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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, January 29, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

CANADA-UNITED KINGDOM TRADE CONTINUITY AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed from January 28 consideration of Bill C-18, the Canada—United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement Implementation Act.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-18.

I would like to begin by saying that I was particularly interested in two aspects of the process for passing this bill. The first is the way the Standing Committee on International Trade had to do its work with regard to the bill to bring CUKTCA into force. The second part of my speech will focus more on the historic aspect of this new temporary agreement and the impact it could have on the scare tactics that are generally used on separatists when it comes time to talk about Quebec and the way it will conduct future negotiations when it becomes independent.

Yesterday, I had several opportunities to listen to my learned colleagues discuss how parliamentarians were informed of the results of the negotiations between the U.K. and Canada. In the words of my hon. colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, parliamentarians, through no fault of their own, became actors in a theatre of the absurd when they had to receive witnesses in committee without having seen the content of the agreement.

I heard some bizarre responses from the other side of the House to concerns expressed by parliamentarians seated to the left of the Speaker. I heard members say that complaints about how parliamentarians were kept in the dark were futile and petty because, ultimately, both Conservative and Bloc members intended to vote in favour of the agreement and the implementation bill.

With all due respect, our government colleagues are confusing two very distinct concepts: the ends and the means. Here is an example. Say I have to deliver a package at a specific time. I can leave late, drive 160 km/h on the highway, pass cars, cut them off

and run red lights, and still arrive on time with a package in good condition that I can deliver like it is no big deal. I have achieved my end, but the means I employed were questionable at best. On the other hand, I could have left home on time, obeyed speed limits, got lost and backtracked, and even got stuck in traffic before finally arriving late with the package.

In both cases, the quality of the outcome in no way reflects the quality of the means used to achieve it. To make the comparison, one might agree with the contents of the deal and the legislation that it implements, but could still be justified in criticizing how parliamentarians were informed of its contents.

Let me give a very clear example of the situation. Parliamentarians were told repeatedly that it was no big deal that they could not see the contents of the agreement, since it was only meant to be transitional in any case. It was intended to bridge the gap between the previous agreement with the European Union and a new agreement to be renegotiated with the United Kingdom. If parliamentarians could have seen what was in the agreement, they would have noticed the missing sunset clause, in other words a deadline by which the two countries must have signed a final agreement. Such a clause, which would irrefutably confirm that the agreement before us is indeed only transitional, does not exist in the text.

We are required to negotiate within a certain timeframe, but not required to reach an agreement within that timeframe. It is unacceptable that parliamentarians were left in the dark, that the Standing Committee on International Trade received the text of the agreement the very day it was supposed to submit its report and recommendations on whether or not to approve its content.

The lesson in all this is that future negotiations for a final agreement not only could, but must offer more transparency to parliamentarians and all those who will be affected by the agreement. That was the approach during negotiations of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. Members of both the European Union and the provinces were invited to at least express their position and demands in connection with the future agreement.

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As far as the actual agreement is concerned, it should be noted that the British had the courtesy to at least admit that the negotiations were conducted a little late, at the last minute, something the Canadian government is still trying to refute.

With regard to the second aspect of my presentation on the issue of Quebec's independence, there is no denying the fearmongering we are subjected to when there are discussions on the future of an independent Quebec and any necessary future negotiations with other countries. The Brexit negotiations could have many similarities with the situation that will prevail right after a successful referendum.

The European Union is a customs union that provides for the free flow of goods and services within Europe with standardized rules for its trade relations with countries outside the EU. Member countries of the European Union do not negotiate directly with non-member countries. The European Union does so on their behalf, in the same way that Canada negotiates its international treaties with other countries instead of the provinces.

● (1005)

If Quebec were to leave Canada, it would do so the same way that the United Kingdom left the European Union. The U.K. withdrew itself from the agreements it held as part of the European Union and is seeking out new agreements as an independent state, relying on transitional agreements in the interim.

In the lead-up to the 1995 referendum, federalists sowed fear that an independent Quebec would be thrust into economic uncertainty and turmoil since, without agreements with other countries, it would undoubtedly sink into a dark hole, a legal vacuum with no trade partners. Federalists made it seem as though markets would start locking Quebec out as soon as the referendum was won and as though Quebec would be immediately removed from any Canadian agreements.

Professor Daniel Turp countered that argument by pointing out that countries party to agreements operate with the presumption of continuity. A new country popping up in the international community would therefore already have a connection to the trade partners of the country from which it seceded, and this would carry through until they negotiated a new agreement. However, at the time, Professor Turp's model applied only to multilateral treaties, in which the newly seceded party would be joining several other existing parties. It was unknown how the model would play out with bilateral trade agreements.

With Brexit, the United Kingdom just completed Professor Turp's analysis exercise regarding trade agreements, not just in theory but in very real and tangible terms. Leaving aside the issues of a lack of transparency and the last-minute work that I talked about at the beginning of my speech, one has to admit that the exercise is going relatively well, all things considered. The interim agreement that is about to be ratified maintains the status quo and ensures that there is no volatility or uncertainty in the trade relationship while the final agreement is being negotiated.

Even though Brexit put a nail in the coffin of the federalist argument that an independent Quebec would experience great economic uncertainty following a winning referendum, it is still interesting to

see the extent to which Brexit itself is serving, for some, as a federalist scare tactic when it comes to Quebec's desire to become independent. Former Conservative minister Michael Fortier, who recently became a columnist for *La Presse*, gave his first article the title of "A Sneak Preview of Quexit". In his article, Mr. Fortier painted a very sombre picture of the negotiations for the U.K.'s departure from the European Union. He talked about a cursory agreement that was also negotiated at the last minute and that failed to include many essential details, including financial services, that still need to be worked out. Mr. Fortier indicated that the people of Britain still do not really understand what their government negotiated. His article would have us believe that the people of Britain will one day regret voting in favour of Brexit.

I have talked to a number of people who are up on what is happening in the U.K., and I have asked them if they, too, see Brexit as a bad thing and if the British might ultimately come to regret their decision to leave the EU. As a separatist, I found their answer interesting. Financial services, which are one of the United Kingdom's main exports, if not the main export, are not yet governed by a formal agreement, but uncertainty about their future has not caused bankers to flee London and The City in droves, as some catastrophic scenarios predicted.

As for the people who voted yes to Brexit, it would be odd if they came to regret their choice one day because that vote got them what they wanted, and one of the things they wanted was the power to control their borders. That is something Quebec is clearly lacking right now in COVID times.

All the same, Brexit negotiations in general and a future final agreement between Canada and the U.K. in particular will continue to be of interest to parliamentarians. Bloc members will be paying even closer attention to get a sense of what awaits Quebec one day. It is not perfect, but despite its wrinkles, the likely outcome seems much less catastrophic than some predicted. One lesson Quebec can learn from this process is the importance of diligence and transparency.

● (1010)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for his well-written and well-thought-out speech. I do not share his view on some of the points he raised, but since we are in the heart of democracy, we must preserve this freedom of speech and differences of points of view.

Since we are talking about free trade and international trade, my colleague's speech reminded me that in 1988, under the government of the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, the Prime Minister of Canada, Canada signed a free trade agreement with the United States. This achievement opened the door to an extraordinary market, in part thanks to the support of some prominent, career separatists such as Bernard Landry or Jacques Parizeau. The 1988 free trade agreement opened the door to many international agreements. It is therefore important to remember that even if we do not have the same vision for the future of Canada or Quebec, free trade invites a unity that must be preserved.

The member said earlier that a number of federalists were attacking the possibility of an independent Quebec becoming fully empowered and pointing out that independence could cause economic hardship. Does the hon. member recall when former Quebec premier and PQ leader Pauline Marois herself said that Quebec independence could lead to five years of economic turbulence? I am not the one saying so; it was the former PQ premier Pauline Marois.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, yes, I remember it well.

I would of course be surprised if someone told me the day after winning a referendum that absolutely nothing would change, that it would be as if the vote never happened and that no negotiations were needed. After all, if we want to make an omelette we have to break a few eggs.

However, I think it would be a case of just minor economic disruptions, not catastrophic scenarios like those that are raised in the context of Brexit. The City was supposed to lose 75,000 bankers, but only 7,500 ended up leaving, so just 2% of the 400,000 who work in that business sector. The British people are only 29 days into their country's exit from the European Union, and some people are already talking about the end of the British Empire. I would prefer to avoid those kinds of catastrophic scenarios.

• (1015)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with a lot of the sentiments raised by my Conservative colleague in his question, and I want to pick up on the discussion between him and our hon. colleague who spoke a few minutes ago.

She at least seems to be acknowledging that there would be some disruption. She said it would be minor. As the Conservative member pointed out, other people say it would perhaps be more than that: five years' worth of disruption.

Can she define what she would consider to be minor? What is acceptable? What is an acceptable level of economic disruption for Quebec to seek, as she is saying, that form of independence? What would be an acceptable amount? Rather than just saying "minor", I would like her to quantify that.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, it is difficult for me to give an answer in just 30 seconds.

Government Orders

I think we should not lose sight of the fact that the vagaries of the economy and the secession of Quebec from Canada should not be assessed in terms of the GDP alone. There are many other issues that must be taken into consideration such as border control and, as my colleague mentioned yesterday, supply management, which successive Conservatives and Liberal governments have weakened.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue along these lines. We have been talking about the issues that an independent Quebec would face, but what about all the issues that Canada currently does not address in international agreements to the detriment of Quebec?

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, I will once again take this opportunity to mention supply management, the jewel in our crown, which should ensure that agriculture is not negotiable in the different trade agreements.

We hope that is also the case for culture and certain services. Once it becomes independent after a successful referendum, Quebec will be able to have its way in future international negotiations.

[English]

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook for sharing his time with me today.

It is an honour to rise on behalf of the Green Party to speak to the Canada-United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement, or TCA.

I want to recognize that I am speaking from the traditional unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

I have many points that I want to make about the TCA, and I will begin by saying that it is time to demand fairness for the 150,000 U.K. pensioners living in Canada. During these trade negotiations, we must not forget about them.

U.K. pensioners in other countries, including the U.S., receive annual rate increases tied to the rate of inflation. U.K. pensioners in Canada do not. This is unacceptable. We end up providing financial support to U.K. pensioners because of this discriminatory policy. Meanwhile, Canadian pensioners living in the U.K. receive annual rate increases. We need to demand the same for U.K. pensioners, and now is the time to do it.

The Green Party supports fair and equitable international trade. We want to ensure that trade agreements have enforcement provisions to protect indigenous rights and workers' rights, as well as consumer, health and environmental standards.

We are opposed to any agreement that contains investor-state dispute settlement, or ISDS, provisions. Trade agreements should not be corporate rights agreements in disguise. We oppose a regulatory race to the bottom. We want to ensure that people and the planet are put before corporate profits. That is the kind of fair trade we support.

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In February 2020, during the debate on CUSMA, the government made a commitment to be transparent and provide adequate support and notice for all new trade agreements. The government did not fulfill that commitment with this agreement.

For decades, there have been demands for increased transparency on how trade agreements are negotiated. I have followed trade agreement debates for many years, and it does not matter which party is in power. The opposition always complains that there is not enough transparency in the negotiations. That is why I tabled a private member's bill: the trade and foreign investment agreements transparency act, which is modelled on the European Union's process of transparent trade negotiations. The purpose of the proposed act is to create a transparent consultation and assessment process to ensure that Canada's trade, and foreign investment agreements, reflect the values and interests of Canada as a whole; take into account the perspectives of various groups, including local communities, civil society organizations and indigenous peoples; promote sustainable development and respect for the environment, and adhere to the principles of economic fairness, social justice and internationally recognized human rights. We need this kind of legislation in Canada to ensure a transparent process.

The TCA is a transitional trade agreement that replicates the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, or CETA. The TCA has no end date or sunset clause. If negotiations for this new agreement fail, the TCA could become permanent and bring the worst parts of CETA into our new trade relationship with the U.K. This is not something we can allow to happen. The stakeholder consultations that occurred for the TCA are completely inadequate for a permanent agreement.

The international trade and investment agreements that Canada has signed affect all Canadians, all Canadian businesses and all levels of government. They affect how we govern ourselves all the way down to the local level. This is especially true of CETA, and now the Canada-U.K. TCA.

The rules of CETA have the potential to affect public procurement at all levels of government. For projects above a certain budget level, CETA prohibits favouring local bids, applying local content or hiring quotas, or setting aside contracts for small and medium-sized enterprises or minority-owned businesses. CETA could affect indigenous rights and indigenous control over traditional lands when those lands are targeted by foreign resource extraction companies. Public services supplied on a commercial basis are automatically included under CETA unless they have been expressly excluded, which limits the government's ability to regulate foreign-service providers. If the government wants to provide public services or return a previously privatized service to the public sector, it will be open to challenges from foreign investors.

Canada's free trade agreements have hollowed out our manufacturing base. We focus on ripping and shipping raw resources, such as bitumen, logs and minerals, instead of prioritizing value-added domestic manufacturing and using our resources to maximize employment and diversify our economy.

• (1020)

We are vulnerable to fluctuations in commodity prices for raw resources. The downturn in oil prices and the cancellation of the

Keystone XL pipeline are both perfect examples of this vulnerability.

Canada's trade deficit with the EU has increased under CETA. EU companies have an easier time exporting to Canada than Canadian companies have exporting to the EU. A 2019 study shows that the only exports to the EU that have increased are fossil fuels and raw minerals, so CETA hurts value-added industries and benefits rip-and-ship resource extraction.

Canada made major concessions on intellectual property that hurt our pharmaceutical industry. Under CETA, Canada was forced to give drug companies patent extensions for innovative drugs. The EU was not bound by the same rules.

How has CETA helped us procure vaccines for COVID-19? The EU is threatening to block exports of vaccines to Canada until it has enough supply for its own citizens. If we still had a robust pharmaceutical industry in Canada, we would not be in this position.

Canada is one of the most open countries for trade and foreign direct investment. There have been more investor-state challenges against Canada than against any other country in the OECD. This is not a record to brag about. We give far too much power to foreign investors. Foreign investment is destroying home affordability. Foreign investment in long-term care homes has resulted in seniors living in horrendous conditions. Foreign investors have ripped and shipped resources from this country and left an environmental mess for taxpayers to clean up.

The ISDS provisions in CETA have been suspended for three years with the TCA. Why were these provisions not completely removed? Do we not trust our justice systems to make fair rulings when corporations feel they are being treated unfairly? There is no justification for a private tribunal system to deal with trade disputes between our two countries. The TCA actually states that if we have not agreed to new investor-state provisions in three years, then the CETA ISDS rules apply. We need to remove ISDS permanently from this agreement and from all of our trade agreements.

The pandemic has made it clear that we need to support our local supply chains. We have seen how the hollowing out of our manufacturing base and the offshoring of jobs has left us short on personal protective equipment. The Greens are particularly concerned about protecting our food supply chain. This makes sense for food security and also makes sense for lowering the carbon footprint of the food we consume. Canada has vast areas of farmland and is a net exporter of food, but we have become too specialized and too dependent on imports of food that can be produced right here.

Since CETA, a provisional agreement, came into force, the agricultural sector has lost 10% of its exports to Europe, while imports from the EU have increased by 10%. The CETA, along with other trade agreements, has undermined our supply management system, which provides stability for farmers. We need enforceable labour and environmental standards in trade agreements. The labour provisions in CETA are not enforceable, and the compliance mechanism is non-binding. The environmental provisions are weak, with no concrete obligations.

The CETA does not protect regulations to address climate change, and leaves climate action on the part of the government subject to investor challenges through the ISDS provisions. This is unacceptable to the Green Party. We would hate to see the U.K.'s climate accountability laws attacked by Canadian corporations using ISDS provisions.

Since 2008, the U.K. has had a real climate accountability law, with five-year increments set to carbon budgets. The U.K. has currently reduced greenhouse gas emissions 40% below 1990 levels, with a target to be 69% below 1990 levels by 2030. Pathetically, Canada has increased its greenhouse gas emissions by 21% above 1990 levels. This is one area where I would love to see Canada adopt U.K. standards.

In closing, CETA was disappointing and so is the Canada-U.K. TCA. Canadian governments need to do a better job of putting the interests of Canadians ahead of large corporations.

• (1025)

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague made a lot of great claims about issues that I think are very important. We should be listening to them.

I want to highlight something regarding pensions. Some people from the U.K. who came to Canada are collecting U.K. pensions. They will not get any of the increases that those in the U.K. get, yet Canadians living in the U.K. will get them. This could be very costly to Canada, as we are actually subsidizing people from the U.K. through some of our programs because of low rates that are not keeping up with the cost of inflation.

Does the hon. member agree that this should be looked into and that the government should be taking a serious approach to it? This is not free trade at all. This has to be looked into.

Mr. Paul Manly: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member for Hamilton Mountain. This is an egregious situation for pensioners in Canada who are not getting indexed increases to their pensions. This has to stop, and the government needs to take this opportunity, when it is negotiating a trade agreement with the U.K., to make sure this ends.

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The U.S. allows indexing. It has an agreement with the U.K. for indexed increases, as well as a with whole bunch of other countries, but here we are, a Commonwealth country, being abused by the U.K. Where is the allyship in that? It needs to end.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Green Party needs to acknowledge that Canada is a trading nation. We need trade. It is critical to our economy and supporting our middle class. The number of trade agreements we have achieved in the last five years is significant. At the same time, our employment prior to the pandemic grew by well over one million people, most of whom are full time.

The Green Party is always in opposition to all trade agreements. Can the member indicate any trade agreement that the Green Party has ever supported? Why does the Green Party not recognize the true value of trade and how Canada has benefited by it over the years? That is a reality.

• (1030)

Mr. Paul Manly: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has a very short memory because the Green Party caucus voted for the CUSMA agreement. We voted for it because the ISDS provisions were removed. It took away the corporate rights part of that agreement. The proportionality clause about exporting oil was taken out of that agreement as well.

We are looking for fair trade. We are looking for trade that protects the rights of workers, protects the environment and protects the health, safety and consumer standards that we hold dear. We want to see regulatory levels go up, not down; it is not a race to the bottom. We want to see measurements like the genuine progress indicator when we measure how well we are doing with trade so that we consider things like health, the economy, social good and the environment, rather than just how much we rip and ship raw resources for export from this country.

Government Orders

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with quite a number of the member's comments. With CETA, there were many components that the New Democrats were concerned about. The investor-state dispute settlement provisions were certainly one of them. The issue around the increased cost of drugs related to additional patent protections for pharmaceuticals was another. Restrictions on local content provisions for subnational procurement initiatives was a third element. Then, of course, the concessions resulting in lost market share for Canadian dairy products were also a component we were very concerned about. These are just some highlights.

