



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on International Trade

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 019

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

Chair: Judy A. Sgro



Standing Committee on International Trade

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

• (1100)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.)): I call the meeting to order. Welcome to everyone.

Welcome, Minister Sidhu. Glad to have you here in your role as minister. I think it's the second time you've been to committee since you switched from being a committee member to being the minister.

Happy new year to everybody. I'm glad to see everybody was able to make it to our meeting today.

This is meeting number 19 of the Standing Committee on International Trade.

Pursuant to the order of reference of Thursday, December 11, we are studying Bill C-13, an act to implement the protocol on the accession of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

We have with us today, as I mentioned, the Honourable Maninder Sidhu, Minister of International Trade, and from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, we have Mary-Catherine Speirs, director general, trade negotiations bureau. It's nice to see you again.

Welcome, all.

I understand that the minister is not going to take the usual 10 minutes that ministers do. He's going to do opening remarks of five minutes. That will leave more time for questions from the committee members.

I will now open the floor to Minister Sidhu.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu (Minister of International Trade): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[Translation]

Good morning, everyone.

[English]

It's so nice to be back here in the trade committee room, where I spent a lot of time previous to my role as a Minister of International Trade. I'm excited to be back here with you as you do important work. This was one of my favourite committees, because it was all about collaboration and getting good things done for Canadians.

Thank you for having me here today as we speak to Bill C-13 and, of course, the future of Canada's trade relationship with the United Kingdom.

Bill C-13 is about strengthening one of Canada's most enduring partnerships and taking it into the future. It brings the United Kingdom into the CPTPP as the first new member of this high-standard trading bloc.

That matters, because the U.K. is not just a trading partner: It's a strategic partner, an economic partner and a long-standing ally of Canada. Our histories are deeply connected, our economies are complementary and our people-to-people ties run very deep. As global trade shifts, this relationship will only grow more important, not less.

This agreement builds on the Canada-United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement, which preserved tariff-free access for Canadian exporters to a market of more than 67 million consumers. That matters. It matters for farmers, manufacturers, service providers and small businesses across the country that depend on stable, predictable access to global markets.

Bill C-13 is not about standing still. It's about moving forward. It positions Canada to modernize our trade rules, deepen our commercial ties with the U.K. and ensure Canadian businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, can compete and win in a rapidly changing global economy.

Yes, even among close partners, trade relationships require constant work. We continue to address trade irritants with the U.K. directly, constructively and with one goal in mind: fair treatment for Canadian workers, producers and exporters. That's what serious trade policy looks like, and that's the standard this government holds.

What gives me confidence is this: Canadians are ready, our businesses are innovative, our workers are world class and our products are trusted globally.

Our government is focused on expanding Canada's trade horizons, deepening strong partnerships and building new ones that reflect today's economic reality. This is not trade for trade's sake; this is trade that delivers. It's trade that supports good jobs in every region across our country, strengthens supply chains, attracts investments and creates opportunity for the next generation of Canadian entrepreneurs. It's trade that makes Canadians more resilient, more competitive and more prosperous.

At the centre of it all are Canadian workers. Every agreement we negotiate, every barrier we remove and every partnership we strengthen is done with workers in mind. Their success is Canada's success. Their resilience is Canada's resilience.

Bill C-13 reflects a confident, outward-looking Canada, a country that understands the value of global engagement and the importance of strong, reliable partners like the United Kingdom. It reflects a government that is focused, optimistic and determined to ensure Canadians can compete and win on the global stage.

This is how we build Canada strong: by opening doors, creating opportunities and making sure that the benefit of trade reaches workers, families and communities across our vast country.

Madam Chair, I'm very delighted to be here on short notice. As you know, we got the notice yesterday. We're here today. It's always exciting. I'm sure I'll be here many more times as we progress on many of our trade agreements, but I'm happy to take questions from members today.

Thank you.

• (1105)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister Sidhu.

We will start with our committee's questions.

Go ahead, Mr. Mantle, please.

Jacob Mantle (York—Durham, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

We too received short notice today. This is not a new issue. This is something you've been dealing with for months, and I would suggest that if the government takes this matter seriously, it should provide parliamentarians with appropriate notice to prepare to consider your remarks and the remarks of officials, not two hours and 10 minutes in the morning on the second day back from our constituency break.

You talked about trade delivering...preserving access, but by all accounts, Minister, the deal we are getting is worse than the deal we had. The trade continuity agreement, which we previously had, was in large part based on the provisions of the Canada-EU trade agreement, CETA, as you know. Until very recently, the stated objective of your government was to negotiate a stand-alone Canada-U.K. trade agreement to preserve those mutual benefits that we had under CETA. What you've brought before us is a worse deal.

The TPP has comparatively higher tariff rates and slower tariff elimination. The TPP has less service and investment liberalization and more shallow regulatory co-operation. The TPP has less access for our agricultural products; no dedicated provisions for veterinary, sanitary and phytosanitary protocols; less breadth and depth of access for local government procurement opportunities; and weaker pharmaceutical protections. You said workers are top of your mind, while the TPP has weaker labour protections than our previous deal.

So, simply holding on to what we had, which was your stated objective until recently, would have been a better deal. How did you miss this opportunity to engage and redefine our trading relationship with the United Kingdom?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: We're talking about the CPTPP and what the quality of this agreement is. The CPTPP is a trading bloc of roughly a dozen countries that represent 15% of the global economy. If you look at trade numbers since the Government of Canada signed the CPTPP trade agreement in 2018, they have gone up; it has actually opened up more access for many industries.

I'll just give you some quick examples. Malaysia has had 25% growth since we signed on to the CPTPP. If you look at the numbers in Japan, with from \$29 billion to \$48 billion in 2023 alone, there's a 60% increase in two-way trade. For Vietnam, another important trading partner, there's an increase of roughly 110% growth. So this is about creating opportunities. This is about opening doors for workers.

There's a reason why countries are lining up to join the CPTPP; it's because of the high quality standards.

Coming back to the U.K., why is the U.K. important? It's our third-largest trading partner, and we need to continue opening doors. Currently with what we have with the U.K., we have 99% tariff-free access. Of course, we're working hard to get to that 100% mark; I'm fighting hard for that 1%. The CPTPP presents us an opportunity to have mechanisms in place to have those conversations to get to the full 100%.

I think it's important to know, look at the numbers, look at the facts. You look at the countries lining up to join the CPTPP. We need to be there to support countries like our counterparts in the U.K. to join this important trade agreement.

• (1110)

Jacob Mantle: Thank you, Minister.

Vietnam and Indonesia have nothing to do with our access to the United Kingdom. So, while I may agree with those positions, you've not answered my question. In fact, you've not disagreed with any of the points I made that the deal we are entering into is worse than the deal we had.

I have another question for you on a different matter. It's on your recent trip overseas to China. Tomorrow will be the one-year anniversary of the final report of the public inquiry into foreign interference, which identified China as our top foreign interference threat.

In fact in the election, of course you'll remember, and it's been widely reported, that the Prime Minister considered China to be our greatest security threat, and just eight months later we are now entering into what you are calling a strategic partnership.

Now, trade with China is necessary, a positive diplomatic relationship with China is necessary, but forging a new strategic partnership with China is a choice. Declaring that we are setting ourselves up for a new Chinese-led new world order is a choice. Doing those things with great fanfare and media attention is a choice.

What I would suggest to you is that attempting to trade American unpredictability for Chinese dependence is not the answer to our problems. I think Canadians are owed an explanation as to why in such a short period your government has moved from a position of considering China our greatest security threat to forging new strategic partnerships with a geopolitical adversary.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Through you, Madam Chair, I'd like to respond to the member regarding his important question in terms of the U.S. and, of course, China.

