Québécois has rebounded, and the onus falls on the Liberal Party and its leaders. There is a reason the Liberals were wiped out in Alberta and Saskatchewan and lost seats in British Columbia, the Maritimes and Manitoba, and why western separatism is being discussed in pubs and on streets in places like Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray, Regina and Saskatoon. The onus falls on the Liberal Party and its leader.

I have heard it said that the difference between a statesperson and a politician is that the politician is looking to the next election and the statesperson is looking to the next generation.

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I believe that members opposite have good intentions, and I would encourage the Liberal Party to stop playing identity politics and dividing Canadians. It should do what is good for all of Canada, not just where it has the most, or any, seats.

My team and I went to tens of thousands of doors during the election. It was a lot of work, and I enjoyed it. It was an opportunity to listen to people, get to know them and hear their concerns. The number one issue I heard about was affordability. Bear in mind that in my riding, the average family income is about \$90,000. Families are finding it tough. It is not how much one makes, it is how much one is allowed to keep. Taxes from all different levels of government are approaching 50%. The Conservative message of reducing financial stress on families resonated on the doorsteps in my constituency and throughout British Columbia.

The Liberals say they are planning on reducing the tax burden, but they do it with a sleight of hand, giving with one hand and taking more with the other. We—

• (1810)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in many ways this government, particularly the Prime Minister, has been a visionary on many of the different policy announcements made over the last few years. There has been a very solid commitment to Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be part of it, lifting people out of poverty, contributing in a very big way by increasing disposable income, thereby enhancing and giving greater strength to Canada's middle class and, ultimately, the economy. We have seen significant gains. Yes, there are always going to be highs and lows in the economy. The Prime Minister has been visionary in the sense of making commitments on our environment and an increase in CPP for people retiring.

There is a litany of things and time will not permit me to list them all, but I wonder if my colleague across the way, after reflecting on some of them, would agree that he may have passed judgment a little too quickly on the current government.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, my apologies to the member, but I did not pass judgment too quickly; I do not think I passed it quickly enough.

The middle class has struggled. On the doorsteps in British Columbia and throughout this country, people are saying their disposable income is going down. Members on the other side mentioned job increases. That is not what I am aware of in my community. Over 400,000 jobs have been lost since the House recessed in June. I believe the number is 71,000 alone in the last month. It is a significant problem.

As far as the resource sector is concerned, it does not just impact Alberta and the hinterlands of Saskatchewan; it impacts Canadians from coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

Mme Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened with passion to our colleague's speech.

He says that it is important to him that provincial jurisdictions are respected.

Can he explain why he voted against the Bloc's amendment to the amendment that sought to improve the Speech from the Throne and specifically note that the government is to respect the jurisdictions of the provinces and Quebec, especially when it comes to land use and environmental laws?

Can he explain his perspective on that?

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

I truly believe in every province's jurisdictions. It is very important.

[*English*]

There are jurisdictions on the provincial side of things that also are a responsibility for Canada. It is a matter of recognizing that all Canadians pay taxes which go to providing services, whether they be health care or other services. Those are outlined in the Constitution and it is important to respect the Constitution.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge on his first speech in the House.

There is an epidemic on the west coast when it comes to salmon farming. We have seen a record amount of sea lice infestation on salmon. These salmon are in farms on juvenile salmon migratory routes. The government continues to allow diseased fish into open-net fish farms. We have seen massive die-offs. We have heard from organizations, like the Pacific Salmon Foundation, that want open-net fish farming moved to land. In fact, the Liberal government promised that it would do this by 2025, and we have yet to see it do that.

In the member's own riding, in the Alouette River, there has been a collapse of the chum. It went from 160,000 fish a decade ago to about 500 this year. There were 60,000 returning fish expected this year. There has been the collapse of the Fraser and half of the lowest return in history—

• (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Let us have a very short answer, please, from the hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, salmon fishing and salmon runs are extremely important. I think it is very important that we conserve the salmon runs.

I have advocated a fish ladder on the Alouette River toward Alouette Lake, which is very important. I did that provincially and I will as a member of Parliament.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is delightful to see one of my former seatmates sitting in that chair again tonight. Congratulations.

I know all my colleagues have heard this a lot, but it is an absolute honour to rise in this place in my first opportunity to speak in the House during the 43rd Parliament.

I want to take a moment to thank the amazing people in my constituency of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, the greatest riding in all of Canada, with all due respect to the members who have had amazing speeches in the House today and gave me a chance to hear about so many wonderful ridings across this country. This is one of those first few weeks of this sitting of the House that I truly do love, as I get to hear about the amazing ridings in this wonderful country.