The real question is this: Why would the government proceed with this transitional agreement without a sunset clause?

Mr. Paul Manly: Mr. Speaker, that is a really good question and it is something we are concerned about as well. This should have a termination date on it. We should be negotiating a fair and equitable trade agreement and dealing with all of the issues I outlined in my speech and the member outlined in her question.

We need to ensure that we protect our manufacturing base and stop hollowing it out. We have seen what this has done to our pharmaceutical industry. We have become too dependent on the export of raw resources, such as raw bitumen through pipelines, and when the price of oil changes or a pipeline project is cancelled, it affects our economy in a detrimental way.

We need to really examine how we do trade properly and take into consideration a long list of other things, aside from corporate profits.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to speak in the House of Commons, even if it is virtually.

As members know, I am from Nova Scotia. My riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook is quite diverse. We have a very strong Black community, Acadian community, fishing community and agricultural community. We are on the outskirts of the big cities of Halifax and Dartmouth. It is a beautiful place to visit, with lots of tourism.

Trade deals are extremely important not only to Canada, but also to Nova Scotia and my riding, and with trade deals, new opportunities are being opened up. They are about having access to more people and goods, which is extremely important.

We have had a number of successful trade deals in the last five years, since we have been in government. We signed off on the CUSMA, which is the Canada, U.S. and Mexico deal. Then we signed off on the CPTPP and the CETA, which is with the European Union, and now we are talking about this trade deal with the U.K.

When it comes to CUSMA, since 1993, Canadian and U.S. goods have doubled in trade, which is very impressive. With Mexico, we are trading nine times the amount we were prior to 1993.

No one can forget that when we were negotiating CUSMA, then president of the United States, Trump, made it very tough, to say the least. Of course, he wanted NAFTA out, wanted a new trade

deal and had all kinds of demands. He would tweet at three or four o'clock in the morning, saying there would be no deal unless Canada removed supply management. Canada won; we did not remove or end supply management.

Trump then tweeted that we had to end chapter 19, the dispute resolution mechanism. He said he did not want international judges, but American ones. Of course that was unacceptable to Canada, and did Trump win? No, Canada won.

Then he wanted the five-year sunset clause removed so that if we did not renegotiate every five years, the agreement was dead. He was pushing for that as well and was unsuccessful. We made a great deal and our government did an awesome job in that area.

When it comes to the CPTPP deal, it is very important for trade in the trans-Pacific partnership. We are seeing lower tariffs or no tariffs for Canadians in many areas. This means great jobs and opportunities for our companies. The duty-free access is up to 99%, which is amazing considering where we were before.

In the first year since we signed that deal, our two-way trade is over \$45 billion, which is a 3.36% increase. Frozen and fresh beef alone saw 143% in export growth to Japan. With Japan, we have seen the 5% tariff on certain products go down to zero, and tariffs with New Zealand are down to zero. For Vietnam, tariffs of 34% dropped to zero as well. As we can see, it was a very successful deal.

Now let us talk about CETA, because it is going to be a bridge with the U.K. This deal was with the European Union, and prior to the deal only 25% of goods were duty-free. Today, 98% are duty-free, and in seven years 99% will be duty-free with some removals. CETA allowed us the best market access to the European Union. It also boosted Canada's trade and allowed us to have access to over 500 million people and lots of opportunities.

● (1035)

In Nova Scotia, the trades we did with the EU were 98% duty free. On seafood, we used to have tariffs of 11% to 25%, which were removed. The tariff was 11% to 25%. That was removed. This new CETA deal was a success for Nova Scotians in the food industry, the agriculture industry, the manufacturing industry, the seafood and the fish industries because it eliminated 96% of the tariffs that were in place.

Today we are talking about the departure of the U.K. from the European Union, so this agreement is a crucial one, because we wanted to avoid disruption. This is a trade continuity agreement. In November, the Minister of Small Business and her U.K. counterpart announced the successful conclusion of this trade continuity agreement. It is, of course, an interim deal, but what is crucial is that it preserves the main benefit of CETA, including the elimination of 98% of the tariffs, so it is again very successful. This continuity deal is bridging between CETA, which is so important for Canada. It maintains our preferential access and it also bridges this deal, as I have mentioned on a few occasions.

We had to do this quickly. As of January 1, 2021, CETA no longer applied to the U.K. Two-way merchandise export trade between Canada and the U.K. was the largest market in Europe in 2019. It was worth \$29 billion just in 2019. The U.K. is also the fifth-largest partner, next to the United States, China, Mexico and Japan.

Beyond that, our relationship goes even further, because we have a long-lasting relationship of peace and we fought together in both world wars. We have a long-standing relationship with the United Kingdom.

With this deal, we are going to see opportunities for agriculture, fish and seafood exports. We are going to see opportunities in services and supplies, with guaranteed access for Canadian supplies to \$188 billion worth of U.K. procurement. Having access to their procurement would be a very important part.

We have entered negotiations, and the objective is that as soon as we ratify this interim deal, we have one year to begin negotiations, with the goal of a new bilateral trade agreement within the next three years. Our government will work hard to ensure high standards and an ambitious agreement, which will also focus on the environment, on women, on small business and on digital, which are all important pieces of our trade deals, past and future.

This interim trade deal is an opportunity for our exports. It is an opportunity for our services. It has given us access to their procurement, which is worth \$188 billion. It ensures high standards for labour, the environment and dispute resolution. It is also a commitment for subsequent negotiations. This is a great deal. We are moving forward and we are very pleased to move forward on this.

• (1040)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I could not help but notice that the member said that this deal had to be rushed because the timing was so important.

Why would we have to rush the deal? It seems that the Liberals never take action until we are in crisis mode. Why was this deal not worked on for months prior, if not years, instead of arriving at the 12th hour? Liberals did what they always do, creating their own chaos and having to rush deals through that we never have time to properly scrutinize.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has to realize that trade deals take time. They are negotiated. Of course, the U.K. had to work its way through the CETA agreement with the European Union. We have been in conversations with it now for quite a long time. This deal is bridging us to future negotiations, through

which we will have a much more comprehensive deal, but this agreement is ensuring the predictability and stability that is needed to move forward, as of day one, on January 1.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could comment on the fact that this was a real opportunity for Canada to do some interim measures.

There is nothing in the agreement that states it is interim. It could end up being permanent. We are dealing with one country only. This point has already been mentioned, but I will ask again why we did not take advantage of this opportunity to get agreement on reciprocity on increases for pensions for U.K. pensioners in Canada, just as Canadian pensioners in the U.K. get increased indexed pensions. Can the Liberals explain why that was not done and why it could not be done?

• (1045)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has to realize this is not a comprehensive agreement. That is what will follow.

I would say “absolutely not” to his suggestion that this could be the deal. It is agreed upon that the U.K. has one year from the ratification of this deal to begin official negotiations on a comprehensive deal, with the goal of achieving it within the next three years. Because of the relationship I shared earlier throughout my speech regarding Canada and the United Kingdom, I am convinced we will arrive at a conclusion that will not only be good for the U.K. but also very good for Canada and the Canadian business community to have access and the like.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke a lot about our fishery resources in his speech.

However, one specific sector in Quebec has often been neglected under the last few trade agreements. I am talking about the agricultural sector and the breaches in supply management.

The three most recent trade agreements opened up breaches in the supply management system. Producers are getting compensation, but it will never make up for everything they lost through these international agreements.

I would like to know what my colleague could do about that.

For example, would he be prepared to support Bill C-216, introduced by the member for Berthier—Maskinongé, which would prevent further breaches in supply management in international agreements?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her important question.

I can assure her that the agricultural sector is part of this negotiation and will be part of the more comprehensive final negotiation.

Government Orders

As my colleague pointed out, supply management is very important to Canada. We have protected the supply management system in all of the agreements that we have signed, even though we had to make some adjustments and compensate for losses in certain sectors.

We have not made any concessions this time. I sincerely hope that we will come to an agreement that does not take anything away from the sectors in question.

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to enter into debate on Bill C-16. Trade agreements are an important subject of debate within this House, and I am glad that we have this opportunity.

Before I forget, I will mention that I will be sharing my time with my friend, the member for Regina—Lewvan.

Before I get into the substance of my speech, since I am on my feet in the House, I will note that today is a day of remembrance for the tragic shooting that took place at a mosque in Quebec. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that we take the time today to consider the implications of hate. Likewise, two days ago was International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Two poignant days this week remind us all of the tragic consequences of hate.

We are entering into debate on one of the constitutionally significant roles that this place plays: Canada's relationship with other global jurisdictions. In that context, there is no more important relationship than the one we have with Great Britain, the United Kingdom.

We share a governmental system. In fact, the opening lines of our Constitution refer to this government as being based in principle upon the Westminster system of governance. Certainly we share a lot of history, and even the symbolism around this place and in many of our provincial flags represents that long-shared history.

The United Kingdom has undertaken some pretty significant changes over the last number of years, as we have seen with Brexit, the exit of the United Kingdom, after a referendum, from the European Union. Last year it negotiated the intricacies of that departure, bringing us to the point where we are today, debating a continuity agreement as a stopgap between the previous CETA and what we expect will be a more comprehensive trade agreement in the coming years. The United Kingdom is acknowledging what it has gone through over the last year as well, in exiting the European Union while securing trade agreements with many partners in Europe and around the world.

It is a little troubling, because in typical government fashion and in direct contradiction to commitments made in this place, this process was brought forward at the 11th hour. The parliamentary secretary who spoke before me made a statement that trade deals take time. Yes, that is absolutely correct, but it is incumbent upon the government to ensure that steps are taken to anticipate changes.

We knew for a number of years that the circumstances relating to the U.K.'s position in Europe would be changing significantly. It is disappointing, quite frankly, that we now find ourselves debating this continuity agreement at the 11th hour, while other comparable

jurisdictions have taken steps to go much further than what we are debating here today.

It is the opinion of many that had the government been more proactive, had the government worked more diligently to ensure that steps were taken early, we would be in a very different position. Because Canada is a trading nation, we have spent a lot of time this week discussing our trading relationship with our neighbours to the south. As well, I believe the United Kingdom is our fourth-largest trading partner. All of these sorts of agreements have massive implications upon our economy, upon jobs and upon the security of Canadians.

● (1050)

One of the troubling trends we see with the government is that it seems to not take seriously the need for certainty, investment certainty and certainty of the economic circumstances that allow people to do things like plan for their future.

A trade agreement is a massive undertaking. Negotiations between two jurisdictions are complex. In the case of the United Kingdom, we have similar legal systems and a long history. We share a Queen. We could not be closer than that. There are massive intricacies involved in the negotiations. When we see these eleventh hour deals brought forward, it brings a level of uncertainty. Although many may suggest that it does not have an impact on the ground for regular Canadians, it has a significant impact. Jobs are impacted each and every day by the certainty of ensuring that investment has a clear path. When companies or entities are looking to invest in jurisdictions, they want that certainty. They want that understanding that there will not be a massive upheaval in jurisdictions, that there will be consistency in the long term.

This is really at the heart of why it is so troubling that we are debating this. We are actually debating this after the U.K. left the European Union, although work has been done to ensure there are further stopgaps that provide a bridge between the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union, which took place the last day of last year. Before the bill is passed, some significant work has been done to ensure there are measures to bridge that. Now we are debating another bridge to which we will see within three years very clearly that we will enter into more fulsome negotiations for further trade agreements. That speaks to some of the challenges we face and why this debate is so important.

Many aspects of the bill reflect similarly the agreement we negotiated with CETA. I would like to compliment the former Conservative government led by Stephen Harper and specifically the member for Abbotsford, who was the trade minister for a good portion of the Harper government's tenure. There is no question that the Conservative Party is the party of free trade. When that member spoke on the bill the other day, he brought incredible wisdom to the conversation and the clear fact that many of the deals that the Liberal government had taken credit for was because of the heavy lifting done by the previous Conservative government.

Statements by Members

In fact, when it comes to CETA, we saw the panic on the faces of Liberal ministers when they almost screwed up. They had to rush back into negotiations with Brussels and other jurisdictions to save the deal because they decided to change things. Then we saw how they were quick to jump into negotiations with the United States, and we came out behind in the new NAFTA or the “hafta” agreement. With respect to the CPTPP, much of the heavy lifting was done by the previous government.

There are significant details I would love to get into, but I do not have the time. However, the Liberals will claim that they are all about free trade. The reality is that even in the 1993 election, they ran on a campaign of two major promises. The first was to get rid of the GST, but I still see GST on everything. The second was to pull out of NAFTA. However, when they saw the value of trade, they seemed to have changed their tune. I am proud to be part of a party that has worked diligently to increase trade globally.

I know a number of members have brought forward the need to address some of the pension disparity that U.K. expatriates have in Canada. I often hear from constituents who have uncertainty regarding their pensions. I would hope that as the government moves forward into the fulsome trade agreement, it would use its position at the bargaining table to advocate for U.K. pensioners who live in Canada and, in some cases, have lived in Canada for many years.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1055)

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change released a list of the 325 conditions that the CN intermodal project must meet before it could proceed with any development in my riding of Milton. I recognize that these conditions address some of the concerns raised by my community and that this conditional approval is a technical assessment not an endorsement by the federal government. However, let me be very clear that these conditions do not change my position. I have always advocated for a rejection of this project and I remain strongly opposed.

Today, I want to directly address this to CN. Its own regulations recommend against new residential development within a thousand metres of an existing intermodal facility. Therefore, why would CN consider building one that same distance from a strong, growing and vibrant residential neighbourhood?

This fight is far from over. Miltonians will not give up. I will not give up. For me and our community, our top priority will always be protecting our people's health and a clean environment. In instead, I encourage CN to invest its time and energy in a community that welcomes this development and all the benefits it claims an intermodal will bring.

• (1100)

[Translation]

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN MONTMAGNY— L'ISLET—KAMOURASKA—RIVIÈRE-DU-LOUP

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Guy Drouin from CDC Ici Montmagny L'Islet, Lysanne Tanguay from the Centre d'entraide familiale de la MRC de Montmagny, Karine Jean from the Carrefour d'initiatives populaires de Rivière-du-Loup, Christiane Vincent from the Centre d'action bénévole des Seigneuries, Bernard Gaudreau from the Comité de la famille et des aînés de la Ville de Montmagny, Mireille Lizotte from Moisson Kamouraska, Gilles A. Pelletier from Saint-Vincent-de-Paul de Rivière-du-Loup, Paule Giasson from the Maison de secours La Frontière, Daniel Darveau from Soupe au bouton, Mélanie Dumont from the CDC du Kamouraska and all their employees and big-hearted volunteers work to provide food services to people in need, particularly during the Christmas season. I thank them for that. Without them, our communities would not be what they are today. With the help of my friend Francis Paradis, I myself was able to deliver Christmas hampers last year. When everyone is going through hard times, sharing is good for the soul.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your commitment to others, and thank you to the generous donors.

* * *

[English]

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this day four years ago Canada lost six brave men: Mamadou Tanou Barry, Azzedine Soufiane, Abdelkrim Hassane, Ibrahima Barry, Aboubaker Thabti and Khaled Belkacemi.

We remember these six men whose lives were cut short by an act of terror when a gunman stormed the mosque in Quebec City and opened fire. The hatred of one took six from us and injured 19 others. The Islamophobic rage of one killer left 17 children orphaned.

As a Muslim man and a father of two young boys, I cannot fathom the sense of loss that those families feel to this very day. As an MP, I can commit to do better, to do better by calling out Islamophobia by name, to do better by taking action on hatred whenever and wherever it rears its ugly head, including the increasing radicalization we are seeing online.

My hope is that all of us in this chamber can unite in common cause as Canada commemorates January 29 as a day of remembrance of the mosque attack and action against Islamophobia. Those six lives taken deserve no less.

*Statements by Members**[Translation]***RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on January 29, 2017, at 7:45 p.m., worshippers were gathering for prayers at the Quebec City mosque. In that moment, no one could have anticipated the horror that awaited them. A few minutes later, hatred and racism in their worst form took the lives of six people and injured eight others. Some will be scarred for life.

Today we mark the fourth anniversary of that tragedy. This sad chapter of our history should serve as a reminder that we all have a duty to never stop fighting racism in all its forms, including Islamophobia. It was a weapon that took lives at the Quebec City mosque, but often that weapon takes the form of words that can be loaded with hate or intolerance, fuelling tensions between communities and ultimately inciting violence. As parliamentarians, we must lead by example. Let us be more attentive to the potential repercussions of our words. This sad anniversary of the Quebec City mosque shooting should remind us that racism and hate do exist in this country and that sometimes, they can kill.

Let us work together so that these six people did not die in vain.

* * *

CONSTANCE PROVOST

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to Constance Provost, a great lady from my region. She passed away on January 9 at the age of 96, surrounded by her four children.

Ms. Provost was a woman of vision and character. In 1983, she was the first woman to be elected mayor of the City of Gatineau. The extraordinary Ms. Provost was warm, energetic and a unifying force. These qualities helped her win three elections and she remained in office until 1995. Her retirement project was the community. She was interested in everything, including Scouts, the United Way and Aylmer's 150th anniversary.

[English]

As Aylmer's well-loved mayor, her legacy will be felt for generations. She preserved our patrimonial heritage, attracted businesses and made room for affordable housing. Madame Provost often said, "Aylmer has it all!" To that, I will add "We do, Madam Mayor, thanks to you." May she rest in peace.

* * *

COVID-19 VACCINES

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the discovery of insulin by Canadian researchers led by Drs. Fred Banting and Charles Best. There was a time when the world would be beating a path to Canada's door to secure the next great medical cure, but no more.

The vaccine crisis Canadians face today is a direct result of the bad decisions made by Liberal governments, starting in 1969 with Pierre Trudeau and continuing to this day with his son. Bad legisla-

tion passed by the Liberals in 2017 means Canadians will always be at the back of the line for new medicine.

The Prime Minister never should have jeopardized the health of Canadians with bad deals like the one with communist China. The lives of Canadians are too important to trust to this Prime Minister.

* * *

● (1105)

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, January and February can be difficult at the best of times when it comes to mental health, and the economic and health crisis brought on by this pandemic have added to an already difficult time. Whether I am speaking to parents, teachers, nurses, business owners, seniors or students, one thing is clear: Everyone is having a hard time coping.

[Translation]

That is why I am rising today to thank the incredible people who work at the organizations Le Versant, Le Tournant, Tel-jeunes and Clinique externe de santé mentale pour jeunes et adultes. They are working hard to provide mental health supports to the people in my community. Their work is extremely important. They literally save lives every day.

[English]

I also want to thank those from our community who have shared their stories, like Svetlana Chernienko, Lee Haberkorn and so many others. I encourage all members of my community to reach out to a friend or family member or to one of the many organizations available to them.