The U.S. will always be an important partner to Canada in terms of trade and other relationships.

When you look at China, our second-largest trading partner, it's important to engage at a time when our economic security is being threatened. The Joint Economic and Trade Commission, JETC, didn't sit for eight years to work through many of the trade irritants that the canola growers and the seafood industry have asked us to resolve, and that the beef industry has asked us to help them resolve.

This comes back to a conversation I had—when I was newly appointed back in May—in Paris with my counterpart from China, Minister Wang, to work toward reassessing and opening the JETC so we could work through many of these trade irritants. The trip to China was about resolving many of these irritants and getting access to many of these industries.

The canola industry alone supports 250,000 jobs. The beef industry has 350,000 jobs. When you look at the seafood sector in Atlantic Canada and on the west coast, there are about 30,000 jobs. To me, at the end of the day, it's about the workers on the ground and making sure we're giving access...to those workers.

That trip to China resulted in shipments getting out the door. Our first beef shipment in many years is now out the door. Canola shipments are now going out the door. This is what workers and stakeholders have asked us to do, and we're there.

Of course, we're making sure that we're protecting Canadians and that there are security provisions in place. Those will remain there. We always make sure that we're standing up for Canadians, and we will continue to do that, but we need to be eyes wide open and pragmatic about our approach. China is our second-largest trading partner, and the U.S. is our largest trading partner, so we'll continue to have those conversations.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll go to Madame Lapointe, please, for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Minister, thank you for joining us today despite the short notice. We really appreciate it.

I recently spoke on Bill C-13 in the House. The United Kingdom is one of our largest trading partners. You know that I represent Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, in the Lower Laurentians, north of Montreal. It's a very innovative and industrial riding, and expansion is ongoing. We have a number of high-tech companies, small and medium-sized manufacturing companies, as well as strategic aerospace suppliers. Smart mobility, clean energy and advanced engineering are very important in our neck of the woods.

The aerospace sector in Quebec accounts for 43,000 direct jobs and more than \$20 billion dollars in exports. In the Lower Laurentians, we have Bombardier, Safran, Bell Textron and Airbus. To the south, in Saint-Hubert, there is also CAE.

You may not know this, but I have a son who is an airline pilot, and he trains pilots using CAE flight simulators. It's high-quality training. CAE has subsidiaries around the world, and it started in our region. It provides customer service to many airlines.

Minister, can you tell us about your experience with aviation and aerospace companies in the Montreal region?

• (1115)

[*English*]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Absolutely.

I want to thank my colleague on this trade committee for that very important question. I hope to respond to you one day in French. It's a work in progress.

Yes, you're right. The aerospace industry in Quebec is hugely important to the GDP, to the economy and to the workers there. Everywhere I travel, Canadian innovation in aerospace is front and centre.

You mentioned CAE. They have many simulators around the world. CAE alone has thousands of jobs in its ecosystem, not only in Quebec but also across Canada. You talked about Bombardier. This recently expanded into another space in Quebec to create more aircraft products.

If you look at the top exports to the U.K., aerospace is in the top five. We have many opportunities in the aerospace industry. Canada is known for that, not only in Quebec but also beyond Quebec. Look at what De Havilland is doing in Calgary to create water bombers. Those are world-renowned. These are conversations we're having everywhere I go.

I was just recently in the Middle East, where we had a vast conversation on aerospace and on what more we can do in terms of training and simulation. We are very proud. Everywhere I go it's about Canadian workers. We have the most educated workforce in the world, including many in Quebec. It's something we should be proud of. It's being there to pitch Canada as a reliable, stable trading partner.

Aerospace plays a key role, but there are many other sectors that feed into that. You mentioned Pratt & Whitney and Bell helicopters. These are many conversations that support thousands of jobs that we need to continue pushing forward. In the U.K., if you look at their imports and look at our exports to the U.K., aerospace is in the top five. It's about collaborating. It's about making sure that our workers are represented.

When you look at trade agreements and what they mean for people, at the end of the day, Linda, as you know, it's about opening opportunities. You've been on this trade committee for many years, even before I got here. I want to say thank you for your work as we continue to engage and to open up areas of opportunity for your workers in Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Linda Lapointe: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

You said Canadian products are trusted.

[*Translation*]

Whether it's a matter of goods or services, these are world-renowned products.

How could you make the Canadian brand even stronger and more attractive so that we can sell even more of our products abroad, especially in Great Britain, through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership or any of the many free trade agreements we have?

How can we elevate the Canadian brand?

[*English*]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: What we can do to encourage businesses to look outwards is a great question.

Prior to politics, I spent 13 years in the private sector in international trade facilitation. Back then, because of the shipping costs, not understanding the language, packaging requirements, etc., many businesses were not ready to look overseas. Now businesses are more open to that conversation, especially with the trade policy from our southern neighbour, so we need to be able to do some hand-holding and encourage businesses to get out into these new overseas markets.

What are we doing as a government? If you look at budget 2025 and the trade ecosystem that we're creating through the SME export readiness program that's being led by our Minister of Industry, you'll see the CanExport program that's going to be able to provide grants and assistance to get our businesses and our world-class products onto the global stage at trade shows. Once they have orders ready, we want to make sure that there are some credit facilitation tools there through EDC by enabling \$25 billion or more in credit financing to help them get out to new markets.

I think this is very important when you look at the ecosystem. There are many businesses that don't know how to export yet, and we want to make sure we get them there. Once they're ready to get there, we want to make sure that we're able to get them to trade shows around the world through CanExport. Of course, once they

get their first order, it's about financing that first order, so this ecosystem is being created.

We're at an opportune time when the world is looking at Canada as a reliable, stable trading partner, and we need to be able to promote Canadian goods.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Savard-Tremblay, you have six minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot—Acton, BQ): Thank you.

Minister, when you were sitting across the table from me and not to my left, I used to call you "Mani". Today, I will be calling you "Minister". We'll keep the familiarity and the name "Mani" in the private sphere, as the situation has changed.

That said, I welcome you back to this committee, and I wish you a happy new year. Happy new year to all my colleagues, as well. In Quebec, there's often a debate about how long we can wish each other a happy new year, but since this is the first time we've seen each other since last year, I think we can wish each other the best.

First off, the protocol was tabled on September 18, 2025, and Bill C-13 was introduced 15 sitting days later. However, the Policy on Tabling of Treaties in Parliament says that the time frame must be 21 days. That is a policy and not a piece of legislation, so it is not binding, but it is still a public policy that can be found through a Google search, which takes us directly to the Government of Canada site. So it's an official policy.

Why not comply with Canada's official policy on this?

• (1120)

[*English*]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, through you, I wish a very happy new year to my colleague and friend.

Of course there's important work that you do on this committee, so thank you for everything you're doing.

In terms of your question, in the state that we're in right now, two-thirds of our economy is powered by international trade. If you look at the policies being created by our neighbour to the south, you see that they're directly hitting our economic security. When the Prime Minister says we're in a crisis and we need to move fast, here's why we're moving fast and here's why I'm here within a day's notice: It's to make sure that we're moving forward on many of these agreements and creating opportunities.

As we move forward, I think we need to keep in mind that we're not in normal times anymore. Our number one trading partner is creating some trade policies that are directly impacting workers on the ground. Respectfully, I think it's important that we look at the context that we're in.

We want to continue engaging with stakeholders, and we're doing that, whether it's through my ministry or whether it's through many of your colleagues here on this trade committee and engaging with witnesses coming to committee. We need to move fast to be able to open doors for Canadian businesses, and that's exactly what we're doing.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Those six days would have changed everything. For example, in committee, if we decided to extend the study by a week for whatever reason, you would say that we are radically changing the situation, since, in your opinion, waiting six days—the difference between compliance and non-compliance with official policy—would have changed the situation completely.