I want to thank the tireless volunteers who worked so hard to share our progressive message on the doorsteps. We had an incredible, diverse group of volunteers, from new Canadians to business owners to seniors and lots of young people. I want to give a shout-out to what we call our “teen dream”, all of the young people who worked so hard on our campaign. Our volunteers gave so much of their time and their energy to make sure that we could continue the important work that we are doing for Canadians. I want to thank them.

I would be remiss if I continue to forget the fact that I am sharing my time with the member for Surrey Centre.

None of us get here without the help of our partners and our families. I have to thank my loving wife of 20 years, Anne, and my kids, Bruen and Ava, for supporting me through the campaign and through every day that I am either in the constituency or in this wonderful place.

I also want to take a moment to thank the hon. member for Halifax West for his service as the Speaker in the 42nd Parliament. He worked hard to bring decorum and respect back to the House of Commons. That is a tough job, and for that I think he deserves all of our gratitude.

I also wish to congratulate our new Speaker, the hon. member for Nipissing—Timiskaming. I have no doubt that he will also serve honourably and will continue the work of the member for Halifax West in holding all members accountable in this place.

Dartmouth—Cole Harbour is filled with community-minded, compassionate people. My hometown is the kind of place where folks help one another, where neighbours help neighbours, where doors are open wide to those in need. There has never been a better time to live in Dartmouth. I say that a lot.

Our business community is flourishing and vibrant. We have many incredible entrepreneurs who are opening businesses all across the riding. From Selby's Bunker in Cole Harbour to Lake City Cider in Dartmouth, we have numerous restaurants, cafes, brew pubs, shops and more that are all worth exploring. Businesses such as the Village on Main, the Cole Harbour and Area Business Association, the Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission and

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the Greater Burnside Business Association are doing an incredible job in advocating for businesses across the riding. Memberships are growing, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to continue to work with them to make sure that the decisions that we make as a government help local businesses grow, succeed and continue employing people at home.

Our arts and cultural community is alive. There are always festivals, performances and exhibits at Alderney Landing.

From the Salt Marsh Trail to Shubie Park, our green spaces add to the livability of our community. Of course, Dartmouth—Cole Harbour is known as the home of hockey players Sidney Crosby and Nathan MacKinnon, but hockey is not all that we are known for. Our lakes and waterways are the focal point and the heart of our community. Lake Banook is known around the world as the greatest lake in the world for paddling, kayaking and rowing. I look to the new member for Milton to back me up on that.

Just for a second, going back to hockey, many colleagues know, as I have mentioned it a time or two in the House, that hockey is my favourite sport. Some folks even say that hockey was founded on beautiful Lake Banook in Dartmouth. However, as I have ties to Windsor, Nova Scotia, all around me, I am not going to enter that debate if I want to stay married.

A stone's throw away from Lake Banook on what is now the Shubenacadie Canal Greenway park, is where Starr Manufacturing produced the first-ever commercial hockey sticks. Of course, we cannot forget their incredible Starr skates.

● (1820)

Although Dartmouth—Cole Harbour is succeeding, we know that not everyone is benefiting from this success.

There are incredible organizations like the Dartmouth North Community Food Centre, VETS Canada, the Public Good Society of Dartmouth, Margaret's House and many more groups and people working hard to ensure that as we succeed, folks are not slipping through the cracks.

It is important to me that we recognize the good work that these organizations do, that we learn from them and that we continue to support them. The partnerships of folks working hard on the ground, at the grassroots level, are the only way we will be able to successfully lift our communities.

From clean air to healthy waterways, we need to ensure we leave this place environmentally healthy and better for future generations. My constituents and the majority of Canadians overwhelmingly asked us to take stronger climate action and to protect our oceans.

The Address

I am from Atlantic Canada and we are seeing first-hand the harm of rising sea levels. We are seeing the damage that plastic pollution is causing to our sea life and to our communities. Protecting our environment is top of mind and it is a major priority for me personally.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in the last mandate, we worked hard to produce a report on protected areas. That report has led to historic investments in protecting nature across our beautiful country.

Our efforts are helping to protect areas like Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes in Nova Scotia. Through protected areas, we are helping species like the Nova Scotia Blanding's turtle and mainland moose and we are helping to protect the ecological integrity of our province.

In my first term as a member of Parliament, I had the opportunity of bringing forward private member's legislation and I used this opportunity to work toward a healthier environment. My private member's bill, Bill C-238, the National Strategy for Safe and Environmentally Sound Disposal of Lamps Containing Mercury Act, is now law across Canada. I want to thank all members on both sides of the House for supporting that bill. The act is helping to keep dangerous mercury out of our land, air and waterways.

Dartmouth—Cole Harbour is home to a growing and thriving clean technology industry. Companies like One Wind are promoting clean, renewable energy, while at the same time employing hundreds of folks across our riding. In fact, the only impediment to its continued growth is the ability to find more skilled labour.