Let us do all we can to care for ourselves and each other, and in doing so, we will get through this.

* * *

PEARSON AIRPORT LIMO AND TAXI SERVICE

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I stand proud as the daughter of a taxi driver, but I make this statement with great sorrow.

The following men were part of my father's extended taxi family, and I would like to take this opportunity in the House of Commons to commemorate the lives of the taxi and airport limo drivers from the Region of Peel who lost their lives due to COVID-19: Kamal Dhami, Gurdeep Dhugga, Paul Grewal, Maroun Haddad, Ki-oh Kim, James Wu, Lawrence Zah, Akashdeep Grewal, Abdullah, and Karam Singh Punian.

We thank them for their dedicated service.

Statements by Members

They worked around the clock to make sure others made it home safe after long flights. With Pearson Airport Limo and Taxi Service, one could always look forward to a great conversation and service with a smile. These men were at the front lines of the pandemic, having to deal with a virus we knew very little about when it made its way into our nation.

These drivers were loved by their communities, families and friends, and provided an important service to everyone in the GTA. We will not forget their service or their memory.

* * *

COVID-19 VACCINES

Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year has been a challenge for Canadians across the country. Our seniors have not been able to visit with their families, and small business owners who invested their life savings into their businesses have lost everything.

We did have hope this year that the nightmare may be coming to an end, yet recently, Pfizer announced that the deliveries of the vaccine to countries would be significantly cut. While the rest of the world called Pfizer and got their delivery schedules fixed, our Prime Minister did absolutely nothing until our Conservative caucus called on him to take immediate action.

Vaccines are critical to reopening our economy and securing jobs here in Canada. Because of this Prime Minister's ignorance in making vaccinations a priority, Canadians are losing hope in his leadership.

Conservatives are calling on the Prime Minister to immediately address this issue and start making the vaccination of Canadians a priority.

* * *

COVID-19 VACCINES

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the pandemic, our government has been committed to protecting the health and safety of Canadians, which is why we secured the most diverse portfolio and the highest number of COVID-19 vaccines doses per capita of any country in the world.

[Translation]

Now that free, safe and effective vaccines are available, we are working around the clock to distribute them to the provinces and territories so that Canadians can be vaccinated as quickly as possible.

[English]

In my riding of Sudbury, public health officials have been hard at work all week administering these vaccines to residents of long-term care homes.

In the coming weeks, vaccines will be provided to other vulnerable populations and front-line health workers in Sudbury and across northern Ontario. In fact, the Canadian Armed Forces have been commissioned to support vaccine efforts in 32 communities of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation in the region.

[Translation]

We have already shipped more than one million doses to the provinces and territories, and we will be receiving six million doses for distribution by the end of March.

[English]

The residents of Sudbury are very pleased our government is focused on beating this virus and keeping Canadians safe.

* * *

● (1110)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Keystone XL would have brought 2,800 well-paying jobs to several provinces, including Saskatchewan. The NDP and the Liberal Party, through their policies, continue to talk down our energy sector and show disdain for the hard-working men and women who go to those jobs every day.

To add some perspective to this conversation, the world will continue to use around 100 million barrels of oil a day for up to the next 30 to 40 years, according to reports from McKinsey and the EIA. It is time that we start thinking about the real choice we have. We continue to watch massive oil tankers come through Canadian waterways with foreign oil. Are we going to choose to use ethical oil from Canadian companies that reach the highest standard of environmental regulations in the world?

It is time for us to take the decision of whether we are going to use Canadian oil in our homes, businesses and vehicles. This can and should be done, because it will ensure that we are going to secure the future for the next generation of Canadians.

* * *

COVID-19 VACCINES

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as someone who has spent much of my life playing, and then coaching, hockey, I know first-hand how leadership can make or break a team. There has been much said throughout the pandemic about a team Canada approach. Unfortunately, it seems team Canada, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, is falling farther down the standings. One might even say we are becoming the Ottawa Senators in the race to secure vaccines.

This week Canada will receive zero doses of vaccines. Next week we will receive 80% fewer than originally scheduled, and the week after that there will be even fewer. The fact is that compared with our neighbours to the south, even when accounting for population size, the United States has vaccinated three times more people than we have.

Statements by Members

Canada is sitting 22nd in the standings and looking for leadership. It is time for the Prime Minister to stop sending out others to give Canadians the bad news and start showing leadership and doing his job. Conservatives are ready to show that leadership to secure our health care, to secure our economy and to secure our future.

* * *

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today marks four years since the horrific attack on le Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec, the Quebec City mosque massacre. Fuelled by Islamophobia and hate, an armed man walked into the mosque during peaceful prayer and took the lives of six people, wounding many others.

In the wake of the news of this terror, which devastated Muslim communities, many Canadians and many diverse faith groups rallied together. Here in Victoria, people joined hands to create a circle of protection around our Muslim neighbours, but since that attack, we have continued to see a frightening rise in extremism, white supremacy and anti-Muslim views in Canada, as well as a troubling increase in anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies, primarily targeting Muslims, around the world.

While today we remember those who lost their lives and those who were impacted by this tragedy, we must also stand up and speak out against hate in our communities, online and wherever we find it. We have a duty to send a clear message that racism and Islamophobia have no place here.

* * *

[Translation]

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is the four-year anniversary of the atrocity at the Quebec City mosque.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to honour the memory of the six men whose lives were stolen for the sole reason that they were Muslim. We stand with their loved ones, their families, the wounded and everyone who was there at the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec on that dark January 29.

I want to stress that every Quebecker must be able to practise their religion freely and without fear if they so choose.

I want the Muslim community of Quebec, and of Quebec City specifically, to know that they can count on all of us as allies to ensure that such violence never happens again.

Our thoughts are with you today and in the future.

* * *

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the duty to remember is a duty of honour and respect.

Four years ago, six Canadians in Quebec City, brought together by their faith, were shot to death by a murderer. This was an act of terrorism inspired by Islamophobia.

This was an unspeakable tragedy that will stay with us forever. It shook us to our very core as human beings. Islamophobia and all forms of violence, all phobias based on religious beliefs, have no place here and must be unreservedly condemned and denounced.

We have a duty to identify and bluntly condemn all forms of violence, whether it be armed violence, physical violence, verbal violence, psychological violence or violence on social media. Discrimination in all forms will never be acceptable in Canada.

Mamadou Tanou Barry, Ibrahima Barry, Khaled Belkacemi, Abdelkrim Hassane, Azzedine Soufiane and Aboubaker Thabti, we will honour your memory and remember you always.

* * *

● (1115)

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, four years ago, a peaceful place of worship was rocked by an act of terror.

Ibrahima Barry, Mamadou Tanou Barry, Khaled Belkacemi, Abdelkrim Hassane, Azzedine Soufiane, Aboubaker Thabti. They were fathers and husbands, loved by many.

Yesterday, our government announced its intention to make January 29 a national day of remembrance of the Quebec City mosque attack and action against Islamophobia.

We are wearing a green square to honour the lives that were lost. Mine was made by Alina, my seven-year-old daughter. My dream is for her to live in safety and free from discrimination.

Today we are united in remembrance and solidarity. By marking this day, we are pledging to fight Islamophobia together.

The Deputy Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the attack at the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec four years ago.

I invite hon. members to rise and observe a minute of silence.

[A moment of silence observed]

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we learned that the European Union is going to require vaccine manufacturers to obtain authorization before exporting those vaccines. That is very bad news for Canada, which is already behind schedule. Quebec is ready to administer 250,000 doses per week.

How many Quebecers will be deprived of the vaccine because of this decision?

[English]

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government and I have been in contact with my EU counterpart. As the Prime Minister said in this House, the EU measures will not affect the shipment of vaccines to Canada. We will continue to work with the European Union, as we have throughout this pandemic, to ensure that critical health and medical supply chains remain open and resilient.

We share the sense of urgency Canadians have to ensure access to vaccines as rapidly as possible, and our government is operating with this sense of urgency every single day.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no point in telling us over and over again that Canada bought the most doses, when the government cannot get its hands on them.

We need 60 million doses in order to vaccinate all Canadians by the end of September. We are now ranked 20th for vaccine doses administered, and we are falling further and further behind every week. The contracts were poorly negotiated, and this is endangering people's lives.

What will it take for the government to wake up?

• (1120)

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, we are taking urgent action to get the vaccine doses.

We have clearly shown Canadians that we can procure vaccines. We will receive six million doses by the end of the first quarter of 2021, and we will have a sufficient number of already approved doses by the end the third quarter, the end of September, to ensure that every Canadian who wants the vaccine will have access to it.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 60 million doses, two doses per Canadian, is what is needed to meet the target set by the government. That means two million doses a week. We know that we are not receiving any doses this week and very few next week.

How does the Prime Minister plan to catch up on this unacceptable delay?

Oral Questions

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have informed all the provinces and territories, as well as all Canadians, of the number of doses we are expecting.

We will receive enough doses by the end of the third quarter with the two approved vaccines alone. We will be able to provide the vaccine to every Canadian who wants one by the end of September.

* * *

[English]

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our oil is not flowing, and our vaccines are not landing. The buy American policy is set to put thousands of Canadians out of work. President Biden had these policies as a key part of his campaign platform. The Liberals had plenty of time to prepare for this possibility.

Will the Prime Minister do something for Canadian workers and immediately act to protect Canadian jobs?

[Translation]

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always stand up for the interests of Canadians.

The Prime Minister spoke with the President and underscored that workers must benefit from our integrated supply chains. The Prime Minister and the President agreed to communicate with one another to avoid limiting trade between our two countries. We are working together to support a sustainable economic recovery.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a pattern here. The Prime Minister just surrendered on Keystone XL, and he is surrendering on Line 5. Now he is throwing his hands up and doing nothing to protect Canadian jobs from this buy America policy. Our previous government worked with the Obama administration to get an exemption from its buy American policies.

To get our economy back on track, Canadians need a government that will secure jobs now and for the future, so will the Liberals push for an exemption, yes or no?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will always stand up for Canadian businesses and Canadian workers. The Prime Minister and the President have agreed to consult closely to avoid any measures that may constrain economic growth in and bilateral trade between our two countries. Canada is the largest export market for the United States. We buy more goods from the U.S. than we do from China, the U.K. and Japan combined. Canada is the number one customer for more than 32 states.

Oral Questions

Yes, we will continue to work to stand up for Canadian businesses and the Canadian people so we can grow middle-class jobs here in Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, epidemiologists are sounding the alarm. The only way to control the pandemic is to ensure that most Quebecers are vaccinated before COVID-19 variants spread across Quebec. Ontario public health officials revealed yesterday that not only is the British variant already well established, but it is expected to become the most widespread strain in the province by March. That is very bad news, especially since we will be receiving 70% fewer Pfizer doses than anticipated.

What is the Prime Minister doing to ensure that we get the vaccines he promised?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working closely with the provinces and territories to make sure they have the supports, tools and resources necessary to deploy the vaccine as it arrives in Canada. I am extremely grateful to the hard-working ministers of health from all across the country, who are doing exactly that. We will continue to work together to protect the health of Canadians, including that of Quebecers.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the bad news just keeps piling on.

First we were told there would be no Pfizer doses this week. Then we were told there would be 50% less than expected after that. Then we were told there would actually be 70% fewer doses. The government keeps saying that it can still meet its targets for March, but of course people are losing faith. We currently rank 20th in the world in terms of vaccination, and that downward trend continues.

What is the Prime Minister doing?

• (1125)

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have clearly communicated the information about vaccine deliveries to the provinces and territories. I want to reiterate for my hon. colleague that we will be receiving six million vaccine doses by the end of the first quarter, and that we will keep increasing the number of doses received by Canada and Quebec throughout the year so that by the end of September every Canadian who wants a vaccine will get one of the two approved vaccines.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, Pfizer delivery interruptions delayed vaccine doses to Canadians. Then EU export controls threatened our supply. Now reports from think tanks are raising alarms. According to the U.K.-based Economist Intelligence Unit, the majority of Canadians may have

to wait six months longer than Americans and Europeans for vaccines and will not be vaccinated until mid-2022.

Canada is already falling behind virtually dozens of countries regarding vaccinations. Why is the Liberal government failing to secure timely vaccines? Can it guarantee that every Canadian will be fully vaccinated by this September?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have set out many times, and shared with provinces and territories, we have a delivery schedule of vaccines that have already been approved that gets us to a sufficient number, whereby every Canadian who wishes to receive a vaccine by the end of September will have access to one.

Of course, we have procured other vaccines that are in the middle of regulatory approval or have yet to begin that process, and those will add to that total. When we get to all seven procured vaccines, it will be enough to vaccinate Canadians 10 times over. We have a very diversified portfolio. We are going to continue to work urgently to get those vaccines into Canada and to vaccinate Canadians.

* * *

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberals' pay equity regulations, which have been delayed again, Canadian women could be forced to wait until 2029 or longer to receive equal pay. This is after already waiting 50 years since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women called for it. Every year that passes is another year where the so-called feminist government participates in wage discrimination.

Why are Liberals content with discriminating against women for another decade?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member on pay equity. Pay equity is not just the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do. That is why we passed proactive pay equity legislation in 2018. When Canadian women can count on equal pay for work of equal value, our economy grows stronger.

Karen Jensen has been appointed to serve as Canada's first employment pay equity commissioner, and she is developing tools and resources to support employers with implementation. Regulations were released for consultation last fall, and once finalized, they will complement the act and allow it to be brought into force later this year.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the recently announced EU export restrictions on vaccines, CBC's Janyce McGregor has just recently tweeted, "I don't see anything in these regs exempting Canada or other countries with FTAs with the EU from having their shipments monitored and caught up in the fresh red tape of these new authorization requirements."

This is pretty bad. It is definitely going to affect Canadians' supply of vaccines. Does the minister care to comment?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been in contact with my EU counterpart as recently as yesterday, and the Prime Minister has spoken to the President. We are assured that the EU measures will not affect the shipment of vaccines to Canada. We will continue to work with the European Union, as we have throughout this pandemic.

We absolutely understand the urgency, and in fact, we are working with that sense of urgency every single day to make sure that Canadians get vaccinated.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are already experiencing a major shortfall of vaccines. Our math says that, on average, two million doses per week are needed to meet the target of September. We are nowhere close to that. All, or a majority, of the vaccines the government has supposedly procured are produced in the EU, and now the EU is saying there will be export restrictions. There are no exemptions for countries with free trade agreements and the EU has not said that Canada is exempted. Given we are seeing such a shortfall, and I ask members to forgive me, but I do not think I can take the government's word for it.

What has it secured in terms of assurances that we will get these vaccines and not be part of these new restrictions?

• (1130)

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we continue to work with the European Union. We are absolutely seized with this. We understand how important this is and how urgent this is, which is why I spoke to my EU counterpart yesterday and why the Prime Minister spoke to the President. We will continue to work with the European Union on this matter, and as I said earlier, the EU measures will not affect the shipment of vaccines to Canada.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the last election, the Liberal government promised to plant two billion trees.

Here we are over a year later and not only has it failed to plant even a single tree, but the non-partisan parliamentary budget office says that announced funding is only half of what is required. I know the government is fond of poorly thought-out plans, but this is ridiculous.

Oral Questions

Will the government be cutting its tree target in half or doubling the money it is planning to spend?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me quote the PBO report, which I am sure my colleague has read.

Parameters used for this estimate are based off data from Forests Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program and may not accurately reflect program costs under the federal government's 2 Billion Tree program.

That says it all.

We are partnering with the provinces and territories, indigenous groups and NGOs to make sure that we get it right. We are committed to combatting climate change, and planting two billion trees is a part of our ambitious plan.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not me saying the government's plan is barely half of what is required, but the non-partisan parliamentary budget office. Not only that, but the report's numbers are based on 1,500 trees a hectare.

The government said it would start planting urban trees first, which are far more expensive per tree than even the budget office's figures. It is simply not credible for the government to make this happen with its recklessly drawn-up plan.

What is the actual cost going to be for Canadians, or is the government just simply planning to abandon the two-billion tree promise, like it has with so many other commitments?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to planting two billion trees, and the first trees will be in the ground this spring.

The PBO report only considers the cost of planting trees in Ontario. The PBO also states that the estimates "may not accurately reflect program costs" because of their narrow scope.

We will be planting several different types of trees across Canada based on what is native to the local environment. Generations of Canadians for decades to come will recognize the importance of this initiative.

*Oral Questions***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, notable Hong Kong pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong has been sentenced to a year in prison for participating in peaceful protests. Three weeks ago, 53 lawmakers and pro-democracy activists were arrested for violating Hong Kong's draconian national security law.

The alarming threat from the Chinese Communist Party is escalating rapidly. Meanwhile we found out at the immigration committee this week that the Liberals' support policies for Hong Kong have been delayed without notice, and they were already lacklustre to begin with.

Will the minister stand with Hong Kong and finally introduce a real refugee and asylum program to bring pro-democracy activists to Canada?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada joined the international community in condemning the mass arrests in Hong Kong of more than 50 lawmakers and activists.

These arrests fundamentally contradict the civil and political guarantees that have been made to the people of Hong Kong under the Basic Law. This demonstrates that the national security law is being used as a tool in escalating repression of peaceful, political opposition and grassroots electoral politics.

The arrests are an assault on representative democracy, the rule of law and a further erosion of the one country, two systems principle. Canada will continue to hold the authorities in Beijing and—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Kherin Dimalanta is a live-in caregiver from the Philippines who is working for two doctors on the front lines of the COVID crisis in Ottawa. Sadly, Kherin was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease, and as a result, her immigration status has been put in limbo.

The Liberals have been sitting on her humanitarian and compassionate application for a year. Without approval, she will be forced to return to the Philippines, where she will not have access to proper medical care and will die, leaving her two children motherless. Kherin is a taxpaying member of Canadian society and is contributing the COVID effort. The delay is completely un-Canadian.

Will the Minister of Immigration expedite Kherin's case?

• (1135)

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we realize that decisions on immigration cases can have a profound effect on the lives of individuals. Every case must be assessed on its merits, fairly, and in accordance with Canada's laws. Every case is unique and is evaluated according to the individual circumstances.

As my colleague knows, I cannot discuss the details of a specific case due to privacy laws. I would be pleased to work with her on specific cases.

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AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government is completely ignoring the aerospace industry. At least 40% of the sector's workers have been laid off since the beginning of the pandemic.

Obviously, it is not a good time to be working in the airplane manufacturing business, since airplanes around the world are grounded. On Monday, Unifor published a plan for getting out of the crisis. Workers are calling for a comprehensive policy for the aerospace industry. Canada is the only major world player that does not have one.