Did I understand your answer correctly?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Coming back to my answer, it's about the current situation we're in.

When you look at how trade impacts communities across Canada, whether it's in Quebec or in Ontario, you see huge impacts of trade policies created by our neighbour to the south. We need to be able to diversify as fast as possible.

We promised Canadians during our election mandate that trade diversification to open new doors would be at the top of our priorities, especially when we're impacted by so many things that we cannot control from other governments. What we control is how fast we open doors, how fast we move in Parliament, how fast we're able to get workers more opportunities so that they can export their goods to other countries around the world.

One in five jobs in Canada is directly or indirectly impacted by trade. Two-thirds of our economy is powered by trade. We need to continue opening doors. This is what workers on the ground are—

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Minister, I think we agree on the substance. That's not the issue. We agree on diversifying our economy. On the substance, I agree with this accession, which ultimately doesn't change much because the United Kingdom is already part of the agreement. Some aspects are finally being formalized. On the substance, then, there is no problem.

However, while we are at it, why not comply with the policy in question? At the same time, do you have an announcement for us today? If you think that six days would change everything, do you think that, in our case, there would be a maximum time frame that we would have to respect in our study right now?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: I think the committee's energy is well respected and well recognized. In the meetings that you've had, I've

sat on the other side of this table, meeting with witnesses and talking about trade. We need to continue engaging with stakeholders, so it's not to say that we don't want to engage stakeholders. We need to continue engaging stakeholders, but I think stakeholders understand that we're in a complex time right now.

We have other trade agreements that we've completed. Indonesia is next up in line, and I introduced that agreement in the House of Commons last month. We hope to move fast with that, because that's another fast-growing market. It's destined to be the fifth-largest economy in the world.

After that, we hope to get to Ecuador and the U.A.E. investment agreement. We need to continue moving forward and opening doors to many other things. Historically, we have 15 trade agreements with 51 countries, but Canadians expect us to open more markets, and that's exactly what we're focused on.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: We are also parliamentarians, members of Parliament elected by the people to advance certain interests and values. If we were to tell you that we need a certain amount of time to carry out this study properly, for example, would you say that we're thereby hampering trade?

• (1125)

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: I think it's important. I don't know about time frames, but when you look at stakeholders and engagement and what stakeholders have said about this process and about access to the U.K., we've heard a lot of positive things about having access, so it depends on stakeholders. Have we listened to stakeholders? I certainly think so. If there's someone that I need to talk to, I'm always happy to have that conversation.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: You don't have a specific time frame, but you're saying that those six days, needed to comply with the policy, are fundamental.

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: As I said, in the context that we're in, we need to move fast and we need to open doors, and I think Canadians recognize that and appreciate it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. McKenzie, please go ahead for five minutes.

David McKenzie (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, you indicated that there are in the neighbourhood of 350,000 employees or jobs in the Canadian beef industry. The figures I have available to me indicate that Canada exported \$85,000 worth of beef to the U.K. in 2023, \$25,000 worth of beef in 2024, and had no beef exports in 2025. Those amounts of revenue wouldn't pay for the gas for the Prime Minister's jet to go and visit his friend in the U.K.

I'd like to know from you, sir, whether specific industry barriers—non-tariff barriers with the U.K. that are preventing our beef exports to that country—were discussed in the course of the support that Canada is offering to the U.K.'s accession to the CPTPP.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: I've met with the cattle association more than once. I think the conversation with them was, "Continue to open doors for us so we can get our exports out." I said, "Well, how quickly can you get your exports out?" They said, "Well, there's a supply and demand issue. We need to get our cattle up there. We don't have enough cattle. Maybe within the next 24 months we'll be able to have enough cattle to get to the new markets you're opening up, but we do appreciate what you're doing."

Of course, with the U.K., there are considerations around carcass wash and there are hormone-free issues, which I've been looking at, and we need to continue having those conversations.

You can look at the CPTPP in terms of what it's done for merchandise trade and what it's done for Canadian beef. Some numbers for people watching on the screen are that Canadian beef exports to the CPTPP's largest economy, Japan, increased over five years to more than \$361 million, an 18% increase—

David McKenzie: I'm going to interrupt there, just because we're talking about the U.K. today. I want to know if there have been specific discussions about those very barriers that you mentioned: the carcass wash—that's a non-tariff barrier—as well as the growth promoters that are used in the Canadian cattle industry. Both of those processes are widely accepted internationally, but the U.K. holds them up to prevent our products from being exported there.

I come from western Canada, and there's a hell of a lot of cattle out there, so, with respect, sir, I don't think that market supply is a serious issue in our ability to export, but please tell me about the barriers.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: I'm a westerner. I was born in Calgary, and this is something that the Canadian Cattle Association has said to me directly in terms of supply and demand. You're seeing the impact on beef prices in our grocery stores because of supply and demand.

If you look historically at what's happened in that industry, this is something that they clearly explained to me.

Coming back to the question on the U.K., I've had many discussions with my counterpart, even last night, on many of these issues. You know, whether it's pensions, whether it's beef, we've continued to have those conversations, so I'll be very open on that.

Of course, right now, as I said to your colleague, we have 99% access, but there are mechanisms that, once ratified in the CPTPP, will allow us to discuss non-tariff barriers. Coming back to how we

can facilitate discussions, the CPTPP will provide further access to those conversations in terms of discussing non-tariff barriers and, hopefully, resolving beef access.

However, as things stand, my conversations with the cattle farmers, with the cattle association, are around questions such as, "What are you doing with Indonesia?" and "What are you doing in some of the other markets?" and comments like, "Of course the U.K. is important. Please continue to work on that, but our supply won't meet that demand for the next 24 months, so please keep that in mind."

David McKenzie: You'll know of course, Minister, that the Canadian Cattle Association has called on the Government of Canada to not support this succession, so, clearly, there are bigger issues there. It's not simply a question of supply, and they don't seem to be happy with other benefits being gained.

I'd like to know if the Government of Canada will commit to using dispute resolution for these non-tariff barrier issues with the U.K. This is not a new issue, as I'm sure the minister is aware. It's been outstanding now for years.

• (1130)

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: When it comes back to what we want to do next, the energy is there to continue having those conversations. Beef and cheese go hand in hand. They want access to our dairy market, and we want our beef over there. That's a conversation we'll continue to have. It's not one against the other, but, again, having those active conversations. We'll continue to have those conversations. I stay engaged with the beef industry. It matters to farmers in western Canada. It matters to me as a trade minister, but also as a Calgarian. I'll continue to work on that.

David McKenzie: Minister, you're really suggesting that we're being punished by the U.K., similar to the manner in which China was punishing Canada with canola tariffs.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: I wouldn't say that; I wouldn't say we're being punished. If you look at trade numbers since 2016, our trade growth is over 50%, and so we're opening doors. Exports are benefiting from our agreement with the U.K., and so we'll continue making sure that we're having those conversations. With your neighbour, you'll always have differences. We'll need to continue talking about that to work out the differences. Right now, as I said, we have 99% access. We're hoping to get to 100%, and I'll work hard on that 1%.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Fonseca, go ahead please.

Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome, Minister Sidhu.

I learned something new here today from MP McKenzie, that you're from Calgary originally. I always know you as a Bramptonian, from our region of Peel. I want to hone in on our region of Peel.