We are home to Mara Renewables, a company that discovered a marine algae strain that is used to produce healthy Omega 3 nutritional supplements, without needing to harvest fish. It is brilliant.

In fact, the ocean technology sector is exploding in Dartmouth, especially through COVE, the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship. On the waterfront in Dartmouth, COVE is an incredible hub of ocean tech research and industry.

In the last mandate, I also advocated the zero-emission vehicle incentive. This incentive has been helping more Canadians afford to make the switch to an electric vehicle. However, we need to do more. We need to do more to encourage people to try out these vehicles, to ensure that the supply is there for all Canadians and to ensure more and more Canadians are aware of the benefits of electric vehicles.

We know that we need to do more to strengthen health care across the country. We remain committed to working with the provinces and territories to strengthen health care and to ensure that all Canadians receive the care they need when they need it.

Over the past few years, I have heard from constituents in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour who are forced to choose between putting food on the table or paying for the prescription drugs they need.

I know that throughout the previous mandate I sounded like a broken record, but Canada needs universal national pharmacare. The throne speech called pharmacare the missing piece of universal health care in the country, and I could not agree more. This government will keep working to make this a reality for all Canadians. I

can tell the folks back home in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour that I will not stop advocating for it.

Congratulations to you, Madam Speaker, and to all members in the House who were elected for the first time or re-elected.

• (1825)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, many constituents in my riding have been concerned with the throne speech making absolutely no reference to rural broadband connectivity. Internet is becoming increasingly more and more essential for participation in modern life and residents in rural and remote areas of our country are disadvantaged because of poor Internet connectivity.

Could the member speak to the importance of this issue and when the government will make it a priority?

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, I welcome the member to the House.

If he had been here before the last election, or if he was paying attention, he would know that we have made massive investments in connectivity. We will have high-speed Internet in every home in Canada by 2030. I ask the member to stay tuned. A lot of work has been done by our amazing ministers on this. We are going there by 2030.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on your post as well.

I was really happy to hear the previous member talk about the government's acceptance of universal pharmacare. That is something that we desperately want to work on with the government. We want to make sure it is single-payer and, in fact, universal. That is great. I am glad to hear it.

The member talked about people suffering and struggling. A former colleague of his talked about the housing problem. In my home community of London—Fanshawe, and in London, Ontario, 5,000 families are currently on the affordable or social housing wait-list. Prices in London have increased over the last 10 years by 70%, and that is simply something that the average family cannot keep up with.

People are certainly in a housing crisis. When I canvassed door to door, people told me they were concerned and worried. They see neighbours not being able to make ends meet. Things are getting tighter. These services are being downloaded on to municipalities by the federal government and it is simply a shame. People cannot keep up.

Will that government member commit to the NDP plan to build the necessary 500,000 units of affordable housing? It would help people not only across Canada, but certainly people in London—Fanshawe.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, our plan is better. Our housing strategy is the best housing strategy, the biggest investment in housing in the history of the Canadian government. I feel that when we have made these commitments and we have made these bilateral agreements with each province, we are going to see incredible growth in housing.

The member is correct. We hear this. The member heard me say this in my speech. When I knocked on doors in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, I heard that the people who are seeing success, the people who are benefiting from their success, are there to help the people who are falling through the cracks. That is one of the reasons why I am so proud of the people in my riding. Those doors are wide open for people who need help.

We are working toward a national housing strategy. We just signed our bilateral in Nova Scotia on August 23. The member for South Shore—St. Margarets was there that day to sign that with the minister of the Crown in Nova Scotia. This is going to be a game-changer for housing in our country.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is absolutely wonderful to see you in that chair. Congratulations.

I want to thank the hon. member for his work in the House.

One of the things that I heard a lot about during the campaign was the Canada child benefit and the difference that it was making. The member mentioned the national housing strategy. A number of things are making a difference in the lives of Canadians to lift them out of poverty.

The Address

I come from an affluent riding, there is no doubt about it, but there is still poverty in my riding and there are still people who are struggling. I can remember one family in particular with a number of children who talked about the amount of money they were getting every month. That money was going to buy food to put on their table.

I wonder if the hon. member could speak a bit about some of the things that we have done but more importantly, some of the things that we could do going forward to alleviate poverty in our country.

• (1830)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, the Canada child benefit will probably go down as one of the greatest social policies in Canadian history. People run toward me to give me a hug because of the Canada child benefit.

The Canada child benefit has changed lives in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. There are people who have not been able to put their children in hockey. They have not been able to put their children in organized sports or music lessons. They have not been able to put food in their children's lunch boxes to go to school in the morning.

All of that has changed in my riding. It has changed in a huge way. When I am done in this place, that will be one of the things that I will be the most proud of achieving during my life in politics.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 6:30 p.m. the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

Thank you all for your patience.

(The House adjourned at 6:31 p.m.)

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