When will Ottawa take action to help the aerospace industry?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that the aerospace industry is extremely important in Quebec, and not just in Montreal, where I live. It is important for exports and for Quebec's and Canada's international reputation. It is also important for local, well-paying jobs and for research and development. We will always continue to support the aerospace industry.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec is a world leader in the aerospace industry, and Ottawa is ignoring our industry.

We need a comprehensive policy to build the future. We need to ensure that government procurement, particularly in the area of defence, has economic spinoffs here. We also need to ensure that federal aid policies that benefit businesses also benefit workers and protect their jobs. The aerospace industry is exclusive to Quebec and employs 43,000 Quebecers.

When will Ottawa take action to help these people get through the pandemic?

[English]

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry (Innovation and Industry), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to assure my esteemed colleague that we recognize that the aerospace and aviation industries are very significant and we will always be there for their workers. Through our economic response plan, we have put in place extensive measures to help Canadian businesses weather COVID-19. Our government will always stand with the sector and the workers we are so incredibly proud of.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a unanimous consent motion was moved yesterday to strike an advisory committee to select the next governor general. The Liberals refused the motion.

Does the Prime Minister think that the screening process he used for Julie Payette was better?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every Canadian, as I indicated yesterday, deserves to go to work each day in a safe workplace environment, free from harassment. That includes the hardworking and dedicated employees who work at Rideau Hall. We took this matter very seriously from the beginning and put in place an independent review process. Following that process, the Prime Minister accepted Madame Payette's resignation, and we are in the process of reviewing the next steps.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, because of the Prime Minister's failure, the Canadian taxpayer is on the hook for \$350,000 a year in pension and expense account costs for the former governor general. How is the Prime Minister going to show Canadians that his continual lack of good judgment will not have to keep being paid for by their hard work?

• (1140)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the former governor general's annual annuity will be dealt with in accordance with the Governor General's Act, something that has been in place for many years. The reimbursement of expenditures of the former governor general is the responsibility of the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General. The new leadership at Rideau Hall will be able to address the serious concerns that are raised in good part, if—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

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AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, employees at the Regina International Airport are beyond worried. They have been told outright that their jobs are being eliminated and that the control tower will be shut down. The control tower is an integral part of the safety of air traffic in Saskatchewan, and it is important because of our proximity to 15 Wing air base in Moose Jaw.

The people of Saskatchewan can tell when they are being hosed, so will the minister please explain his contradiction from yesterday when he said that the report was not finished, but layoff notices still went out?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the safety and security of the travelling public is our top priority. Nav Canada is undertaking several

Oral Questions

studies to assess level-of-service needs. No decisions have been made. It is important to note that any changes in the levels of service proposed by Nav Canada will be subject to a rigorous safety assessment. The process provides for full consultation with all affected stakeholders. No compromise on safety will be tolerated.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know what the minister is trying to do. I come from a farm in Saskatchewan and we pride ourselves on having common sense and knowing when the wool is going to be pulled over our eyes. The people of Saskatchewan have a new phrase for this. It is called “getting Liberalled”. The minister yesterday said that no final decision was made, and now I have layoff notices from these employees. Either he is contradicting Nav Canada, or he should ask Nav Canada to rescind these layoff notices.

What is it? Is the fix in? Has this decision already been made?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand the hard impact of Nav Canada's decisions on Canadians and employees of Nav Canada across the country but, again, it is important to note that any change in the level of service proposed by Nav Canada is subject to a rigorous safety assessment by Transport Canada officials. No compromise on safety will ever be tolerated at Transport Canada.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, President Biden held a climate day, signing a series of executive orders to take ambitious action on the climate crisis with a focus on jobs, equity and scientific integrity. His sweeping new orders included freezing new oil and gas leases on public lands, cutting fossil fuel subsidies and establishing a civilian climate corps to put people to work conserving and restoring the environment. In contrast, our Prime Minister looks more like a climate laggard. Announcing unambitious empty promises will not cut it.

When will the Liberals take action that meets the scale of the crisis?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change threatens our health, our way of life and our planet. That is why our government is taking significant action to address this crisis. My hon. colleague knows that full well. We are delivering on our promise to Canadians to bring forward a strengthened climate plan that includes creating thousands of jobs across the country, ensuring that we not only meet but exceed our Paris targets and lay the foundation for net zero emissions by 2050. We will continue to work with all Canadians on climate action and to ensure a more sustainable future for our children and grandchildren.

Oral Questions

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer revealed the Liberals are underfunding their promise of planting two billion extra trees by nearly 50%. The PBO found that an additional \$2.7 billion will be required, bringing the overall cost closer to \$5.9 billion. By underfunding this initiative, the Liberals show that they are not serious about fighting climate change.

Will the government put its money where its mouth is, or was this just talk all along?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we are committed to planting two billion trees. Let me quote from the PBO report, and I encourage my colleague to actually read it, wherein it says:

Parameters used for this estimate are based off data from Forests Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program and may not accurately reflect program costs under the federal government's 2 Billion Tree program.

We are partnering with the provinces and territories, indigenous groups and NGOs to make sure we get this right. We are committed to combatting climate change and planting two billion trees is a part of our ambitious plan.

* * *

• (1145)

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, businesses across the country have been hit hard by the pandemic. Many have seen dramatic losses in profit.

Small business owners in Surrey Centre are wondering how their eligibility for the Canada emergency rent subsidy, Canada emergency wage subsidy and Canada emergency business account will be impacted in 2021, as some of them experienced decreased profits in 2020.

Can the minister update the House on how our government will address eligibility for these essential supports, as we continue to manage the negative impacts of the pandemic on businesses across Canada?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Surrey Centre for his continued advocacy for small businesses in his riding and across Canada. Our government knows that businesses are still struggling very much under the second wave of COVID-19. This is why we have made our program application deadlines carry through until 2021.

The emergency business account, which has provided support to more than 800,000 small and medium-sized businesses, is now open until March 31 of this year. The new rental subsidy program, which has now connected 94,000 businesses to support, is available until June of this year, and the Canada emergency wage subsidy, which has helped keep more than four and a half million workers on the payroll, will be available until June 2021.

Our government is going to continue to be there to support Canadians and Canadian businesses, as we have been since this pandemic—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to hear from the parliamentary secretary, but I have heard from the owners of numerous start-ups who started off in 2020, and they are continuing to be denied these business supports for COVID-19.

Markus, a constituent in Elgin—Middlesex—London, opened a new business called The Icebox. Markus contacted my office regarding the federal government, which did not revise criteria for small businesses despite the Province of Ontario making these necessary changes.

Will the finance minister commit to revising the eligibility criteria of COVID-19 supports for businesses, and stop disqualifying business owners who are trying to survive under these public restrictions?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her continued advocacy for small businesses.

From the very beginning of this pandemic, we have been listening to and working with businesses to make sure that there is a broad range of supports. I was very pleased, earlier this week, to announce an additional support, a lifeline support: the highly affected businesses program, otherwise called HASCAP. It is another way to help our businesses with loans from \$25,000 to \$1 million. Those businesses under one entity that have multiple locations can receive up to \$6.25 million. This is another way that—

The Deputy Speaker: The minister is out of time.

We will go to the hon. member for Bow River.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after a year of lockdowns, my constituents do not have access to rapid tests in this riding. As for vaccines, who knows? Now, Europe is restricting exports of vaccines, so those are not available either. My constituents are reading stories of rapid tests and vaccines that have been developed in Calgary and Montreal, and they are angry.

When can my constituents expect rapid tests and vaccines to be available in the riding? They want to return to work and normal life, but when?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite may or may not know, the delivery of health care falls within the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories. Having said that, we have been supporting provinces and territories to have the tools they need. Almost 16.8 million rapid tests have been sent to provinces and territories to date: almost six million to Ontario, three million to Quebec, 1.5 million to Alberta and 1.5 million to B.C.

Furthermore, new guidance was released from the testing and screening strategy expert panel to help provinces deploy those rapid tests. I suggest he speak to his MLA.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to remain silent on Enbridge's Line 5. The other day he told the leader of the official opposition that he has always stood up for Canadian interests, but I am puzzled. He refuses to say Line 5 by name, and his minister is waiting to talk to the new energy secretary as soon as she is sworn in, whenever that is. Thousands of jobs are dependent on this pipeline on both sides of the border, and it is so crucial that we get this right. No urgency is being shown. The clock is ticking.

What is the government proactively doing, if anything, to save Line 5, or does it want to see this one ripped out of the ground, too?

• (1150)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. Our government supports the operation of Enbridge's Line 5. It has been in there since the 1950s and it is vital to the economy of Canada. It supplies Imperial, Shell and Suncor refineries in Sarnia, Ontario, Suncor's refinery in Montreal and Valero's refinery in Lévis, Quebec. It delivers 66% of the crude oil consumed in Quebec.

This is a vital pipeline. We believe in it. We support it. We are continuing to work alongside Ambassador Hillman and Consul General Comartin, and we will continue to advocate for Line 5.

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ETHICS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, disgraced former finance minister Bill Morneau announced that his bid for secretary-general of the OECD was over. This happened while the saga continues with the student jobs/WE scandal cover-up: Liberals scheming with Liberals to ensure insiders get ahead while Canadians suffer. Liberals will claim that it is simply time to move on, but in reality their lack of transparency proves that they have something to hide.

Enough is enough. Will the Liberals reveal the cost of this endorsement boondoggle and commit to coming clean on the WE scandal?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, Bill Morneau announced earlier this week that he had withdrawn his candidacy with respect to the OECD secretary-gen-

eral position. We would like to thank Bill Morneau for throwing his hat into the ring. We feel that he would have been an excellent representative due to his public and private experience.

Having said that, we will, of course, continue to support whomever is in the position at this very important organization, the OECD.

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[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that the report on the governor general was in English only, because only English Canada cares about the monarchy.

What Quebecers care about is how the tax dollars we send to Ottawa are spent. Millions of dollars for the monarchy is not a good way to spend our money, nor is a lifetime pension for a tyrannical governor general.

Until Canada permanently severs all ties with this symbol of oppression, will the Prime Minister commit to not giving former governor general Julie Payette a pension for life?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this symbol is, in fact, very important. It is part of our Canadian heritage. As I indicated earlier, the former governor general's annuity will be dealt with in accordance with the Governor General's Act. The reimbursement of expenditures to the former governor general is the responsibility of the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General. The new leadership at Rideau Hall will be able to address the serious concerns that are being raised.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as though the lifetime pension were not enough, the former governor general will also be entitled to a generous expense account, which should enable her to maintain her royal lifestyle, keep the champagne flowing and keep the caviar on ice.

Consider former governor general Adrienne Clarkson as an example. She has claimed up to \$100,000 per year since leaving office. Being appointed governor general is like winning the cash-for-life lottery, even for those who resign because of harassment, intimidation and verbal abuse.

Will the Prime Minister defund the former governor general who resigned?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the new leadership at Rideau Hall will be able to address the many serious concerns that have, in fact, been raised. It is important to keep in mind that the reimbursement of expenditures to a former governor general is the responsibility of the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General, where many things are taken into consideration.

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*[Translation]***SENIORS**

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have learned that the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is refusing to finance seniors' residences with 50 units or fewer in our communities. That is completely unfair.

These residences in Lévis, Bellechasse, Les Etchemins and across the country are seriously affected by this discriminatory policy. They look after our seniors, especially during a pandemic. Will the minister immediately reverse this unfair policy and end this systemic discrimination against our seniors in rural areas?

• (1155)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, helping seniors access affordable housing and stay in their homes in their community is one of this government's top priorities. The national housing strategy will reduce the number of seniors in housing need through the national housing co-investment fund.

[English]

There is more work we can do through the national housing strategy. Our government is looking to fill gaps to gain more information on the housing needs of Canada's most vulnerable populations, including seniors, and to better respond in the future.

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COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Mr. Kenny Chiu (Steveston—Richmond East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food is a significant part of many ethnic communities. For them, as for many Canadians, food insecurity creates barriers to participating in social activities. With the pandemic and economic downturn, many have to rely on food banks or charities for support. This lowers the connection they feel to their culture and harms their sense of well-being.

Why is the government not taking any action to address food insecurity for marginalized Canadians?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, food security is critically important to Canadians and to their health. That is why, in the very beginning of the pandemic, we were so invested in ensuring that many of the food providers around the country had the support they need. We invested millions and millions of dollars across the country to make sure food security could continue to be front and centre for communities.

In fact, in my own community of Thunder Bay—Superior North, I want to thank the Roots to Harvest group, which has done such an exemplary job filling the gaps for so many Canadians in need.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, several cases of CERB fraud have been identified in the past two weeks. Some people have had their employment insurance files frozen. Both the Canada Revenue Agency and Service Canada have completely unacceptably wait times to get through on the phone. It feels like we have gone back to the beginning of the pandemic.

The government has had months to prepare, so why has it not put enough staff on the phone lines to handle people's files?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that there are wait times. The CRA's call centres have seen an 83% increase in calls since 2019, given that the agency is administering a COVID-19 program.

I want to thank all of our call centre employees who are working tirelessly to inform Canadians throughout this pandemic.

In the fall economic statement, our government announced almost \$100 million in additional funding for the CRA's call centres, and we are working on finding more solutions to efficiently serve Canadians during tax season. We plan to make announcements in the near future.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now more than ever, the COVID-19 pandemic has made our homes our sanctuaries, our places of safety and refuge. That is why the Government of Canada is making sure all Canadians have access to safe, affordable housing. The people of Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe strongly believe that all Canadians should have access to affordable housing. That is an important goal we must all work toward.

Would the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development tell the House what the government is doing to create more affordable housing units?

[English]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very important that in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic we keep in mind the most vulnerable members of our society.

In addition to the regular national housing strategy program and the national housing co-investment fund, which is dedicated to creating deeply affordable housing units, we have introduced the rapid housing initiative, a \$1-billion program that will build at least 3,000 affordable housing units right across the country. It focuses on the most vulnerable Canadians, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, women and children fleeing domestic violence and vulnerable seniors.

* * *

● (1200)

HEALTH

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon—Grasswood is home to thousands of seniors living in retirement residences and care homes, communities that, as we all know, have a greatly increased risk due to COVID. My office receives calls every day from senior residents in care homes and other institutions who are wondering when the vaccines the government insists are abundant will arrive.

When will the government give Canadians from Saskatoon—Grasswood an honest timeline of when they can expect to be vaccinated?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every single step of the way we have been working with the provinces and territories to protect people living in long-term care homes, including by ensuring that we provided national guidance that could support provincial guidance on vaccination priorities.

Let me back up. With the safe restart money that we provided the provinces and territories in the spring, \$740 million was earmarked to protect people living in senior residences. An additional \$1 billion is committed through the fall economic statement toward the development of standards and, yes, the prioritization of vaccinations.

We will be working with the provinces and territories to make sure we do all we can to help them deliver on their health care responsibility of providing care for older people—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while cracking down on civilian travel, the government continues to deploy our military overseas to COVID-stricken locations without vaccinating them first. It was revealed this week that incidents of COVID-19 have been on the rise among the members of the Canadian Armed Forces. In fact, Canadian troops in Latvia have contracted COVID.

Why are Canada's brave women and men in the armed forces getting chaos from the government when what they need are vaccines?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the health and well-being of our Canadian Armed Forces members are always a top priority. Since the beginning of this pandemic, our surgeon general and chief of the defence staff have taken measures to make sure our members are safe.

Oral Questions

Our surgeon general is currently monitoring very closely the vaccine rollout for our Canadian members. I can assure the member and all Canadians that our Canadian Armed Forces members will be prioritized according to the best science and medical advice from our surgeon general.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that billions of dollars have been spent and we have very little vaccine to show for it.

The European Union is considering restricting vaccine exports, we do not have an agreement with the Americans, and Canada's vaccine production capacity is non-existent. This government has weakened Canada's vaccine supply position. No Canadian believes that we will all be vaccinated by September.

To enable them to learn from the Liberal government's mistakes and avoid repeating them, could Canadians get fully transparent access to the vaccine procurement contracts, as the E.U. did with AstraZeneca?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we are talking to our provincial and territorial partners about the vaccines they can expect to receive.

We have contracts to purchase enough approved vaccine to make sure every Canadian who wants to be vaccinated will be by the end of the third quarter.

We will continue to be open and transparent and to make sure our partners have what they need to make sure the massive campaign to vaccinate all Canadians will be undertaken and completed on schedule.

[English]

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since day one, Canadian front-line workers have been unwavering in their support for vulnerable Canadians in the face of this pandemic, like the staff at Shepherd Village and Mon Sheong in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt. Essential workers are rising to the challenge each day to keep our seniors safe and healthy.

The recent outbreak at Tendercare is tragic, and across the country, long-term care homes have been disproportionately affected, so what is our government doing to help support long-term care residents in Canada and those who care for them?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for her dedicated focus on the wellness of seniors not only in her riding but Canada-wide.

Routine Proceedings

Every step of the way, we have been there to help support the provinces and territories deliver on their health care responsibilities for people in long-term care, whether it was the \$740 million in the spring through the safe restart agreement to improve infection prevention control measures, the \$1 billion in the fall economic statement to upgrade standards and ensure there are standards across the country or, indeed, our sending in the Red Cross and the Canadian Armed Forces in cases of extreme crisis. This government—

• (1205)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Nunavut.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Mumilaq Qaqqaq (Nunavut, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Baffinland, a mining company in my riding, is planning an expansion at Mary River. This week, consultations continued concerning the fact that it wanted to build a railway in primary breeding grounds for narwhal. The local hunters and trappers association along with groups closest are clearly opposed to this rapid expansion, which provides uncertainty for food supply and the future of Inuit.

Why is this project being allowed to go ahead when there is clear opposition from Inuit in the communities? When will the federal government stop valuing natural resource extraction over Inuit and wildlife survival?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, everything we do across the north we do in conjunction with indigenous people, with consultation and from listening to northerners.

Right now, this resource development process is going through public hearings. There will be a final step in this review process that will be designed to ensure that the project is environmentally and socially responsible, while considering the concerns of Nunavummiut.

The member also knows that upon conclusion of the assessment, there is a period of time in which both the board and the government will respond, and that will also include the duty to consult with all those who are impacted.

* * *

HEALTH

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Mr. Speaker, January 28 is observed as Let's Talk Day, sponsored by a well-known corporation. While it was heartwarming to see the solidarity to end the stigma, we are still waiting for the government to set national standards for access to mental health services so Canadians can get the support they need when they need it beyond their screens.

Mental health service providers on the ground and in our communities need our full support every day of the year. Systemic and concerted actions are needed immediately, including the direct funding for mental health service providers and the removal of the tax on counselling services.