In Mississauga, we have over 75 Fortune 500 companies, but more than that, we have 50,000 businesses. You know, we talk about the diversity of our people in Peel Region and Mississauga, but it's also the diversity of our businesses. We have everything from manufacturing to life sciences and agriculture. You wouldn't think that from Mississauga, but we are quite a diverse business community.

I know that in your previous life in the private sector, you did a lot of work with those businesses in our region. For a long time, many of them just thought regionally, locally, in terms of the business that they do. More than ever before, however, I hear that they need to diversify; they need to trade. They're looking not just to the United States, of course, as our major market and number one trading partner, but right around the world, including to the United Kingdom.

I'll give you one example of a large business. AstraZeneca has U.K.-based headquarters, but then it has its Canadian headquarters in Mississauga East—Cooksville, my riding. Just think of the work that could be done there and throughout their whole supply chain in terms of what that means for Canadians.

Also, in our earlier discussion, we heard here at committee about trade. What I'm hearing from my constituents and businesses is the urgency to get on with this, to move quickly, to move at speed and at scale, to be able to help them compete and capitalize on these agreements like the CPTPP and the accession of the U.K. to the CPTPP.

I know that's a lot, Minister, that I've put out there for you, but take it as you will. If you could, please speak to the businesses in my riding, in my city of Mississauga, and how you can help.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Absolutely.

Madam Chair, through you, thank you to the member opposite, my friend Peter.

Of course, in our neck of the woods in Peel Region, in Brampton and Mississauga, we have a lot of businesses that export. There are various different industries. One business that comes to mind is MDA aerospace. They're right on the border of Brampton and Mississauga. That supports thousands of jobs. It's something that we should be very proud of. They've been on many delegations with me to many countries around the world. They're recognized in the partnerships we're forming.

If you look at the defence industry and the investments our government is making at record levels, you see that we haven't invested this much since the 1950s. It's huge. There's a huge potential there. The Prime Minister, during the election period and even after, has repeatedly said that we need to continue to increase industry capacity in the defence sector. As you know, 75¢ of every dollar we spent traditionally went outside the country in terms of procurement, but we need to continue bringing our industries here and building up our industries. That's a focus, and MDA is seen as a champion. You've seen what they're doing in Quebec by producing satellites

there and what they're doing in Brampton with their world-class engineering. Those are the businesses that we need to continue pushing forward. BlackBerry is another one that comes to mind. We need to continue supporting our defence industry and our aerospace industries in many of those growth potentials.

You talked about pharmaceuticals. You mentioned AstraZeneca. I remember their grand opening expanding their office not too long ago in Mississauga. There are a lot of areas of opportunity in pharma with the U.K. I'll give you some examples that I have here from the fantastic trade commissioner service in terms of what more are we doing. In Cambridge, U.K., AstraZeneca has signed an agreement with EM Health to pilot and share R and D technology with the U.K. That's another area of opportunity. When you look at the top five imports and exports, you see that the pharmaceuticals from the U.K. are one of the imports, so there are plenty of ways in which we can collaborate with a like-minded country like the U.K. There's another company out in Alberta. It's a medical-based technology company that signed a partnership agreement with the U.K.-based Golden Helix Foundation on technology in the pharmaceuticals field.

Coming back to Brampton and Mississauga, there are a lot of conversations around agri-food and what the opportunities are there, because that supports thousands of jobs. When I look at my trade delegations, I look at what markets we're going to where we can have the biggest impact. In the U.K., it's definitely pharma, aerospace and defence, and many other industries.

The U.K. held a show back in September. We had close to 150 defence companies go out there from Canada to pitch their wares, so there's a lot of opportunity in the U.K., but also in the European Union. In the European SAFE agreement that Canada signed, Canada was the only non-EU partner welcomed into those procurement opportunities.

We can look at NATO spending targets. As they go up, this has huge potential for Canadian defence industries to have market access and procurement opportunities in that fast-growing region, whether it's in the U.K. or the European Union. We need to continue opening those doors.

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We have Mr. Savard-Tremblay for two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Hello again.

Tell me, is it true that the protocol reactivates the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: You mentioned investors. When they're investing, they need confidence. They need stability and reliability. If you look at many of the things we've signed around investment agreements, we're looking to attract half a trillion dollars into Canada to build the major projects, and you need to present certainty to investors that want to invest in Canada.

There are a lot of people knocking on our door. Just today, I have a South Korean delegation here, from multiple industries, looking to invest in Canada. These dispute resolutions that you talk about present a great opportunity to showcase certainty and reliability. For investors of billions of dollars into our economy, we need to make sure they feel secure that their investments are protected.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Do you have any evidence of that? I don't have them in front of me, but some studies say that the mechanism doesn't have much impact on investor confidence.

Before NAFTA made this mechanism popular, it was very simple. When an investor felt wronged where they were investing, they simply had to go through their state. Diplomacy had to reassert itself. The state would then have to determine if it would make it a state-versus-state dispute. With the introduction of this mechanism, multinationals were ultimately treated as sovereign powers so that a state could be directly sued.

Does that worry you when it comes to the state of democracy?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: I think Canada has an opportunity in the window that we need to continue pushing on, bringing investors to Canada. If you look at what other countries are doing to try to build up infrastructure, you'll see that if they don't have investment protection mechanisms, they won't attract the infrastructure dollars to build. I can give you some prime examples. I don't want to point to any countries right now publicly—we can have a conversation afterwards—but I think it's important to note that countries that do have investment protection mechanisms will be able to attract more investments. In conversations when they ask, "Why won't Canadian firms present proposals to me? Why won't they help me build up my bridges?", I say, "Well, have you looked at the investment agreements that you have? Have you looked at what your country has done in the past by overtaking some of the assets that Canadian companies own?" You need to look at, historically, what we're doing and the certainty that we need to present, and that's what Canada will continue to do.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: I thought I had a few seconds left, but apparently not.

So I will push it to the next round.

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry. There's no more time.

[Translation]

Mr. Groleau, go ahead.

Jason Groleau (Beauce, CPC): Good morning, Madam Chair.

Good morning, Minister. Thank you for being here and giving us your time.

I come from Beauce, a beautiful rural, agricultural region. In the past, we've been very disappointed with our agreement with the United Kingdom, especially when it comes to agriculture, when it comes to the pork and beef trade, because of non-tariff barriers and sanitary standards. There were traceability requirements and an expensive certification. We've been very disappointed in the past.

In the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP, what did you include in black and white to avoid past failures?

• (1140)

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: It's a great question.

As I said, I'll continue to engage with my counterpart from the U.K. to talk about beef access, to talk about more access for our farmers as we get more goods out the door. It's vitally important to me, and this is why I've met with many of the farming associations, including the cattle farmers' association, to talk about what more we can do.

In the U.K., we'll continue having those conversations. If you look at what we're doing in Indonesia—presenting a huge market of opportunity—and if you look at what we just did in China—our beef is now out the door to a huge market that is, in fact, one of the fastest-growing markets in the world—you'll see that these are big wins. I'll continue to focus on that 1% tariff-free access into the U.K. We have 99% tariff-free access right now for many of our goods, but my goal, of course, is to get to 100%, and I remain committed to that.

[Translation]

Jason Groleau: Thank you.

As far as the agreement is concerned, the ideal is always to come to an agreement that benefits everyone. I imagine you agree with that.

Let's talk about beef imports and exports.

In 2024, the value of beef imports into Canada was \$42 million, and our exports amounted to \$25,000. From January to July 2025, Canada imported \$28 million worth of beef, but it did not export any.

You talk about an agreement that benefits everyone, but I don't see it. The same thing is happening in the pork industry, which has the required capacity. Earlier, you said that the beef industry may not have the required capacity, but the pork industry has the capacity to sell hundreds of millions of dollars worth of product.

How much pork did Canada export to the United Kingdom last year alone?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: If you want to talk about numbers, I think it's better to look at the picture of our beef and pork exports overall. In 2024 alone, it was over \$10 billion. I know you're speaking about \$10 million, \$20 million or \$30 million, but if you look at the bigger picture and what we're doing for our farmers, you'll see that the potential is huge.

First and foremost, if you look at the agreements that we're going to hopefully be ratifying in Parliament, you'll see that Indonesia is a huge market opportunity for the beef sector. I talked about China a little bit. Of course, I want to make sure that we get that \$20-million target up higher, but the bigger picture is \$10 billion of exports of Canadian beef and pork to markets around the world in 2024 alone. Of course, I want to continue working on that number and expanding that number.

[Translation]

Jason Groleau: To answer my own question on pork imports and exports, in the last three years, we've had over \$18 million in imports and only \$197,000 in exports. That's really a bad agreement.

Let's go back to the basics.

I'm an entrepreneur. If I'm not mistaken, you're a former businessman.

An agreement has to be well negotiated, well put together, and the details are important. Take the example of a building, such as a house. Its foundation must be made of concrete, but right now, it's made of cardboard and mud. If you add a storey to the house, it will collapse.

My question is simple. What do you intend to do to regularize the current agreement, which doesn't meet our expectations? The United Kingdom has non-tariff barriers that prevent Canada from exporting its meat. Instead of adding a storey, what are you going to do for the foundation?

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Coming back to the CPTPP and what it will provide us once the U.K. has its accession, it will provide us with enforceable disciplines on non-tariff barriers, an avenue to have those conversations and binding provisions in the CPTPP to have those conversations.

It's important to look at what the CPTPP will provide us versus what we don't have currently. It's an area of opportunity that we'll continue to focus on.

[Translation]

Jason Groleau: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Lavoie.

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie (Beauport—Limoilou, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for joining us this morning. I'm very happy to see you.

In the past, I spent 20 years working in corporate finance banks. I worked at the *Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Québec*.

Last fall, we all worked together here on a study on the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA. Two words came up quite often then, to the point where we were making jokes about them: predictability and unpredictability. In my professional past, I know that predictability is essential for businesses and for economic development.

However, today, businesses are living in a world where unpredictability has become permanent. They have to work with that, in large part because of the geopolitical aspect. That is the new reality here. The new agreement—the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership—which we are discussing today, was concluded based on clear rules among Canada and 10 Asia-Pacific countries.

What I would like to know, Minister, is how the key sectors in Quebec—*aerospace, agri-food, advanced manufacturing, aluminum, forestry, value-added wood products and clean technologies*—will be able to benefit from this agreement, which is built on clear rules.

• (1145)

[English]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Absolutely.

Madam Chair, through you, I want to thank the member for his excellent work on this committee.

What we do around trade is all about the workers on the ground. It's all about the industries, whether they're in Quebec or across Canada. I was just speaking about defence. As you look at nations investing in the defence sector, that presents a lot of opportunities for Canadian aerospace industries. This is why we want to fight hard to get access to the EU SAFE procurement mechanisms to allow Canadian companies to bid on procurement opportunities.

Beyond the U.K., look at what we've been doing over the last eight months. Typically, the Government of Canada signs one agreement a year. We've signed three in seven months. We've signed agreements with Indonesia and Ecuador, and we're signing an investment agreement with the U.A.E. This year, we're going to be moving fast on ASEAN, the Philippines, Thailand, India and Mercosur.

The goal is to make sure that we continue to open doors for Canadian businesses and Canadian workers, many of whom are in Quebec.

Of course, we punch way above our weight in the clean-tech space. We're considered to be in the top five in the world in clean-tech technology. Many of my delegations, as Mr. Lavoie will know, involve clean-tech companies from Quebec and across Canada, because there's an area of opportunity as the world moves forward to fight climate change and address environmental concerns. We have the technology in this country, and we'll continue to build on that.

If you look at what we're doing around the Major Projects Office, we have low-carbon LNG coming out of the ground and we have seven projects in development.

Trade and investments go hand in hand, to me. Part of my responsibility is to attract investments into this country, and we've had some big wins. Malaysia's Petronas just signed a 20-year deal for Canadian LNG.

If you look at what we're doing around energy, in battery storage and cleaner sources of energy, there are areas of opportunity. I had discussions in China on energy storage and wind technology. I think we have a lot to be proud of and we have a lot to showcase.

This is part of the reason for trade delegations to come out with me so they can directly showcase their world-class products.

[*Translation*]

Steeve Lavoie: Thank you, Minister.

You mentioned Quebec. If we look at surveys, we see that there is an appetite in Quebec for exporting outside North America. In my riding of Beauport—Limoilou, in Quebec City, we have facilities. There's the Port of Québec in particular. Historically, it has always contributed to the export of our products to Europe thanks to waterways. In addition, we see that we want to contribute more directly in the future.

How is the goal of doubling exports to Europe set? There is interest in that in Quebec and Canada.

[*English*]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: It's a very good question. We've set a target of doubling non-U.S. exports to the tune of \$300 billion by 2035. The European markets and the Indo-Pacific markets play a big role there.

If you look at the terminal in Quebec, in Montreal, in the Major Projects Office it was just recently approved to expand their port in the Port of Montreal. That will present a lot of opportunities. Why is that important? If you look at demand and supply around shipping, we want to make sure that we're continuing to diversify, but we also need to add capacity at our ports. If we don't add capacity at the ports, shipping rates will go up and discourage diversification. That's why we have a \$5-billion trade corridor fund to help with that, to help build more railways, capacity, inland terminals, ports, and more space at the airport and cargo facilities. This is crucial to our diversification strategy.

Coming back to everything that we're doing, it's about the workers on the ground. It comes back to opportunities for Canadians. We need to continue building up that capacity through trade and infrastructure, but of course also through encouraging businesses to get out to new markets around the world.

• (1150)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chambers, you have five minutes, please.

Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, welcome back to committee. It's a pleasure to have you, as always.

Just so I'm clear, all members of the CPTPP had to agree to allow the U.K. to join the agreement. Is that correct?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Yes. It's consensus-based.

Adam Chambers: Right. In my estimation, or from what we've heard today, Canada's beef and pork producers still have non-tariff barriers to trade in place today, after the government has allowed this, as it did before. Is that correct?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: What I would say on beef access to the CPTPP, if you're talking about the whole trading bloc of 12 members, is that if you look at it since we signed it, beef exports to the CPTPP markets have increased by 122%. It's helping the beef exporters in Canada for sure, this trading bloc.

Adam Chambers: Right, but this is specifically as it relates to the U.K. The trade disputes, or the non-tariff barriers that the U.K. imposed on Canadian producers, are still in place today, as they were two weeks ago.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: We're working through that. As I said earlier, it's about how the carcasses are washed and a couple of other things that we're having ongoing discussions around.

I look at the bigger picture. When you look at beef and pork exports to the tune of \$10 billion, of course this market's important to me, but talking to the Cattle Association directly, Indonesia presents a lot more opportunity than maybe another market. So it's "Thank you for opening markets, but please continue resolving many of our outstanding irritants." We'll continue working on that.

Adam Chambers: The committee will hear from the cattle producers. I'm sure they will give us their view.

You also mentioned the pension issue. I'm encouraged that you've raised this with your U.K. counterparts.

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Yes. Absolutely. I have emails in my constituency office from many of the pensioners in Canada. This is an ongoing conversation. I would like to say that pension issues have never been tied to any of our trade agreements, and likely never will be, but it's a conversation we'll continue to have with the government in the U.K. You can't tie it to that, because it has nothing to do with the trade agreements.