Will the government commit to doing this today?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, mental health has remained a priority for this government since the beginning, since 2015. In fact, national standards work is under way with provinces and territories, as she well knows.

Through the pandemic, the federal government is fully funding wellnesstogether.ca, which is an important tool to help Canadians get access to free, confidential care no matter where they live, in both official languages with translation to 60 others.

I encourage every Canadian to check out wellnesstogether.ca today so they can see for themselves the resources that are available to help them and their family members and loved ones.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would ask for the unanimous consent of my colleagues to table the layoff notices that have been received by employees in Regina.

It seems the minister is not aware of these layoff notices. I would like to table them so he could be made aware of the contradiction he had in question period today, saying that no report had been finalized and that all safety reports were taken seriously. However, the layoff notices the employees have received in Regina are also very serious.

The Deputy Speaker: Are any members opposed to the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan tabling said document?

Some hon. members: Nay.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1210)

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE AND THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the pleasure to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2019-20 annual report for the office of the ombudsman for National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The committee advises that, pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met to consider the order for the second reading of a private member's public bill originating in the Senate and the items added to the Order of Precedence on Friday, December 11, 2020, and recommended that the items listed herein, which it has determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2) the report is deemed adopted.

* * *

PETITIONS

The Deputy Speaker: Before we proceed, there are a number of petitions today, so I would ask members to be concise with their descriptions and not debate them.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition on behalf of concerned Canadians who have taken issue with the treatment of the Uighur and other Muslim minorities in China by the communist Chinese government. Specifically, they are concerned around arbitrary detention, separation of children from families, invasive surveillance, destruction of cultural sites, forced labour and even forced organ harvesting. I share their concerns and ask the government to respond.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am also presenting a petition on the Uighur community genocide.

The Chinese Communist Party is subjecting the Uighur Muslims to atrocities, which meet most, if not all, the criteria for genocide as outlined in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Both the Trump and Biden administrations along with members of Canada's committee on international human rights support the genocide designation.

The petitioners call on Parliament to formally recognize that Uighurs in China have been and are being subject to genocide and to impose Magnitsky sanctions on those responsible for the heinous crimes being committed against the Uighur people.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today of presenting another petition on the Uighur situation in China. Petitioners are calling on the government to formally recognize that Uighurs in China are being subjected to genocide, and to impose Magnitsky sanctions.

The world was slow to react in Rwanda when there was a genocide there, and now the situation of the Uighurs meets most, if not all, of the criteria for genocide as outlined in the UN convention. The petitioners are calling on the government to do that and recognize that.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me today to be joining my colleagues in tabling a petition calling on the government to recognize that Uighur Muslims in China have been and are being subjected to an ongoing genocide. There is clear evidence that there is forced abortion, forced insertion of IUDs, mass incarceration, and various other crimes that meet the criteria of genocide. Petitioners are also calling on the government to impose Magnitsky sanctions, holding accountable those who are responsible for this genocide.

● (1215)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to table a petition signed by constituents of Nanaimo—Ladysmith. The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to commit to upholding the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's calls to action by immediately halting all existing and planned construction of the Coastal GasLink fracked pipeline project in Wet'suwet'en territory and prioritizing the real implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually in the House today to present a petition from constituents who are concerned about an issue of sewage in the area of the Gulf Islands.

To clarify quickly, it is not an issue of municipal sewage treatment, but of recreational boaters and other vessels and their ballast. The petition calls on the government to declare that the Gulf Islands is a no-discharge zone, so it would primarily affect boaters, including recreational boaters, and ensure a higher water quality and a higher protection for this very sensitive ecosystem.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Tamara Jansen (Cloverdale—Langley City, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I present this petition calling on the government to recognize the genocide of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang, China.

I do so on this day when we remember the horrific attack on Muslim worshippers in our country, who were gunned down as they peacefully knelt in prayer. We have an opportunity to do more than just remember; we have a responsibility to eradicate such horrific religiously motivated violence, both here and abroad. We have heard at committee that Chinese Muslims are being subjected to forced labour, invasive surveillance, and forced abortions, sterilizations and organ harvesting.

Routine Proceedings

If we are committed to assisting in the development of religious freedom around the world, we need to strongly condemn religious persecution, so today, on what will be the national day of remembrance of the Quebec City mosque attack and action against Islamophobia, the petitioners urgently call for justice for Uighur Muslims in China as well.

FARMERS' PROTESTS IN INDIA

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the petition I am tabling deals with the farmers from India. I represent hundreds of families that have both direct and indirect family connections to India's farmers, most of whom are located in the Punjab. We respect the legislative independence of sovereign nations, but Canada must always stand for the protection of fundamental freedoms both at home and around the world.

As peacefully protesting is a fundamental right in a democracy and India is the world's largest democracy, the petitioners are calling upon Canadian parliamentarians to stand in support of Indian farmers who choose to have peaceful protests.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present two petitions to the House today.

The first is with regard to the persecution of Uighur Muslims in China. Certainly this is especially poignant as we remember the tragic deaths of those in the Quebec City mosque shooting on this date.

These petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to formally recognize that Uighurs in China have been and are being subjected to genocide and to use the Justice for Victims of Foreign Corrupt Officials Act, known as the Magnitsky act, to impose sanctions on those who are responsible.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also present a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians regarding the promise that was made in the government's throne speech and in the ongoing conversation about the need to ensure that there is accessible and affordable child care across the country, and how this is not a political issue but something on which Canadians are expecting leadership.

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Ms. Jag Sahota (Calgary Skyview, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise here today to present my very first petition to this House. It is on behalf of travel agents across Canada.

The petitioners are bringing to the government's attention that when the travel industry issues refunds, the suppliers are requiring that travel agents return the commissions they made from work done up to a year ago. They are calling on the government to consider travel agents as external staffing for the travel suppliers and to include this in any bailout terms so that travel agents' commissions that were paid previously are not subject to clawbacks.

PEPPERLAW DAM

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Pepperlaw, Ontario, in my riding of York—Simcoe.

The petitioners are calling on the government of Canada to rehabilitate the historic Pepperlaw dam and ensure that the Pepperlaw River flows again.

Built in the 1820s, the Pepperlaw dam has cultural, historical, environmental, economic and recreational significance to Pepperlaw residents and visitors, which is why these efforts are so important.

• (1220)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: That is the last of the petitions. I thank all hon. members for making short, precise presentations. I would remind the hon. members who presented their petitions in person that they must bring their petition documents to the table.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two points, the first one being that if the government's revised responses to questions Nos. 208 and 251, originally tabled on January 25, 2021, could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 208—**Mr. Philip Lawrence:**

With regard to each contract signed by the government since March 1, 2020, with a value greater than \$10 million: (a) what specific measures, if any, were taken by the government to ensure that taxpayers were getting value for money, broken down by each contract; and (b) what are the details of each contract, including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) description of goods or services, (iv) whether or not the contract was sole-sourced?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 251—**Mr. Kenny Chiu:**

With regard to the 2017 report presented by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled "Starting Again: Improving Government Oversight of Immigration Consultants": what specific action, if any, has the government taken in response to each of the committee's 21 recommendations, broken down by each of the specific recommendations?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA—UNITED KINGDOM TRADE CONTINUITY AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-18, An Act to implement the Agreement on Trade Continuity between Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to discuss Bill C-18, the continuity agreement between Canada and the United Kingdom. For a little background, I would like to take us through the relationship that we have had with the United Kingdom and how we have come to this point so far.

The United Kingdom is our fifth-largest trading partner and third-largest export market, with two-way trade between the U.K. and Canada worth \$29 billion as of 2019. When the United Kingdom left the European Union on January 31, 2020, a transitional period lasting until December 31, 2020, went into effect. If no Canada-U.K. agreement were in place by the close of the transitional period, CETA, Canada's trade agreement with the EU, would no longer govern trade between Canada and the U.K. Trade instead would be governed by the U.K. Global Tariff scheme. This would have been the worst-case scenario for Canadian business.

In July 2018, a notice was issued in the Canada Gazette that the government was intending to negotiate a Canada-U.K. trade agreement. Canada walked away from the trade negotiations with the U.K. in March 2019, only to return to the table in July 2020.

When questioned on the status of this agreement in early November 2020, the Prime Minister made a remark that the U.K. lacked “the bandwidth” to finalize an agreement, despite the U.K. having concluded negotiations with multiple countries.

On November 21, Canadian and U.K. officials announced that an agreement had been reached. The government finally tabled legislation to enact the agreement, Bill C-18, on December 9, 2020, just two House of Commons sitting days before CETA's application to the U.K. would end. During committee testimony, the minister stated that she had not coordinated with the Senate on this bill's passage and it was likely not to be ratified by the end of 2020. As the government did not have time to pass and enact the legislation before year's end, on December 22, Canada and the U.K. reached a memorandum of understanding to provide continued preferential tariff treatment until the Canada-United Kingdom trade continuity act is ratified.

I lay out these timelines because it is a continuing pattern with the government and it should be a worrisome pattern to Canadians. It seems that the government only takes action on files and on issues when it comes to the crisis point, and that is no way to govern. There are countless examples that lay out the government's pattern of basically waiting until the 12th hour and not making a decision until one is foisted upon it.

We saw it when it came to the negotiations for CUSMA, the new NAFTA. Our negotiators were late coming to the table. The United

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States was negotiating with Mexico before our negotiators were even there. I do not lay that at the feet of the public servants within Canada; I lay it at the feet of the government, this Prime Minister and the former foreign affairs minister, who waited and waited to get engaged and get involved with the administration in the United States on behalf of Canadians. We needed to have competent people at that table to fight to get us the best possible trade deal when it came to CUSMA. Unfortunately, they failed Canadians once again, because they waited until the last hour to try to negotiate a deal.

Unfortunately, we saw it recently again when it came to the cancellation of the Keystone XL expansion. We know that President Biden campaigned on this deal, so the cancellation should not have come as a surprise to the government. Not in just the four days before he was inaugurated, but in the months after he became president-elect and in the years before Mr. Biden went to Washington, our ambassador should have been promoting the idea of Keystone XL tirelessly, talking about how well our oil sector is doing environmentally, talking about how the Keystone XL pipeline would create jobs not only in Canada but in America as well. That is what we should be doing differently.

● (1225)

When I talk about Keystone XL, people ask what I would do differently. To start, I would be a proud advocate on behalf of our energy sector and an advocate on behalf of Canadian businesses. That would be the start of not always being the last one to the dance or the last one to the table, and trying to play catch-up every time there is a new decision that needs to be made.

We have seen this in other recent negotiations by the government. We saw it when the COVID pandemic outbreak started. I am new in the Chamber, and I am slowly learning the processes of what it takes to pass legislation. However, there is a lot of people who have been here for a long time, especially on the government benches.

However, once again, the government has foisted a huge spending bill on this House, and because it was not prepared, it is saying that we need to pass it so that spending gets out the door. I remember we had four hours to debate hundreds of billions of dollars worth of spending because the government was not prepared. The government is not providing certainty to Canadians.

Time and time again, when it comes to providing opportunities to not only oppose legislation or oppose agreements, but also to take a fine eye and go through them to help the government make better decisions and come up with better trade agreements and legislation, the government has continuously been found lacking.

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We are seeing this again with the crisis that arose with approving the continuation of spending. The government did not realize the COVID programs were sunset, and they needed to be continued. Where is the foresight? Where is the foresight for Canadians to ensure that the programs are there? Where is the foresight, when the government is making agreements with the U.K. or the United States, to be there earlier to talk and advocate on behalf of Canadian businesses and what Canadians want to see in the agreement?

The government could take a page from Japan's book during its U.K. negotiations. Japan's trade delegation was able to secure a free trade agreement with the United Kingdom on October 23, several months before Canada was ready to move ahead with an agreement.

Like Canada's agreement, Japan's agreement is very similar to what it had in place when the U.K. was still a member of the European Union. Unlike Canada's agreement, however, the U.K. and Japan were able to identify and eliminate enough trade barriers to result in an additional £15 billion, or over \$25 billion, in trade between their two countries. They made sure that the agreement was already firmly in place before the trade agreement deadline of January 1, 2021. Not only did this give Japanese businesses and investors a head start over other countries, but they were able to take advantage of new negotiating positions and score big wins for its automotive sector.

I ask members to imagine a government that has the foresight to make trade deals sooner, and to make them better and in favour of the businesses in the country it represents. That would be a great country to be a part of, one with a government that actually cares about some of its industries.

We know that the Liberal government has difficulties with the philosophy of being an energy independent country. We understand that it does not like what we do in western Canada. It does not like the energy sector.

I remember when the Prime Minister let it slip that he wants to phase out the energy sector and the oil sands. Unfortunately, through the litany of promises he has made and broken, this might be the one promise in which he actually succeeds, the phasing out the energy sector across western Canada. That will not only damage those in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Newfoundland and Labrador, but it will also damage us across the country. When the energy sector does well in Canada, Canadians do well, and our economy does well.

It is imperative for people to realize we are being forced to make decisions in crisis mode because the government has continuously had a lack of foresight to do the groundwork necessary to make sure Canadians are getting the best deal. Whether it is the CUSMA, the Canada-United Kingdom trade agreement, or the cancellation of Keystone XL, the government continues to show Canadians that it does not have the ability to govern competently. That means we need a government that is working hard for Canadians, respects all industries in this country and wants to secure our future for generations to come.

• (1230)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was no shortage of points raised in my hon. colleague's speech that I would like to correct. Perhaps, just to mention off the top, in response to his mention of CUSMA, I would remind him that it was actually months of extensive work by all members of the House of Commons in order to negotiate a successful agreement, which was the result of the president at the time threatening to rip up the NAFTA agreement. If he does not want to take my word for it, or the word of the minister responsible for it, I would suggest he speak to former prime minister Brian Mulroney.

With respect to the Canada-U.K. free trade agreement that is the subject of the bill we are discussing today, I would like to hear from my hon. colleague with respect to the farmers and producers in his region in Saskatchewan. What I am hearing from those very farmers is that they would like this agreement to be ratified as soon as possible so they can benefit from this trade agreement.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, I would just remind my hon. colleague that the Liberals were not even at the table when Mexico and the United States were bargaining and negotiating CUSMA. I will take what she has to say with a grain of salt.

When it comes to the farmers in my home province of Saskatchewan, I am happy a Liberal has finally noticed that we do have farmers in Saskatchewan. Without a doubt, the trade agreement should get ratified and get done so we can continue to have that trade with the United Kingdom.

However, and this point cannot be made enough, they are always so late coming to the table. They are so late coming to a trade agreement deal that we have to accept whatever is forced upon us. Why can the government not be like Japan and make better trade agreements within that trade continuity agreement?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will take the floor while we are talking about agriculture.

My esteemed colleague, who sits with me on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food and whom I hold in high regard, raised the lack of transparency in the recent negotiations that were held behind closed doors. This was thrown at us at the last minute, and then we are asked to rush through a vote.

Does he not believe that the agricultural sectors that have been sacrificed so much lately, like the supply-managed sectors, should be protected?

Should we not adopt Bill C-216 to avoid any new surprises?

• (1235)

[English]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's great work on the agriculture standing committee. It is an honour to serve with him. Our committee has done a lot of work promoting farmers. We are doing a study right now to see how we can increase capacity and our processing across the country.

One thing that we should do, whenever we come into trade negotiations, is make sure that we have farmers across the country in the forefront of our minds as we are making trade deals. In Canada, we have the best agriculture producers in the world. We need to continue to promote those great quality products such as poultry, milk, lentils and pulse crops. We have to ensure that the world knows that Canada has the highest quality goods and make sure we have trade agreements in place that have the backs of our farmers across the country.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, I think we missed the questions for the last speaker. I was hoping to ask him about the record for the Harper government and the Canada-China FIPA, which is an outrageous agreement with a 15-year clause on it before we can get out of that agreement. This is unlike all our other FIPAs, which have one-year get-out clauses. That agreement gives Chinese state-owned corporations extraordinary powers to invest in this country and then challenge our laws and policies when they do not like them.

I would like to ask the hon. member about this agreement and what he thinks about giving Communist China so much power over our resources and over foreign investment in this country.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith mentioned the word “resources” and that makes me laugh. This is coming from a member who has wanted to crush the resource sector in Canada since he took his spot in the House of Commons. This is coming from a member who is happy to say oil is dead across the country and support his leader when she welcomed Keystone XL being vetoed. For him to stand up and ask that question is beyond the point of hypocritical.

If he wants to support our energy sector, he should ask his leader to stop making ridiculous claims, actually get on board, and support the hard-working men and women across our country who go to work every day in our resource sector and do a fantastic job.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Before we move on, I would like to advise the House that since there have been a total of five hours of debate on this motion, all subsequent interventions will be limited to 10 minutes for speeches and five minutes for questions and comments.

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The previous speaker from the Green Party commented that he was not able to ask questions regarding his concerns and noted that a member was not in the chamber at the time. I recognize that we are all working together because we understand that we want to get the bill through, and we want to have debate. We are aware of the time, so let us all work together and get this done.

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Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I was paying attention as well, and while I appreciate the point that my hon. colleague from the Conservative Party just made, I want to correct the record in that the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith did not point out the presence or absence of anyone in the House. He merely said there was no opportunity to ask questions of the member who spoke right before question period. I just did not want—

The Deputy Speaker: I do not want to get into a debate on this question. Let me say for the benefit of other hon. members that this opportunity is not always available. When an hon. member, the previous one being the member for Battle River—Crowfoot, is unable to do the five minutes of questions and comments because it is time for Statements by Members, and thereafter question period, sometimes members will have to go on and do other things.

When this occurs, the likelihood of there being a continuation of that five minutes for questions and comments is not always assured. Members should not be surprised if that occurs in the course of the sitting day, and I would ask hon. members for their patience in that regard. If the member is not available to take the time for remaining questions and comments, we move on to the next speaker on the list and carry on with the debate.

I thank hon. members for their patience.

• (1240)

[Translation]

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-18, an act to implement the agreement on trade continuity between Canada and the United Kingdom.

The Bloc Québécois has always been in favour of free trade, so it will come as no surprise that we are in favour of this bill to approve the agreement and make the necessary legislative changes for the transitional and coming into force provisions. It is important to realize from the outset that the purpose of the agreement is to keep trade flowing. Maintaining the flow of trade is of the utmost importance to our businesses, in Quebec in particular.

What does the agreement do? It keeps 98% of goods tariff-free and preserves access to government procurement, which may seem restrictive in some ways, but which gives us access to a market worth \$118 billion annually. Agreements on services, investments, intellectual property, sustainable development, environmental protection and labour standards are all renewed. It is all good, and that is why we are in favour of the bill.