Adam Chambers: My impression is that if Canada is allowing something to happen that the U.K. absolutely needs in order to join the agreement, surely we should get something, or potentially have an opportunity to get something, to get a commitment or something a little bit more concrete than having more discussions about some of these issues that we have outstanding.

With regard to the U.K. pensioners, my understanding is that it can be solved with about 12 million pounds, according to them, which isn't a really big ask. The Prime Minister has a very close personal relationship with Prime Minister Starmer. That's no secret. How come we're giving the U.K. something but not getting something in return?

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: I would say it's a win-win for both Canada and the U.K. in terms of what the CPTPP gives us access to. I can give you some examples of what it means for Canada, but coming back to the pensioners here in Canada who have constantly brought up the U.K.'s provisions around their own pensions, this is a conversation that I'll continue to have. It's important to me. This is why I've raised it with my counterpart multiple times. I'll continue to engage in that matter, but I think it's very important, for those watching, that a pension issue should not be tied to trade agreements.

Adam Chambers: I take that point, Minister. I just think that when we have the opportunity, when Canada has leverage.... There's all this talk about leverage around the world, but when Canada does have leverage with another country—it needs something from us—then it's fair to ask or assume that the government use that leverage in a way that extracts a benefit for either our producers here or, as we mentioned, the pensioners, Canadian citizens.

I'm encouraged to hear that you're raising these issues. My understanding is that your predecessor did not raise these issues, so your raising them is important to me.

I think I have about a minute left. I'll perhaps leave you with the following view.

I don't agree with a lot of what your government does. I don't agree with a lot of how your government spends its money. I certainly don't agree with some of the decisions it makes on a regular basis. We have differing opinions on the China question, of course, and getting closer to the CCP, but I'll leave you with a commitment that I'll make personally. We believe in free trade. I believe in free trade. We need to expand our trade relationships.

I think this committee has done some good work. It will stand to do some good work. We remain at your service in order to help the government expand its trading relationships. We'll hold you accountable along the way, but we would like to work with you in order to ensure that Canadians are getting the best deal that we can get when we make these agreements. This is why, when we have it, I'm pushing you to use our leverage for the benefit of Canadians.

Thank you, Minister.

• (1155)

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: This is going to take a team Canada approach, and I appreciate the collaborative approach from all parties around this table. We're in a time of economic insecurity, especially with our largest trading partner. We need to continue pushing for-

ward, and we need to continue to engage with new opportunities and new partners around the world.

I'll come back to the CPTPP and the U.K. accession. There are wins here for our food producers, for our processors, for our sweet corn industry, and for service suppliers in veterinary services and construction services, giving them access to more U.K. procurement opportunities. There are definitely wins here in terms of the CPTPP. We'll continue pushing.

This is a high-quality trading bloc that has a lineup of countries waiting to join it. Canada is lucky to be a founding member—since 2018—and the results speak for themselves. In our exports alone, the increase is over 50%. Beef and pork exports are up to close to the tune of \$10 billion. We'll continue engaging with all industries and stakeholders to ensure that they're represented at the table. That's my number one commitment to all of you around this table.

Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Thank you very much.

That ends the hour.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Chair, may I request a document from the minister?

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Given the Minister of International Trade's favourable position on ISDS, the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism, can he send the committee some statistics in writing?

I'm looking for the number of losses suffered and the number of victories won by Canada in the types of cases handled under this mechanism, as well as the total costs incurred as a result.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Can you speak your answer into the microphone so that it can be properly kept in the archives?

[*English*]

Hon. Maninder Sidhu: Yes, my official will follow up with you.

The Chair: All right.

Minister, thank you very much. We appreciate it. You covered it with Mr. Chambers' comments. You know how the committee feels and that we've always worked together. We will continue to do that. Thank you very much for giving us an hour.

We will now switch into having department officials come to the table. The plan for dealing with Bill C-13 will be two meetings plus clause-by-clause. Hopefully, we will get this through in the manner in which we all want to see it happen.

Minister Sidhu, you can leave and have your department officials come to the table, please, for the next hour.

• (1155) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1200)

The Chair: Staff and members, please take your positions so that we can continue our meeting.

Mr. Savard-Tremblay, do you have a point?

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Madam Chair, can you please say when the deadline is for proposing amendments to the current bill?

[English]

The Chair: It will be Tuesday.

Mr. Clerk, would you like to add to that?

[Translation]

The Clerk of the Committee (Grant McLaughlin): For amendment proposals, we're asking for 48 hours, to give us time to check them over.

If the committee agrees, I would propose Tuesday, February 3, at 9 a.m.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: You're talking about the proposal, right?

The Clerk: Yes, and it's for the clause-by-clause study planned on February 5.

[English]

The Chair: Yes, thank you very much.

We have with us today from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Evan Lewis, senior director, market access division.

Go ahead, Mr. Savard-Tremblay.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: I would just like to add something.

I'm being told, and rightly so, that we won't have heard from all the witnesses yet. So that may not be the best time to propose amendments.

[English]

The Chair: If the idea is to have the other meeting on Tuesday and going to clause-by-clause on Thursday, which is February 5, the clerk would need any suggested amendments in by the Tuesday

so that staff would have time to do translation and work on those amendments. That is my understanding.

• (1205)

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: The fact that we won't have heard all the testimony is a bit unnatural, as we may have relevant suggested amendments that we hadn't thought of. That's the purpose of a study.

What is the point of hearing from witnesses if their testimony serves no purpose?

[English]

The Chair: Do you have any suggestions, Mr. Clerk? There's a suggestion that we move it to the end of the day on the Tuesday following Tuesday's meeting.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: That would still enable us to have a certain number of hours to work on proposals, reflect and digest the testimony we've heard.

What time are we talking about?

[English]

The Chair: We are talking about 4 p.m.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Would the next morning also be possible?

By 4 p.m. is a bit tight. The meeting ends at 1 p.m., and we have a free hour followed by question period. We would then have a little more than half an hour to propose amendments, which is quite a tight time frame.

[English]

The Chair: How about if we leave it until 6 p.m.?

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: That's better.

[English]

The Chair: All right.

Thank you very much. I appreciate your support and your help.

I will continue on.

From the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food, we have Axel Ndayisaba, director, trade negotiations division; and Matthew Smith, chief agriculture negotiator. From the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, we have Mary-Catherine Speirs, director general, trade negotiations bureau.

Thank you all very much for being here.

There are no opening remarks. I will open the floor for questions.

Mr. Mantle, please go ahead.

Jacob Mantle: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our departmental officials for being here.

What happens to the trade continuity agreement now?

Mary-Catherine Speirs (Director General, Trade Negotiations Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): The Canada-UK Trade Continuity Agreement continues to exist with the CPTPP. Of course, as noted, under the Canada-UK Trade Continuity Agreement, it's already fully enforced, and 99% of our trade in goods is tariff-free under that agreement. Then the CPTPP adds additional opportunities, which are a factor of the CPTPP as a multilateral agreement with 12 partners.

Jacob Mantle: Do I understand from your response that it is the department's intention, the government's intention, that the trade continuity agreement will continue indefinitely, side by side, after the U.K.'s accession to the CPTPP?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Yes, that's correct.

Jacob Mantle: That's interesting. Thank you for that clarification.

I want to ask a question—this is primarily for my friends at Global Affairs—about what I have perceived to be a culture of secrecy at Global Affairs. I'm not directing this comment specifically at you, but rather at the department more generally.

When we have engaged in trade negotiations, no public process is permitted. Comments are received oftentimes by the government, and then curated reports are issued sometimes about what the government heard. However, there is no transparency about what industries may say to the government or what written comments may be provided to the government. For example, with our ongoing discussions with the United States, which I understand are not happening at the moment, the government engaged in a “consultation”—I use quotations because it's not much of a consultation—and the chief trade negotiator came here and basically told the committee to pound sand when we asked for those comments in writing. We had to issue a production order for them.

Contrast that with the United States. When they conduct a negotiation, they have a legislative process, the USTR has a public process and they hold public hearings. I could go on their website today and download any submission that was made as part of those processes.

Why is it that Global Affairs' default position seems to be one of secrecy, rather than transparency?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: As an official, I will respond just to note a bit about the processes that we undertake with respect to public consultations. When we pursue trade agreements and negotiations, they are informed by a robust and ongoing consultation process that we undertake. We undertake public consultations with all Canadians. We also have ongoing engagement with different sectoral groups, provincial and territorial governments and indigenous partners, and we maintain an ongoing dialogue with members of the public. We are available to answer questions. We have open mailboxes, where questions can be submitted at any time.

We continue to be informed by the ongoing interests of Canadians, and we reflect that in our approach to trade negotiations.

• (1210)

Jacob Mantle: Ms. Speirs, in fairness, the question is not whether the government is open to receiving comments or not. I suspect it is and always will be. The question is whether the process by which it receives those comments is open to the public, so that the public and other members of the public or industry groups, or indeed parliamentarians, can see that feedback and draw their own conclusions about what industry or Canadians feel about these negotiations. That's not currently the case. I do not have access to those submissions that you just mentioned. If you receive comments about the CPTPP or the U.K.'s accession, I don't have those. I wouldn't even know they've been made, because it's not a public process.

Do you see any problem with that process? Is the department willing to make changes so that its process is more transparent and so that, for example, parliamentarians would have access to submissions made by industry or Canadians on these trade negotiations?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I'll just say that as a department, we're committed to working collaboratively with Parliament and committees and to supporting the ongoing studies of committees on these different agreements, including through our appearance today and other committee appearances. We continue to respond to requests and to seek to work collaboratively.

Jacob Mantle: Thank you for that. I guess I could ask, in that spirit of collaboration, if you would agree to provide the committee any submissions you've received from Canadians or industries with respect to the U.K.'s accession to the CPTPP. Would you provide that to the committee?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: That's not been our practice, so I will have to confer with my colleagues.

Jacob Mantle: You're not giving an answer. You're saying “maybe”. I want to be clear on what your answer is.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I will be following up internally on that request.

Jacob Mantle: Despite suggesting that you want to work collaboratively, you cannot agree to provide the public submissions that the government has had. You see my concern here. This is why there's a concern about the culture of default secrecy.

Is there anything you want to add?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I'll be following up on that.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Lavoie, please go ahead.

[Translation]

Steve Lavoie: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Speirs, thank you very much for taking the time to join us today.

In preparing for today's meeting, I was pleased to learn that the United Kingdom is the third-largest investor in Canada, after the United States and the Netherlands. We're talking about nearly \$100 billion since 2024.

I would like you to explain how the United Kingdom's accession to this agreement will lead to more investment in Canada.

We're already getting \$100 billion from them. What's the goal, then? Is it \$200 billion, \$300 billion?

Can you tell us what the next steps will be?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I am pleased to hear your questions in French, but allow me to answer in English.

[English]

The CPTPP continues to foster a strong environment to encourage additional investment and to provide the protections and the promotion of that investment, including by offering certainty, transparency and protection for Canadian investments abroad, and likewise for U.K. investors, who will be afforded the same benefits for investments they make in Canada. The intent of this is to enable Canadian businesses to invest more and do business more, while continuing to promote Canada as a very attractive destination for U.K. investment in Canada.

Given that we already have a very strong bilateral investment relationship with the U.K., it's hoped that the CPTPP, as a multilateral agreement, will also offer more opportunities for investment in the context of the access that this brings to the CPTPP market and to CPTPP's supply chains through the inclusion of the U.K. in this agreement.

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie: Thank you for your answer.

Will the government help businesses take advantage of this agreement?

If so, how will it do that?

• (1215)

[English]

Mary-Catherine Speirs: The CPTPP is of course already in force with existing membership. As the minister noted earlier, it has been very beneficial for Canadian businesses. We have significantly grown our trade relationships with partners under the CPTPP. Similarly, as the U.K.'s accession is completed, we will be able to promote these opportunities and the additional opportunities this brings to Canadian business.

We'll continue to be able to leverage that through the existing supports we offer to Canadian business through the trade commissioner service, as well as through specific programs, as the minister noted, which are designed to foster new opportunities for SME exporters to take advantage of trade opportunities and to make better use of our trade agreements, as well as through ongoing efforts to ensure Canadian companies across the country are aware of the opportunities our trade agreements offer and that they are able to take advantage of those opportunities to expand their trade with partners in CPTPP and in other markets.

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie: Thank you.

Will certain sectors or regions of the country benefit more from the United Kingdom's accession to the trade agreement?

[English]

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I believe that the CPTPP, as a very comprehensive and high-standard agreement, should offer opportunities to businesses in a wide range of sectors across the country. Likewise, the CPTPP's growing to include the U.K. will continue to expand the CPTPP's benefits to include a very significant additional market and one that is already a very significant trade and investment partner for Canada. As a result, this should offer some new opportunities in a variety of sectors.

The CPTPP continues to exist and will build upon the Canada-U.K. Trade Continuity Agreement. However, it does provide additional opportunities in a range of new sectors, including through more liberal rules of origin under the CPTPP and specific opportunities that it will offer in the U.K. market, as well as integrating a very large services trading partner into the CPTPP so that we have an increased coverage in terms of commitments for our services trade between Canada and the U.K.

[Translation]

Steeve Lavoie: Thank you.

There's a lot of talk about diversification. There's even talk about doubling the target in that regard. In Quebec, as I mentioned earlier, we believe in it, probably because of our strategic geographic location and our history with the marine shipping sector.

With that in mind, for the benefit of everyone listening to us today, what will opening our market to Europe, including the United Kingdom, which would accede to the agreement, do for us in the next 10 years?

Do you have any concrete examples to give us of the direction we're going to take? What will change tomorrow that we are not seeing today?

[English]

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I'd be happy to offer a few examples of what the U.K.'s joining the CPTPP can add to our existing opportunities with the U.K. Obviously, this is part and parcel of the network of trade agreements that we have in force with partners not only in Europe but also across the Indo-Pacific, as well as in other regions. The CPTPP, as an agreement, covers virtually all aspects of trade and investment, and it brings together a very strong group of economies across the Indo-Pacific region. Now, of course, with the U.K., it brings in another large G7 partner to the agreement, and there are significant additional market opportunities from integrating the U.K. into that agreement.

The intent of including the U.K. in the CPTPP is also to bring it into that one set of rules and that overall trade environment that we've created through the CPTPP, and it builds upon the existing TCA that we have with the U.K. We have FTAs in force with a range of markets, and as I said, we also work together with our colleagues who work more on the trade promotion side to ensure that we are informing Canadian companies and businesses of the opportunities. We are providing guidance with respect to how they can take advantage of the opportunities and the market openings that these FTAs do offer, and we are providing guidance with respect to how they can also take advantage and benefit from a range of related supports and facilitation mechanisms that we have. That could be funding for new exporters to visit trade fairs or explore new markets, or it could be the ongoing services that we offer through the trade commissioner service—both in Canada, through our regional offices, and at our posts abroad—to help facilitate Canadian businesses' ability to take advantage of these trade agreements.