However, we have to anticipate greater competition in the U.K. because the reality has just changed. That country will be perfectly entitled to change its tariff rates on other trade partners, including those that are members of the World Trade Organization.

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Nobody will be surprised to hear me say a few words about agriculture. Fortunately, this agreement does not increase access to our supply-managed sectors. Unfortunately, that is only for the time being. Let us be realistic. This is a transitional agreement while we await a permanent one.

Consider the side letter about cheese, which states that cheese originating in the United Kingdom shall continue to be imported into Canada under the tariff rate quota for the European Union until 2023. It will then be up to the U.K. to negotiate a new reserve and to talk to its trading partner, Canada and Quebec, about what it can export here. I do not want to be pessimistic, but I have a feeling the U.K. will ask us to let more cheese in. Our answer must be a hard no. We must and will be vigilant. Regardless of what happens with the United Kingdom's cheese exports, it is not up to producers in Quebec and Canada to pay for Great Britain's choice. That must be clear from the start.

We know that our farmers across the country, particularly in Quebec, have demands. Through its president, Daniel Gobeil, the Producteurs de lait du Québec is calling for “the federal government [to] continue to keep its promise to stop making concessions in the dairy sector in other trade negotiations, just as it did in the transitional agreement between Canada and the United Kingdom”, the agreement we are talking about today. Obviously, Mr. Gobeil is talking about the dairy industry, but other associations, such as those representing egg and poultry farmers, feel the same way. It would also be good to hear what processors have to say since they are always left out when it comes to compensation.

Let us be vigilant and protect key sectors of our economy, such as dairy production, in the case of Mr. Gobeil, which represents a significant portion of our GDP, or \$6.2 billion to be exact. We can do that by passing Bill C-216, which was introduced by the Bloc Québécois and seeks to exclude supply-managed sectors from future trade negotiations. Of course, we understand that some people are concerned that doing so could negatively impact a future agreement. However, every country has sectors that it needs to protect and, in our case, these sectors have already given enough, since the dairy sector alone has already given up 18% of its market.

This fight must continue. Once again, I invite all parliamentarians to support our bill. Even if their minds are made up, they can change them.

In response to my question about compensation and promises, my esteemed colleague from the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food said earlier that we need to promote our agriculture. What a great idea. The next time we are negotiating a trade agreement, let us promote supply management rather than cutting it up into pieces and tossing it all over the place.

• (1245)

Let us teach others about this effective, amazing system that is working well for our farmers. Let us show others the way.

We have the right to assert ourselves. Once in a while, it is good to stand firm and stop giving in. I apologize to those who have already heard me say this, but I really like this sentence by Pierre Falardeau, who said, “If you lie down, they will stomp on you. If

you remain standing and resist, they will hate you, but they will call you 'sir'.”

We have to protect our sectors from time to time. I therefore urge my colleagues to support Bill C-216. I was not planning on talking for so long, but I could not help myself.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, we support the agreement, but we denounce the lack of transparency.

Since the debate began, I have heard my colleagues repeat that it is not right that the text was unavailable. Remember, the Standing Committee on International Trade sat seven or eight times last fall without seeing the text. The meetings that took place over the summer also took place without the text. Committee members were not able to read the text until the day they were to submit their report.

I do not have the right to show my colleagues the document, but I would have liked to do so. It is not just a two-page letter. It is a very thick document written in small font. The situation is completely ridiculous. This government is always putting us in a position where urgent action needs to be taken at the last minute. It does not make sense.

Members need only think about what happened in the fall. We had to quickly vote on a Friday to extend the support measures that were expiring that Monday just because the government chose to shut down Parliament to cover up scandals.

I would like us to be able to do our job properly. The Bloc Québécois has not changed its views on that since October 2019. Of course, we come here to promote Quebec's independence, but we also come here to work in a constructive way and to make progress. We come here to work for our constituents, to keep the economy going. We cannot work if we do not know what is happening. Think about all of the improvements that we could make.

Even when we get commitments from the House, there is no follow-through. The Canada emergency student benefit is an example of that. We got a formal commitment from the House, but it took months for anything to actually happen.

The NDP secured an agreement for advance access to the CUSMA documents. This time, we did not get the documents. Transparency is very important. Not having access to the documents is preposterous, and so is getting them at the last minute. We need to think about revamping the system. I encourage my colleagues in government and the other parties to start thinking about that.

Let us come up with a process. We cannot keep acting in this bad movie where we are forced to vote for agreements with our backs to the wall and a knife at our throats without having read the documents, purportedly to prevent people from running out of grocery money. That is preposterous. The same thing happened with this agreement.

We also need to find a way for the provinces and Quebec to participate. My colleague, who is a member of the Standing Committee on International Trade, suggested to the committee that Quebec be invited to participate in the negotiations. His suggestion was turned down. In fact, it was turned down by many of the members, including the Conservatives. They have been sucking up to Quebec in recent weeks, claiming that they will give us everything we want. Apparently that is not really true.

In closing, I want to say that what I like about Brexit is the independence aspect. This is a clear, powerful example of a state reclaiming its trade bargaining powers overnight. The fearmongering federalists want us to believe that this would be a horror show, but the Brits signed agreements with 60 of the 70 countries with which they had relationships before leaving the European Union.

Since Canada always waits until the last minute, it is not one of the countries with which the Brits signed agreements. We are doing so now, but I want to point out that today is January 29 and we have continued to trade since Brexit came into force on January 1.

• (1250)

The evidence is clear, and it speaks for itself. It was not a disaster. There are, of course, some adjustments to be made, but it was not a disaster.

Canada ranks fifth in terms of trade with the United States. I might disappoint some people by saying that the United States will not stop trading with us if we become independent. Furthermore, we will be able to sign agreements and protect our key sectors.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Let me first clarify something. I want to make sure my colleague understands that the study we did in committee was a pre-study on the possibility of signing a transitional agreement with the United Kingdom, and that we are awaiting the passage of Bill C-18 at second reading before we begin our study of the legislation and the text of the agreement.

Did we stand up for our dairy farmers? Personally, I think we did. I also think that members from Quebec should take a moment to celebrate the fact that we kept our word and protected the dairy farmers of Quebec and Canada.

When Mr. Gobeil appeared before the Standing Committee on International Trade, he thanked the Prime Minister and the minister for keeping their promise and protecting our agricultural sector.

Would my colleague agree that we have done that?

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very interesting question.

She used the words “preliminary study” and “possibility”. That is ridiculous. As elected members, we manage the country. We need to have access to the documents. Need I say more?

The last time, the government managed to salvage something from the wreckage, which is fine, but they should not be surprised if the smell of smoke lingers. It is true that Mr. Gobeil thanked the government for what it managed to salvage—which we will need to

clean to get the smoke smell out—but he is also asking us to support Bill C-216.

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear the member's thoughts on investor-state provisions.

We were supposed to see provisions that would improve transparency, but foreign companies will still have access to a special court system to challenge Canadian laws without going through domestic courts. Canada is already one of the most sued countries in the world under ISDS. These existing ISDS measures have also contributed to a regulatory chill, where governments fail to take actions in the public interest that they fear might trigger an investor claim.

Does the member agree that it is irresponsible for the government to not adequately protect Canadians from this kind of regime?

• (1255)

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Victoria for the great question.

I will be brief, the answer to her question is yes. Yes, we must protect ourselves from that.

The good news with respect to the U.K. agreement is that the dispute resolution process, which could give rise to such claims, will not come into effect for three years. We have the opportunity to negotiate. I have a message for the Liberal government: Negotiations must not be undertaken at the last minute.

The government introduced the bill two days before the end of the session, or just before the holidays. That is a joke. It must give us time.

I agree with the member for Victoria. We need to curb this tendency and protect state sovereignty, because we also need to protect people's sovereignty.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, you are doing an excellent job.

I have a question for my colleague from the Bloc Québécois. The Green Party is against agreements that include investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms. I think it is terrible to have treaties that protect the rights of major foreign corporations and not the Canadian economy.

What is the Bloc Québécois's position on investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Christine Normandin): The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

Government Orders

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be given the floor by this new occupant of the chair. I am a bit flustered.

I thank my colleague from the Green Party for the question. It is essentially the same question as before. I will reiterate my position. We are in favour of protecting the sovereignty of states because we are in favour of protecting the sovereignty of peoples. Obviously, we must avoid giving businesses the ability to sue governments. It is a dangerous thing that we must fight against.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, like my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé, I am honoured to be given the floor by this new chair occupant.

First, I would like to thank someone who worked very hard on this file on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, and that is my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot. I would like to thank him for the work he did in committee to defend the views of the Bloc Québécois and all the work he did for Quebecers to help them better understand the issues related to trade agreements, something that many people feel is far removed from their daily lives. However, as we saw during the debate, these issues have a very real impact on people's lives and even affect the issue of independence, which is something that our party cares a lot about.

What is more, I would like to thank those of my colleagues who, like the member from Berthier—Maskinongé, spoke to Bill C-216. We see that everything is related and that the work of the Bloc Québécois, what we are going to do to defend agriculture and food sovereignty, is essential. I therefore thank my colleagues for demonstrating how this teamwork helps Quebec to be better heard and defended.

It has been said before, but I think it bears repeating: The Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-18. We are not questioning the need for trade agreements and treaties that have been around since the beginning of time and that improve people's lives from an economic, social and cultural perspective.

This debate is about a bill to implement a temporary agreement that will be in effect until a permanent trade agreement is signed. This historic example is proof that there is no black hole when at state decides to reclaim its sovereignty. Everyone wants to keep the trade channel open so we can reassure our businesses and our economy that there will be a smooth transition. Because this agreement is temporary, we can make improvements. Having to renegotiate is not a bad thing; it actually provides opportunities, including the opportunity to work on one of the issues that came up today, dispute resolution mechanisms. We will have no choice but to renegotiate in the coming months, and that is a good thing.

Here is the first thing I would like us to focus on now: transparency in all its forms. I feel like I have talked about this concept repeatedly during this Parliament and the previous one. I am going to talk about how the committee work played out and how we ended up studying this bill. I found the whole process totally ridiculous, and I want to stress that.

I will use an analogy to put the situation in context. In our personal life, when we reach an agreement or sign a contract to buy a car—a very practical example—or to get married, which outside of love may be very practical as well, the stakeholders, those who are

affected by the agreement or the contract, have to be heard. They must be able to express their interests and their wishes and to discuss them. For there to be agreement, the people involved have to be able to talk to one another. The bill was tabled on December 9 at the Standing Committee on International Trade, just two days before the House rose for the break.

● (1300)

As my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot put it so well, it really is like a theatre of the absurd. What is even worse is that the Liberals have no idea they live in such a world, although everyone else sees it.

The government brought this bill before the committee and asked that it be reported back. In this case, committee members were to examine a trade agreement and submit a report.

Without access to the text of the agreement, they had to take part in the deliberations, express opinions, take considerations into account and ask all their questions. This is completely absurd, even beyond absurd. This calls into question the very privileges of parliamentarians.

We are talking about legislating, deliberating and holding the government to account when we cannot even express our views on a bill. I do not think my constituents would be very pleased with me if I told them I voted for a bill without having any idea what it was about or what impact it might have. They would not understand that, like a good, obedient opposition member, I trusted the government, which has fooled us many times with these kinds of trade agreements. I do not need to name them, because they include last three agreements.

I believe that we have the right to legislate, deliberate and hold the government to account. However, to do this properly, we need all the information.

I find that the government is irresponsible. As parliamentarians and citizens, we must always learn from our mistakes, find solutions and do better. I am urging us to do so as we move forward. As this is a transitional agreement, we should not wait until the last minute again. We must renegotiate and we can establish a timeline so that this happens very quickly.

I would also like to talk about the historical perspective, which we as separatists have a keen interest in. I have already thanked my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for his analysis of Brexit, the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. It represents a true precedent for Quebec. We are seeing the will of a nation to take back its sovereignty. We are moving from theory to reality.

How many times have we heard economic threats directed at separatists, telling us that we cannot make it without Canada? I think we have often seen that we are very capable of making it without Canada. My colleague from Saint-Jean noted earlier that Quebec does not wish to be independent solely for economic considerations.

This is a practical, and not theoretical, example of what happens when a trading nation decides to take back its sovereignty. The United Kingdom's experience is a prime example. There was no black hole at the end of these agreements during the transition period. The United Kingdom has already restored 60 of the 70 trade agreements that had been signed with the European Union. I think it is worth noting that the Brits now have an agreement with Japan, which they did not have before.

Earlier the notion of turbulence came up. In response to that, I want to point out that no matter where you fly, your plane will go through turbulence, and yet you always get to your destination. I am happy to get on that plane, whether it is headed towards Ottawa or towards Quebec's independence.

As a final note on the topic of sovereignty, decision-making and the opportunity to do things on our own, I want to stress that our principles and our values are not for sale. Topics such as health, workers' rights, the environment, food sovereignty and democracy are all things that a sovereign state can protect. When we step up to a bargaining table, we do not negotiate over issues that are important to us, that make us who we are or that bring us together to work as a people, as a whole. That is why we want to sign our own trade agreements.

We could then protect supply management, softwood lumber, aluminum and all of the issues that make Quebec what it is. This is what my constituents want.

• (1305)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have listened to members of the Bloc talk a lot about what I perceive to be a downplaying of the economic reality of what would happen if Quebec took on independence when it comes to economic trade. I have asked a couple of members about this in the past.

Can the member comment on what she thinks that economic reality would look like? It has been downplayed, and I have not heard about what it would look like if it transpired.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for reiterating her question about concerns related to Quebec's independence.

I would say that fear is the federalists' only argument. Fear is irrational. Jacques Parizeau was a Quebec premier who I really liked. The inscription on his headstone reads, "Do not be afraid". I can say that we separatists are not afraid. Building a country is exciting. It is what motivates all the members of the Bloc Québécois when they rise in the House. We will not stop our work because of scare

tactics, quite the contrary. We will show that Quebec is a viable nation that is alive and well.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am very concerned about any comparison suggesting that what happened with the U.K. within the European Union was a loss of sovereignty. Conflating the parallels of Quebec within Canada and the U.K. within the European Union is a false comparison. There are many other aspects of the multilateralism in the European Union, and the U.K.'s place within it, that we should not celebrate. They are ripping apart effective, functioning protections for the environment and human rights, as well as a display of multilateralism that was a good example for the world.

I respect that the hon. member and I have different views regarding the nation of Canada and the place Quebec has within it, but does she not agree with me that Canada would be so much more the poorer if we were to lose the critical role that Quebec plays in our environmental and cultural policies and our social fabric?

• (1310)

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, there are so many things I want to say in my response to my colleague.

First, it is the United Kingdom's choice. In my opinion, withdrawing from a trade agreement does not mean that the U.K. will not respect or want to respect human rights. Withdrawing from the agreement also does not mean that the U.K. will no longer be interested in environmental issues, contrary to what my colleague was saying.

That brings me back to Quebec. Quebec is already struggling. Multilateralism can be worthwhile, but let us focus on the issue of the environment right now. Quebec is a leader in environmental issues, green energy and clean energy, but it is being penalized simply because it is located in Canada. The oil industry is still receiving federal funding, whereas Quebec is not getting anything for green energy, so there is a difference.

I want to say one last thing. Trade agreements are very important to peoples and to nations. I am talking about Bill C-18. The members of the Bloc Québécois have all spoken about it, but it always comes down to Quebec's independence. The economy is very much linked to independence and how it would benefit Quebec.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to hear my colleague briefly comment on what seems to be a recurring issue with the Liberals, namely a lack of transparency, as we saw with this agreement and also the WE scandal and vaccines.

I would like her to briefly comment on the Liberals' dangerous tendency of not being upfront with Canadians.

Government Orders

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for Shefford for her question.

The lack of transparency is an affront to democracy, and this is what we see from the Liberals day after day, session after session here in Parliament. We have seen it in many different ways. I expect more from a government, and as an elected official, I want to defend our democracy. In a democracy, people need to be able to make informed decisions, especially when these decisions affect our constituents, Quebeckers.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Christine Normandin): The member for Berthier—Maskinongé on a point of order.

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I would like to know how much time we have left today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Christine Normandin): To answer the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé's question, I am being told that we have 16 minutes remaining.

The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

[English]

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-18, an act to implement the Canada-United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement. I will say at the outset that I support the passage of this legislation so that the agreement can be studied at committee. I will also say, in unequivocal terms, that it is absolutely vital for Canada to achieve a permanent comprehensive trade agreement with the United Kingdom. It is vital for jobs. It is vital for trade stability, given the fact that the United Kingdom is Canada's fifth-largest trading partner and third-largest export market. It is vital given the special relationship that Canada enjoys with the United Kingdom.

Our countries share a common history and common values. Indeed, I can think of no more special of a relationship that Canada enjoys than that with the United Kingdom, other than perhaps that with the United States.

In light of that common history and common values, and the fact that trade between Canada and the United Kingdom is a big deal, with \$29 billion of two-way merchandise trade in 2019 and opportunities to expand, five years after the Brexit referendum the government has failed to achieve a permanent comprehensive trade agreement with the United Kingdom. What we have instead is a transitory agreement that merely continues the terms of trade between Canada and the United Kingdom from CETA.

Let me be clear. CETA was a groundbreaking agreement, negotiated under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper by my colleague, the hon. member for Abbotsford, while he served as Minister of International Trade. On the whole, it has been a win for Canada regarding trade with the European Union broadly and in the context of trade with the United Kingdom. That being said, CETA was negotiated several years ago, and in that regard I would submit it constitutes the floor: We could do better, and we have not yet to date.

Why have we not done better? It seems that the basis for not doing better is the government's set of priorities. For much of the past five years, the government has been focused, when it comes to

trade, on a trade deal with Communist China, an unreliable trading partner that does not share our values, instead of focusing on a trade agreement with countries like the United Kingdom that are reliable trading partners and share our values.

In March 2019, at the very first opportunity, Canada walked out of negotiations with the United Kingdom. The government then proceeded to sit on its hands, not just for weeks or months, but for more than a year. The government continued to sit on its hands even after the EU-U.K. withdrawal agreement took effect in January 2020. The withdrawal agreement set in motion the date upon which the European Union and the United Kingdom would sever their ties and, consequently, the United Kingdom would no longer be a party to CETA. That date was December 31, 2020.

● (1315)

Notwithstanding that, while other countries secured permanent trade agreements with the United Kingdom, the current government instead chose to let the clock tick: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, and achieved nothing. In November, we got this trade continuity agreement: a copy-and-paste of CETA, the floor for it, rather than something closer to the ceiling. The government then dithered yet again and failed to bring forward enabling legislation until two days before the House rose for Christmas. That made it virtually impossible to ratify the trade agreement by the December 31 deadline.

As a result of the government's mismanagement, Canada was put at the precipice in its trade relationship with the United Kingdom, with no trade agreement in place but a trade relationship that would be governed by WTO rules. It was a completely untenable situation that was only averted as a result of a memorandum of understanding the government entered into on December 22, nine days before the December 31 deadline. Talk about cutting it close. Talk about a lack of a plan. Talk about a lack of prioritizing Canada's important trading relationship with the United Kingdom and, more broadly, the very special relationship we enjoy with the United Kingdom.

As I say, maintaining the CETA terms does provide stability. It provides continuity for the exchange of goods and services between Canada and the United Kingdom, and that is a good thing. However, we could have done a lot better. We could have addressed a number of issues with CETA, including non-tariff barriers; opportunities to expand the export of agricultural products and goods, particularly beef and pork, where we have had significant challenges with the European Union; and opportunities to expand investment and to achieve greater regulatory alignment and to make closer the relationship between Canada and the United Kingdom.

It is true that this agreement does contemplate that within a year of its ratification, negotiations will commence toward a comprehensive trade agreement to be concluded within three years. However, there is no mechanism to require that to happen. There is no sunset clause to this agreement.

Consequently, what we have is a purportedly temporary agreement that might in fact be a permanent one. I hope it is not. I hope the government refocuses. I hope it prioritizes getting back to the negotiating table, something it largely failed to do over the last five years, and engages with the United Kingdom, as described by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, correctly, I believe, as an “open, generous, outward-looking, internationalist and free-trading” country.

Let us get back to the negotiating table to negotiate a permanent comprehensive trade deal that will be a win-win for Canada and the United Kingdom.

• (1320)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from listening to my colleague's intervention today, although I recognize that he accepts that this interim agreement is important and acceptable for now, I do not see his appreciating why businesses might actually want that stability now.

Certainly business owners in my community who do a lot of exporting are going to want to know at this time what they can depend on, that there is continuity and that what they are used will continue. Right now in the middle of a pandemic is not the time, in my opinion, when businesses want to start worrying about how trade relationships, especially with a country like the U.K., might be affected.

Would the member like to comment on how he sees this from a business perspective in terms of that continuity?

• (1325)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Kingston and the Islands is right that continuity and certainty are important to Canadian businesses that do business in the United Kingdom. That is why it is unfortunate that we have this 11th hour agreement that left Canadian businesses in a precarious position, not knowing until the 11th hour that there would in fact be, at this point, an interim agreement, a carry-over agreement. As a result, business, labour, and many sectors across Canada and Parliament were not adequately consulted.

It has been a failed process and it is an unfortunate one. It could have been worse, but it certainly should have been better.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Our colleague opposite spoke about the anxiety of businesses that are not considered essential. I would like my colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton to tell us about parliamentarians' anxiety when they have to work on international agreements without seeing the text, and the anxiety of supply-managed farmers who are always sacrificed at the last minute.

In conclusion, does he not think that we should pass Bill C-216 to avoid nasty surprises and prevent anxiety for our agricultural producers, who are the foundation of our economy?

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the member for Berthier—Maskinongé is right that there has been a lot of uncertainty. He is also right to suggest that the government has no reason to brag when it comes to supply-managed sectors. The government, after all, did not get a deal on that. All it got was an extension of the current terms of CETA. With respect to the government's record on delivering compensation to supply-managed sectors in respect of other agreements, we know it has failed to meet the promises it made.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, is the member concerned about the government's saying that it will start negotiations in a year and that its goal is to have an agreement in three years with no sunset clause? If it does not reach its goal in three years, I guess it will change its goal to another three years and if it does not achieve that, it will go on for another three years.

Is the member concerned that there is no sunset clause to make a permanent agreement? Right now, it is not bound to anything; it just continues on. I would like to hear the member's comments on that, please.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, in short, yes, I am concerned about the absence of a sunset clause. Although this agreement is being billed as a temporary transitional agreement, a carry-over agreement, and the government has gone to pains to emphasize that fact, there is no guarantee. It could in fact be a permanent agreement; hence, the need for the government to focus and get back to the table so that we do reach a permanent agreement like other countries have achieved but we have not.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to make a brief comment before moving to the next question.

I am so grateful to the hon. member for Saint-Jean for replacing me for a few minutes. It is sometimes necessary on Fridays. She heard a point of order, and there were some problems with the technology. She did an excellent job, and I thank her.

• (1330)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, pursuant to an order made on Monday, January 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Monday, February 1, 2021, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***OIL TANKER MORATORIUM ACT**

The House resumed from November 2, 2020 consideration of the motion that Bill C-229, An Act to repeal certain restrictions on shipping, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe I was only one minute into it. I am not 100% sure, but I think I had about nine minutes left. Is that the case?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary raises a good point, and it is good for him to check.

In fact, per our records, he has the full 10 minutes for his remarks.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, when I think of Bill C-229, the first thing that comes to mind is that the Conservative Party is not necessarily in tune with the expectations Canadians have with respect to the responsibilities and the need to commit to protecting our environment, whether it is the land or water. It will be interesting to see if the entire Conservative caucus supports Bill C-229.

Bill C-229 would repeal Bill C-48. Members might recall that Bill C-48 was the oil tanker moratorium act, which passed back in June 2019. If members were to review the Debates, they would find that it was fairly well discussed, whether in committee or on the floor of the House. However, at the time, the only party that took Bill C-48 to task was the Conservative Party. The New Democrats, members of the Green Party and the Bloc supported it.

I like to think that the Government of Canada has done a good job in balancing the important issue of our environment and economic development. It has been demonstrated by policy decisions. Examples of that include Bill C-48, the oil tanker moratorium act, which received support from the above noted parties. Many provincial jurisdictions were very supportive of the need for the moratorium.

We can look at other issues. For example, the government worked very closely with the provincial NDP premier and were able to achieve the LNG, which is good for the Province of British Columbia and therefore good for Canada. It was the single largest private-government investment in infrastructure and ensured that LNG would in fact get off the ground. However, it would not have been possible had it not been for the support of the NDP in the Province of British Columbia.

We can look at Trans Mountain, which, ultimately, will be successful. The project is under construction and will ensure we are able to move a natural resource to the coast. The former government under Stephen Harper was never able to do that.

I like to think the reason we have been successful in recognizing these valuable projects is because, as a government, we are also very much aware of and sensitive to our environment, indigenous concerns and to what Canadians expect us to respond to. At the end of the day, Bill C-229 would move us backward. The first thing I

think of when I see legislation of this nature is what else we can anticipate from the Conservative Party that will move us backward.

I suspect that if we were to canvass Canadians, we would find that there is fairly good support on environmental initiatives and when we get the type of general acceptance those initiatives, the Conservative Party needs to wake up and sense that reality.

● (1335)

This whole Conservative spin seems to be more focused on trying to give a false impression that we cannot handle the environment and the economy in such a way that development of natural resources can continue. It can, and we have demonstrated that. Canadians expect the Government of Canada to balance economic needs with environmental goals.

The tanker moratorium that was passed in 2019 is an excellent example of how we can balance and achieve just that. The moratorium provides the highest level of environmental protection for British Columbia's northern coastline. It is integral to the livelihoods and cultures of indigenous and coastal communities that are located there and ensures the protection and preservation of that.

This is another example of the Government of Canada delivering on commitments to Canadians. After all, no one should be surprised. We made this commitment. It was in the mandate letter given to the minister at the time. The federal government met with many different indigenous groups, communities and a wide spectrum of stakeholders. We listened and gathered input on the moratorium. Our engagement was extensive. It was passed back in 2019 because of the amount of that engagement. We wanted to ensure we got it right.

Whenever bold initiatives are taken to try to move forward on important files, we will always get some criticism. There is no doubt about that. However, what surprises me is the level of criticism and amount of spin coming from the Conservative Party of Canada. One has to wonder what the motivation is for that. Is it purely the political optics of espousing false information about how the government does not care about western Canada, in particular the province of Alberta? That might have a lot more to do with the political motivation of the official opposition. If those members were to put their motivation to the side and start to focus their attention on the environment, on protecting our waterways, they could maybe see the true intrinsic value to the legislation.

I call upon members of the Conservative Party to think again about this legislation and understand that the consensus out there in favour of the current law. Are we to assume that if the leader of the official opposition were to become prime minister some day, heaven forbid, that he would get rid of the moratorium? That is the impression they will give when it comes time to vote on this. Will the leader of the Conservative Party support this private member's bill? I think a lot of Canadians would be gravely concerned to see that.

If that is the case, I for one will be one of those individuals who will be talking about that in the next federal election. I believe that the people who I represent, and Canadians as a whole, understand and appreciate the moratorium that was put in place through Bill C-48.

Hopefully, we will see the Conservatives come on side and recognize what Bill C-229 would do and vote against it.

• (1340)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one of my primary reasons for getting involved in politics was to help protect the environment.

I think we must all set partisanship aside and collectively focus on climate action and on protecting biodiversity. We need to do this for ourselves and for future generations.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives have introduced a bill that does not respect this imperative. Canada's natural environments need to be protected, not undermined. Collateral damage from Bill C-229 would go beyond potential accidental deep-water spills and the predictable environmental disruption; it would ravage the Great Bear Rainforest. The rainforest is a carbon sink that is home to the west coast's iconic biodiversity.

Bill C-229 would increase crude and persistent oil exports by sea in British Columbia by eliminating the current limit of 12,500 metric tons per tanker.

How can we let oil tankers dock on the shores of this precious forest? When will the Conservatives understand that now is the time for focusing on the energy transition and not for stubbornly fighting for one of the dirtiest forms of oil production in the world? I cannot understand how my colleagues in the official opposition can show such a complete lack of environmental conscience; they have become lackeys for the multinational oil companies.

During this week's emergency debate on Keystone XL, people said that Canada produces cleaner energy than anybody else in the world. One member said, "This oil is better economically, and this oil is better environmentally." Another said, "Canada's oil and gas sector is already leading the world in ESG performance." People even talked about environmentally friendly oil.

I invite the official opposition members to look at the work of Calgary's ARC Energy Research Institute, which published a report stating that, of the world's 75 crude oils, the oil extracted from the Alberta oil sands is the third most polluting and produces 24% more greenhouse gases than the average crude oil refined in the United States.

With everyone so focused on the pandemic, it is not surprising to see bills designed to compromise environmental safety or introduce regulatory measures that tone down existing restrictions in ways that help oil and gas corporations.

I wish someone would tell me one thing. Is the lack of consideration for climate reality the result of a misunderstanding of the impending consequences, wilful blindness or general climate change denial? Bill C-229 is nothing less than an ideological measure

whose sole purpose is to extract and sell this resource as quickly as possible.

I would remind members that Canada's record on marine transportation is far from stellar. The commissioner of the environment and sustainable development had the following to say about Transport Canada in a report from October 2020:

...there is still important work to be done...including follows-up on violations identified through inspections. ...the department had not finished its work to give final approval to many companies' plans to respond to emergencies.

The commissioner also informed us that, based on the 2011 audit on the transportation of dangerous goods, Transport Canada had not taken all the actions required to address key elements of the recommendation made.

With this kind of information about Transport Canada at our fingertips, what we have to do is simple: We must not allow any regulations to be relaxed and we must tighten inspections. In short, nothing can be overlooked.

Another major issue with this deregulation trend in this sector is self-assessment. Observations by federal scientific researchers published in Nature Communications indicate that the oil sands emit up to 64% more CO₂ than the resource companies report. Worse, the data that is sent to government organizations comes from the oil companies. Canada's official record is also inaccurate. Do people truly understand what that means?

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change says things like oil development projects off the coast of Newfoundland will support sustainable development by protecting the environment. The Prime Minister says that for five years we have shown that investing in oil and gas projects and fighting climate change can go hand in hand. How is it possible to say such things knowing full well that drilling oil is incompatible with sustainable development, environmental protection and biodiversity?

• (1345)

I forgot to mention something. The same day it was announced that drilling off the coast of Newfoundland was approved without a federal environmental impact assessment and in a significant biodiversity area, the government committed \$55 million for biodiversity at the One Planet Summit. That is how diametrically opposed concepts are made to go hand in hand.

Quebeckers and Canadians should not be shackled to projects that will lead them straight to an environmental or climate disaster or an economic disaster. Since the economic argument comes up so often, let us talk about it.

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The organizations that have divested from fossil fuels have been listed many times in the House, but I will list them again: Sweden's central bank, the European Investment Bank, Norway's sovereign wealth fund, BlackRock, the influential British Medical Association, and more than 40 faith groups from 14 countries. We cannot forget the New York State Pension Fund and its \$500 billion U.S., whose managers have committed to a net-zero investment strategy within four years. Let us also not forget the largest insurer in the world, Lloyd's, which will stop insuring coal operations and fossil fuel exploration projects.

In 2019, over 1,100 institutions with more than \$11 trillion U.S. in assets under management committed to divesting from fossil fuels, a 22,000% increase from the \$52 billion originally committed in 2014. These pledges come from 48 countries and major cities with stock exchanges such as Paris and New York City, and 70% come from outside the United States.

The Conservatives can continue to kick up a fuss about the regulation of this industry, as they did when they proposed a bill like Bill C-229. However, the drop in the price per barrel of Alberta oil, which only generates a profit at \$45 or more, one of the highest prices in the world, combined with the realities that I just talked about, means that meaningful measures must be taken to immediately expedite the transition to renewable energy.

The existing regulations have nothing to do with the slump this resource is experiencing. The global economy is changing in response to growing environmental awareness. We should be happy about that.

Canada must be part of this essential collective effort. For example, Alberta's geothermal potential is a golden opportunity to join the energy transition. This fledgling industry, which has great potential on Canadian soil, could give workers who already have drilling experience a chance to participate in the development of this sector and thus help diversify Canada's energy mix. What is more, government organizations already have the geological data on areas in western Canada with geothermal energy potential. Workers deserve to see their elected officials working to improve their future and their children's future, do they not?

We have repeatedly heard the argument of economic reconciliation with indigenous peoples used in support of the oil and gas sector. The Bloc Québécois proposes that we start instead by ensuring that indigenous communities have clean drinking water and health care, and then focus on clean resources that are adapted to their geographic regions.

Have we forgotten the demands of the Wet'suwet'en already? Have we forgotten that cancer rates in the communities downstream along the Athabasca River are 30% higher than the provincial rate? Have we forgotten their fight to protect their ancestral lands and traditional resources?

When the energy transition is no longer just an environmental imperative, but also an economic imperative, then why get left behind when we could be leading the charge to a carbon-neutral economy? Every member of Parliament who cares about the well-being of future generations and the sustainability of the environment will refuse to support this bill and instead devote their efforts to meeting

the same objective set by other countries around the world, namely to fix the damage to the environment and the climate.

● (1350)

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act, which protects a region in northern B.C. from the devastating impacts of a crude oil spill.

The oil tanker moratorium has overwhelming support from residents along the north coast, and represents decades of work from a coalition of first nations, unions, environmentalists and community leaders. In fact for a half century, people have been fighting to protect this area from tankers.

In 1971 and 1972, the B.C. Legislature and then the House of Commons passed unanimous motions opposing oil tanker traffic on the waters off our north coast. In the late 1970s, there was a federal commission of inquiry into oil tankers on B.C.'s north coast and the commissioner stated:

Despite my familiarity with this history of determined opposition to tanker traffic, I have been surprised to find it so universal.

For anyone who knows the north coast, it is not surprising that so many people are willing to fight to protect this area, especially from the risk of a catastrophic spill.

I was born in Kispiox, near the Skeena River, and while I left very early in life, my partner grew up in Prince Rupert. We now go back to visit the north coast for the holidays, though sadly just by Zoom this past Christmas. Anyone who has spent time in this region knows that it is something incredible. It is a unique and special place that deserves our protection. The Skeena River, the Great Bear Rainforest and the coast itself are areas that future generations are counting on us to protect.

First nations rely on the coastal ecosystem harvest resources that are central to their cultural traditions. Thousands of workers are employed in the tourism and fisheries industries, and their livelihoods would be threatened if there were a spill.

It is not a surprise that the oil tanker moratorium is overwhelmingly supported by residents along the north coast. It is not a surprise that the Coastal First Nations alliance, the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union and dozens of other community organizations and environmental groups in northern B.C. and across Canada have fought to protect this area.

My colleague, the MP for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, also recently started a petition in opposition to this bill that would undermine protections, and it quickly garnered over 900 signatures. This month he also hosted a town hall on the oil tanker moratorium, where residents overwhelmingly spoke about the necessity of a ban on tankers. They expressed a need for even stronger protections than currently exist in the act, and dismay at the fact that they once again have to fight against a threat to the place they call home, but they also expressed their conviction and determination to stand together.

I want to take a moment to congratulate the new Minister of Transport on his appointment, and to stress how vital it is that he and his government understand the perspectives of residents along the north coast. The impact of a crude oil spill on the Great Bear Rainforest and some of the last remaining wild salmon fisheries in North America would be absolutely devastating.

Experts describe a successful cleanup rate for a diluted bitumen spill on the north coast as less than 7% recovery. I want members to think about that for a second. A successful cleanup entails 7% recovery, so 93% of the oil spill would remain in the environment. That is diluted bitumen, which sinks to the bottom and wreaks havoc on ecosystems, in a place where communities rely on the rivers and ocean for their very livelihoods and for their culture.

Not that long ago, the *Exxon Valdez* showed the world the devastating potential of a spill along coastal waters. The shorelines still bear the impacts of that spill. It has been 30 years, and fish habitat and stocks still have not fully recovered. Spill cleanup and coastal recovery cost \$9.5 billion, of which Exxon paid less than half.

An *Exxon Valdez*-style oil spill along our north coast would be catastrophic. It would devastate wild salmon, marine mammals, birds and coastal forests including our treasured Great Bear Rainforest. It would devastate coastal economies, tourism, aquaculture, commercial fishing and first nations fishing.

● (1355)

We know that even a minor spill in this area can cause extensive damage. When the *Nathan E. Stewart* fuel barge ran aground in 2016 near Bella Bella, right near the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest, it spilled 110,000 litres of diesel into the marine environment. Cleanup efforts were repeatedly hampered by bad weather, and the vessel was not fully recovered until more than a month after it sank. We only need to talk to members of the Heiltsuk Nation to know that this was devastating to the area. It has been over four years and the traditional Heiltsuk clam-harvesting areas have still not recovered.

Imagine if that has been a supertanker instead of diesel diluted bitumen. This should be a no-brainer. The risks clearly outweigh the benefits to the north coast residents, but also to our entire province and, I would argue, to our country. The waters in the northwest are stormy, the passages are narrow and treacherous and supertankers are not designed to navigate these areas.

The fact that the Conservatives are prioritizing this issue, even in the midst of a global pandemic, and bringing forward a bill to try to undo half a century of work to protect the north coast highlights the

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risk a Conservative government poses. What kind of party would rip up these hard-won protections and put so much at risk?

What do they propose to replace the act they would do away with? There is literally nothing. The bill offers no alternative measures to protect the north coast. It offers nothing to protect the livelihoods of the communities in the area and nothing to protect the rights of indigenous people along the north coast. It takes the exact opposite approach of what is needed right now. Rather than debating repealing the act and removing important protections for our coast, we should be here talking about strengthening it to guard against spills that would devastate marine environments and disrupt vital ecosystems.

The current act does not protect against spills like the *Nathan E. Stewart* spill. It does not protect against tankers below a certain size. It does not provide any increased spill response or mitigate the risks to the north coast.

We could strengthen the act by limiting arbitrary ministerial powers or lowering the oil-carrying capacity cap. This also raises the issue of the risk of increased crude oil tankers along the entire B.C. coast. The Trans Mountain expansion project is not simply economically unsound, with over 100 economists writing to the Prime Minister to urge him to cancel the project. The energy regulator, the government's own watchdog, has said that it will not be profitable if we take climate action. Even the Conservatives denounced the government's decision to buy the pipeline. It poses environmental risks. It is a disaster waiting to happen. It puts our coast at risk, with a sevenfold increase in tanker traffic. We must say no to TMX.

The risks of having tankers along the north coast are even greater. For those of us who live on this coast, who love this coast, there is no option but to stand up against the bill. There is no option but to fight to protect the places we love. There is no option but to protect the people and the communities we are part of, and protect our oceans, our rivers and our environment for future generations.

● (1400)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak in favour of jobs, the environment and the prosperity and dignity of our indigenous people, and to speak against the wrong-headed decision of the Liberal government to ban the shipments of clean, green Canadian energy off the northwest coast of British Columbia.

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Before I begin addressing the specifics of this export, I would like to address some of the falsehoods that have been espoused by numerous members of the House, including the preceding member, that have been used to destroy the jobs and livelihoods of thousands of Canadians, including our indigenous people, over the last five years.

Let me start with the first falsehood that has been used to justify this attack on our clean green western Canadian energy sector, that the reason our energy sector is suffering is the world is moving away from oil. That is just the way the world is going we are told. That is factually wrong. In fact, this week the IMF reported that oil prices will rise 20% this year over last. The International Energy Agency projects that oil consumption will average 100 million barrels per day, every day, for the next 20 years. That is not a reduction. The agency predicts that, even if all of the most draconian anti-energy, anti-carbon policies were put in place by all of the governments of the world, for the next two decades the globe will still consume at least 60 million barrels of oil per day. That is why the U.S. oil sector has doubled its production in the last 13 years while our sector has been in full-scale collapse. The question is not if the world will use oil; the question is how and, more importantly, whose oil?

The member for Regina—Lewvan brought to the world's attention an interesting point recently. He said that the trendy anti-development hipsters who are constantly telling us they buy fair trade coffee are not concerned in the least whether or not they are consuming fair trade oil. They see no problem with Canada importing millions of barrels of oil from countries that engage in monstrous human rights violations to produce their oil. At the same time, they denigrate the production of ethical clean, green Canadian petroleum.

That brings us to the next falsehood that opponents of this bill and the energy sector in Canada have espoused, which is that their policies are attempting to help the environment. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Let me first address the tanker ban this bill proposes to remove.

There are some exceptions to the tanker ban in Canada that the Liberal government put in, with the support of the NDP and the Green Party. Those exceptions include that petroleum products can be shipped in northern British Columbia waters. Liquefied natural gas, gasoline and jet fuel can pass through those waters. Of course, all of those fuels are foreign-produced fuels. The ban only applies to ethically produced Canadian oil being shipped out of Canada, but not unethical and environmentally degrading foreign oil being shipped off the coast. The ban has nothing to do with protecting the coast from shipping, as it allows shipping; it just does not allow the shipping of Canadian products. When the Liberals brought in their bill, they only banned Canadian energy from being shipped off the northwestern coast, not the passage of foreign energy through our waters. Obviously, it has nothing to do with protecting the waters or protecting against spills, but has everything to do with shutting in Canadian energy production.

• (1405)

Finally, on this point about the environment, we have the most environmentally friendly oil sector in the world. In fact, if we were

to displace a world barrel of oil with an Alberta or Saskatchewan barrel of oil, we would reduce global emissions, because our emissions per barrel are lower than the global average. In fact, some Canadian oil companies are not only proposing to go carbon neutral, but there is also one, Whitecap Resources, a Calgary-based oil company, that is the world's first carbon-negative company. It presently takes more carbon out of the atmosphere than it puts into it. It has found a way to do this by storing carbon beneath the earth, from where it originally came. This is perhaps one of the most promising emission-reduction technologies on earth. In fact, Elon Musk announced just in the last two weeks that he would pay \$100 million to the best carbon capture and storage initiative that a company can invent. I hope that Mr. Musk, whom I am sure is listening to this speech, takes a careful look at Whitecap Resources and gives \$100 million to that company to create more jobs taking carbon out of the atmosphere.

The next falsehood that opponents of Canadian energy spread is that they are doing this for indigenous people. That is a total and absolute falsehood. In fact, when the Liberal government, under the current Prime Minister, cancelled the Northern Gateway pipeline, which would have shipped western oil to the Pacific and onward to Asia, a statement in response was issued by 31 first nations and Métis communities:

We are profoundly shocked and disappointed by the news that the Federal Government has no intention of pursuing any further consultation and dialogue with our communities on the important issue of the Northern Gateway Project. We are also deeply disappointed that a Prime Minister who campaigned on a promise of reconciliation with Indigenous communities would now blatantly choose to deny our 31 First Nations and Métis communities of our constitutionally protected right to economic development. We see today's announcement as clear evidence of their unwillingness to follow through on his promise....

The economic benefits from Northern Gateway to Indigenous communities are unprecedented in Canadian history. As part of the opportunity to share up to 33% ownership and control in a major Canadian energy infrastructure project, the project's Aboriginal Equity Partners [would] also receive \$2 billion in long-term economic, business, and education opportunities for their communities.

All of the left-wing members, the Greens, the New Democrats and the Liberals, who claim that they believe in reconciliation, had no problem vaporizing that \$2-billion worth of educational, economic and business opportunities for those communities. They had no problem bulldozing over the constitutional rights of indigenous communities to be consulted before energy and resource decisions are made with respect to their lands, because these parties actually do not care about reconciliation; they care only about using first nation communities as an excuse, a false and dishonest excuse, to block energy sector development and to play to a far left ideology that does nothing for this country. Therefore, it is another falsehood to claim that any of this is being done for the indigenous people.

Next, there is a claim that this sector only matters to western Canada. Again, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, Canada's number-one export is oil. It is far greater than auto parts, which is a distant second, and far greater than any other export. Since the attack on our energy sector that began in 2015, Canada has had a trade deficit in every single year. That means we are buying more from the world and are borrowing from the world to pay for it. That is a recipe to indebt and enslave ourselves to foreign lenders, who lend to us so that we can buy from them. They get the money, we get the debt, and forever after we work to pay their bills through interest payments. That is not a future. Our future should be one of energy independence, of reaching foreign markets, getting world prices and getting big powerful paycheques for Canadian workers, especially indigenous workers, to defeat poverty through powerful new job opportunities for pipe fitters, welders, engineers and others.

This is the way that we secure jobs, secure our economy and secure our future.

• (1410)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, while I disagree with much of what my colleague has just said, I rise on a point of order because of a word that he used when he was categorizing the indigenous positions on this and many other subjects as somehow unanimous or collective. I disagree with that assertion entirely, but my point of order is that the member for Carleton used a possessive noun to describe indigenous people, the word “our”. It is a paternalistic and antiquated way to refer to people, and I would ask that he unreservedly remove that reference from the record.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for intervening. As far as the standing order goes, what we are looking for is whether something unparliamentary has been said in debate. I was waiting to see what the word was that the parliamentary secretary heard that he felt was potentially not parliamentary. In this particular case, the hon. member has a difference of opinion with how a debate has been presented, and that will have to be taken up in debate.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank you for allowing me to speak today on Bill C-229, an act to repeal certain restrictions on shipping. This private member's bill would repeal the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act on British Columbia's north coast, and I rise today to defend the commitment our government made when we passed this legislation in 2019.

[English]

The Oil Tanker Moratorium Act is a significant and unprecedented measure in protecting British Columbia's north coast. It was a promise made to Canadians by our Prime Minister in 2015 and a mandate commitment that our government proudly fulfilled.

Let me remind members what this act accomplishes.

It prohibits oil tankers carrying more than 12,500 metric tons of crude oil or persistent oil products as cargo from stopping, loading or unloading at ports or marine installations in the moratorium area.

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The act targets crude oil and persistent oils specifically because they are heavier, and when spilled, they tend to break up and dissipate slowly, putting fragile marine and shoreline ecosystems at risk. It represents a precautionary approach aimed at protecting precious coastal habitats, allowing their ecosystems and marine species to continue to flourish. While this legislation is in force, it ensures that there will be no large shipments of crude or persistent oil products off of British Columbia's north coast.

[Translation]

The moratorium area covers almost two-thirds of British Columbia's coast, extending from the northern tip of Vancouver Island in the south to the Canada-U.S. border at Alaska. It includes one of the largest areas of coastal temperate rainforest in the world, along with the naturally and culturally distinct archipelago of Haida Gwaii, which, because of its remoteness, is home to several species of plants and mammals that are found nowhere else on our planet.

The region's nutrient-dense waters make them prime feeding and spawning habitats for a remarkable number and variety of species. Orcas, humpback whales, dolphins and puffins, to name just a few, are all clustered within the region, while some of the largest salmon runs on the entire west coast are found there.

Further beneath the ocean's surface exist stunning ecological communities of seaweeds, kelp, invertebrates and fish. For those who live in and around these cherished ecosystems, there is little doubt of the protection they deserve. Indigenous groups in particular, who have lived here for thousands of years, work to maintain their historic relationship with the waters and land they populate through a fierce commitment to conservation, and the inherent responsibility to protect the environment and the innumerable resources it provides.

That said, populations of northern coastal B.C. remain relatively sparse, which makes responding to potential oil spills challenging. Frequent winter storms with strong winds bring unpredictable swells that will challenge even the most experienced mariners. The shallow waters and high winds of Hecate Strait for example, combined with strong currents emanating from deep water zones like the Douglas Channel can make the north coast a true test for sailors.

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● (1415)

[English]

The populations in and around these delicate ecosystems know what is at stake and know what the devastating impact of an oil spill in this region could be. A significant oil pollution incident would not only have destructive consequences on the multitude of diverse and exceptional ecological communities that make up this region; it would equally threaten the cultural and spiritual connections between the marine environment and local communities, as well as the continued sustainable use and management of ocean resources.

Commercial and recreational fisheries, processing facilities, aquaculture, logging and tourism represent just a small window of the range of economic activity sustained by the marine environments in this region. This activity is essential to the economic life cycle of many communities within the moratorium area.

Just as important, many of these industries and surrounding communities rely on marine transportation to supply essential fuel products for their businesses and homes. Safe and efficient marine resupply operations are a lifeline given the limited road and rail access for so many coastal communities. The moratorium ensures that these critical resupply operations continue to be permitted by allowing shipments of crude or persistent oil products below 12,500 metric tons.

[Translation]

Canada already has one of the strongest marine safety regimes in the world, with a track record in marine safety that meets or exceeds international standards. Our government is committed to safe, sustainable, and efficient marine transportation that improves responsible shipping, while supporting economic growth. We are, after all, a maritime nation, with more coastline than any other nation in the world.

Our historic \$1.5-billion oceans protection plan is creating a world-leading marine safety system, restoring and protecting marine and coastal ecosystems and habitats, enhancing environmental and local emergency response, and strengthening our ability to trade with confidence and safety.

All three of Canada's coastlines—the west coast, the east coast and the Arctic coast—are targeted for specific initiatives through the oceans protection plan. This is a plan that continues to be built on science, technology and indigenous input to protect Canada's unique marine environment.

Our government knows this cannot be accomplished alone, which is why we are working closely with those who know these environments best. New partnerships are in the process of being built, while existing partnerships with stakeholders, Indigenous groups and coastal communities are being strengthened. These collaborative partnerships represent a new way of doing business. Undoubtedly there are challenges ahead of us, but working together will help get things done in a way that reflects the needs of those who benefit most from our oceans and our coasts.

The Oil Tanker Moratorium Act complements this work and is an additional layer of protection for British Columbia's north coast,

yet the private member's bill before us today seeks to remove every protection that this act offers for this globally significant region. That is why I am asking all members of the House to continue supporting the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act so that future generations will continue to benefit from and fully appreciate the pristine ecosystems of British Columbia's north coast as so many have before them.

● (1420)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate with the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London, I will let her know that to keep enough time in the hour for the right of reply, she will only have about four to five minutes available for her remarks as opposed to the usual 10 minutes.

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have had an important time here, listening to this debate, and listening to the members of the government and of other opposition parties talk about why Bill C-48, or this bill, Bill C-229, should not be reversed.

Regarding some of the issues and decisions that were made by the previous government, we have seen an incredible negative impact on many of our communities throughout Canada. Specifically, the previous speaker, the deputy House leader, was talking about how we want to focus on western alienation, trying to make this a political matter.

As a member from southwestern Ontario, I can say that I too am very concerned about the direction we are going. In our own communities, we are talking about things such as Line 5. Line 5 is a pipeline that continues to come from Michigan into southwestern Ontario. It provides all of the natural fuels that we need, including propane. On the propane issue, we saw back in 2018-19, when there were some problems with getting fuel by train, our farmers were running out, the people in Quebec were running out, and the east coast was running out of propane to fuel and heat their homes.

These are types of concerns I have because the types of policies we are putting forward today sometimes do not look at the bigger pictures and some of the negative impacts. I have heard and really do appreciate all of the great comments made on the environment because I believe that we do need to make sure that we are leaving this country and this globe better for the future.

At the same time, I am very concerned with some of the decisions that we make that put a trap and handcuffs on our own economy. These are the things that we have to have a balanced approach to. For all the other members who are speaking to this, yes, I hear them and members of the Conservative Party hear them, but we are trying to find a balanced approach where, as our former minister of the environment used to say, the economy and the environment can go hand in hand.

● (1425)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I like that.

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Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Kingston and the Islands. Yes, I know that is liked. However, the fact is that what we have actually seen is the huge disconnect between the economy and the environment, so I would ask that we have a more balanced approach.

We have talked about Bill C-69 and Bill C-48 of the 42nd Parliament many, many times. We know that the current government has put through policies that are stopping any of the oil sands work that is being done and not focusing on what we need to do here. We are a country with great resources, and it is very important that we ethically source these resources and then get them out for export.

We are a country that currently is bringing in our fuel from places like the U.K., and I still cannot fathom that, as well as from Algeria, Venezuela and Saudi Arabia. We should be looking at what we have in our own backyard. Knowing that it is ethically sourced and knowing that we can do a great job here in Canada, we should be doing made-in-Canada projects.

I respect the members who are talking about this bill and talking about what we can do on the west coast. This has very important impacts on knowing what we need to do to keep on with our environment. When we speak about first nations and indigenous people, we have to understand that many indigenous groups are asking for work like this to be done. They recognize that the environment can be used with environmentally friendly methods.

I hope we can have an honest discussion where we try to find a balance between the economy and the environment, unlike what we are doing right now.

The Deputy Speaker: With that, and accordingly, I will invite the hon. member for Edmonton Centre for his right of reply. The hon. member has up to five minutes, and we will go to him now.

The hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank all my colleagues who spoke on this bill. Whether they agreed with it or not, I appreciate that they took the time and effort to speak in the House today.

When I ran for office, I was incredibly concerned about the Canadian economy. I am a proud Canadian and a proud Albertan, and I am absolutely proud of our resource sector, which has been fuelling a lot of our economy.

Bill C-48, which would be displaced by my Bill C-229, was never about marine traffic transportation safety or ecological life in northern B.C. It really was a bill that restricted the ability of the strong oil and gas sector to continue to grow. It has become even more apparent now, with the debate over Keystone XL and our ability to get our products to market.

There has been a massive exodus of energy dollars from Canada. We can argue that is world demand, but I am not part of that argument. If we look at recent history, Norway has planned a massive expansion into the Arctic for expanded oil and gas. In Russia, Vostok Oil is planning a massive expansion. The U.S. has become one of the largest exporters of oil and gas, and a lot of that is coming out of Canadian reserves.

Canada has this fantastic position, in that we are the third-largest reserve in the world and we have this enormous opportunity to extract our resources in a safe and environmentally friendly way and play into the market.

Over the last few days, we have been discussing a trade agreement with the U.K. It is interesting to look at the U.K. Where do its imports come from? Norway, the U.S., Algeria, Russia and Nigeria are its big suppliers. Canada is not even a player. Canada is 97% into the U.S. and 3% into the international market.

I firmly believe that we can safely extract oil and gas within our country and ship it in a safe fashion. It is not like we do not have tanker traffic in this country. We have tankers going up the east coast, delivering crude to refineries there, and we all realize that the St. Lawrence has consistent tanker traffic day in and day out. We are able to do that in a safe fashion and protect the environment and our citizens.

Let us not forget that our federal debt-to-GDP ratio is at about 15% and growing. We are looking at a federal debt in excess of \$1 trillion by the end of the year. We have the highest unemployment rate in the G7. Oil is one of our largest exports, primarily to one customer.

Does anyone really think that Canada can come out of this massive recession without a strong oil and gas sector and without being part of the international market? We have the opportunity to gain market share. We have the opportunity to displace players who do not follow the same rules we do as Canadians.

This is a bill that would right a wrong and fix an incredibly discriminatory piece of legislation. It is a bill that is essential for an industry that has helped fuel the economy of Canada, and I am incredibly proud of it. It is essential for the thousands of workers who are proud of their work in that sector and the product they produce. It is essential for manufacturing in Canada in a variety of fields. It is essential to the environment. If Canada has the opportunity to displace those bad players, we can do that with some of the most stringent environmental and labour standards. It is essential to respect the right of the provinces to get their product to market.

I live in a province that feels that it has been left out. I believe this is an opportunity for us to right a wrong, get Albertans and Canadians back to work, and be proud of the work that we can do here in Canada.

● (1430)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

If a member of a recognized party who is present in the House wishes to request either a recorded division or that the motion be adopted on division, I invite them now to rise and indicate so to the Chair.

Private Members' Business

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, we would request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, and pursuant to an order made on Monday, January 25, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 3, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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