• (1220)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Speirs.

We'll move on to Mr. Savard-Tremblay for six minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Good morning. Thank you for being here.

I would like to follow up on a question I asked the minister earlier about the failure to comply with the official policy on tabling treaties. I assume that Ms. Speirs will answer me.

Do you know who made that decision?

Actually, you know, but I don't know if you can say.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Honestly, I think that decision was made on the political side, based on Parliament's agenda.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: You still deem that policy official, and it is still in effect, since it can be found on the government's website. You still think it's relevant.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: For our part, in the government, we always follow policies to the letter. Therefore, it remains in effect for us, as government representatives.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: So you're confirming that it really didn't come from you and that this decision was made exclusively on the political side.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Yes.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Thank you.

I will come back to the other subjects I broached.

You are the director general of the trade negotiations bureau. So you were front and centre during previous negotiations. You are not just here to summarize the final product for us. You took part in discussions, did you not?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Yes.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: I will now turn to the other issue I had raised when questioning the minister, namely investor-state dispute settlement, or ISDS.

Is Canada still officially in favour of this mechanism?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Yes.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Would you happen to have the figures I asked the minister to provide to the committee? These are statistics on Canada's wins and losses in such disputes, as well as what they cost the Canadian government.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I can provide you with some numbers, but I do not have all the details you are requesting.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Fine. You can send the numbers you do not have now to the committee. We would be very grateful to you.

We are listening.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Canada paid approximately \$208 million in damages under the dispute settlement mechanism for all cases that were—

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Is that all?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Yes, and all the cases involved investors from the United States. That represents about 5% of all damages Canadian investors outside Canada received through this mechanism.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Damages are paid when there is a loss, of course, but can you quantify the other costs? Whether it's a win or a loss, there are costs associated with each case. Lawyers are hired, there is transportation, etc.

Do you have the total costs?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: No, I do not have them on hand, but I take note of your question.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Thank you.

What about statistics on wins and losses or cases that are still ongoing?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: My answer remains the same. I will have to get back to you on that.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Can you remember whether Canada has lost most of the time?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I do not know.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Since you adopted this position during negotiations, can you tell me why Canada supports this mechanism? You said Canada had contributed \$208 million, and it's not much. It only represents what was paid out for cases we lost. I jokingly asked you if that was it. I can tell you what I would have done with \$208 million. I still do not understand the point of a mechanism that will allow multinationals to undermine the legitimate will of legislators.

So, on what grounds are you defending this position?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Please allow me to respond in English.

• (1225)

[English]

In the context of the CPTPP, ISDS is part of the investment chapter of the CPTPP. In this case, the U.K. was acceding to an existing agreement. In this context, we undertook a conformity review of the U.K. with the CPTPP's rules. The U.K. accepted the investment chapter as it was previously agreed and as it is in force for the CPTPP. As a result, it does contain ISDS provisions.

ISDS has been of overall net benefit to Canada and to Canadian investors abroad. We always take great care to ensure that our investment agreements include strong safeguards and that we continue to preserve the right of governments to regulate in the public interest.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: You say it was a net benefit, but I asked you to provide the figures to prove it and you told me that you did not have them.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I do not have the number of wins and losses.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: It seems to me that, if it is a net benefit, the number of wins needs to be significantly higher. I do not see the benefit.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Yes. I have the figures here. Canada paid damages for cases it lost—

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: It is \$208 million. You said that.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Yes. In cases where Canadian investors won, the total was \$4.3 billion Canadian.

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: It's a little difficult to compare the amount paid by the government to investors and the amount investors obtained from other governments. I do not understand the method you use to calculate that, in all honesty.

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry. We're too far over time to get an answer back.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: I will repeat my question in the next round.

[English]

The Chair: Maybe you can supply that information to the member following this.

Mr. Groleau, go ahead, please.

[Translation]

Jason Groleau: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Smith, if I am not mistaken, you are the chief agriculture negotiator. So you are facing some major challenges right now.

Matthew Smith (Chief Agriculture Negotiator, Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food): Yes, absolutely.

Jason Groleau: I come from Beauce, which is an agricultural region. I mention every single time that it's a magnificent region.

You are negotiating major agreements, so you know that the devil is in the details. It is essential to be very punctilious in this context. Beef and pork producers were very disappointed with the previous agreement.

Could you talk to me about non-tariff barriers and tell me why they were not identified ahead of time?

Matthew Smith: Could you repeat the last part of your question?

Jason Groleau: When you are negotiating, the details are important. It's not just about the headline. The devil is in the details when negotiating an agreement favourable to both parties. We know that beef and pork producers are unable to export their products to the United Kingdom. They have had a very bad relationship and a very bad experience.

How will you resolve this situation in the new agreements?

Matthew Smith: Thank you for the question.

We interact a lot with both the pork and beef industries.

I already know this because, during the first hour of the committee meeting, we discussed the fact that there were significant barriers even though the vast majority of products and goods were not subject to any tariffs at the border. In addition, our pork and beef industries often bring these barriers to the attention of the department and myself.

To be honest, we are extremely disappointed with the UK's treatment of our high-quality products. There are barriers. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has already mentioned that we had many discussions in order to promote, to push things forward, to gain more non-tariff access.

These discussions will continue. We now have two ways to advance these discussions through the structure already provided for in the Canada–United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement, which remains in force, but also with the start of the United Kingdom's session in this agreement.

The provisions of this agreement can also be used to demonstrate the extent to which it is important to have evidence-based rules.

Jason Groleau: Do you use this leverage during negotiations? I am asking this question because our industries are not satisfied, they are unhappy with the results. As you know, there are zero exports compared to tens of millions of dollars in imports. The industries are extremely disappointed.

When you renegotiate an agreement, do you use this leverage to be able to reach a better agreement?

Matthew Smith: Yes, and based on my experience, we raise this issue every time the Canadian and UK governments are in talks. We talk to them about our expectations for better access to their market, emphasizing that there has been no progress in recent years. I am well aware of this, and the government will continue to raise this issue during talks.

• (1230)

Jason Groleau: When agriculture is the subject of negotiations, and these are important agreements, you need objectives. What are your current objectives when it comes to agriculture?

Matthew Smith: Negotiations led to the Canada–United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement after the United Kingdom left the European Union.

The result is that 99% of goods were covered by tariffs. With regard to sanitary and phytosanitary rules relevant to the discussion on agriculture, we have a few more rules and greater rigour stemming from the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP, in addition to the agreement we already have. We will use the structure of these two agreements to continue the discussions.

If the committee is interested, and to continue the conversation, I would also like to invite my colleague from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to talk about the plan with regard to sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

Jason Groleau: Do you do a post-mortem? Do you review the results? When you negotiate, there are surely key performance indicators and objectives that need to be met.

What happens when those objectives are not reached, as is the case now? How does it work on your end?

Matthew Smith: I would say that one of the challenges raised by the Canadian beef industry concerns the rules on beef in the United Kingdom. Doing business with the United Kingdom is expensive. The cost is too high compared to other markets.

For our part, we have a high-quality product that is in demand around the world, including by other parties to the CPTPP Agreement.

It's normal for the industry to want to go to the most lucrative market, and that's not the United Kingdom. I would say that the policies in place make it a less attractive market for them, less attractive for us—

Jason Groleau: It is too expensive because of non-tariff barriers.

Matthew Smith: It's not that it has not been raised. It has been raised often. The United Kingdom has been very clear about this. When it comes to the changes we asked for, to align their rules with ours, which are very clearly evidence-based, the United Kingdom is not prepared to do that with us or with other trading partners. We are not the only ones asking for greater access for our products. The United States also has very similar concerns.

Jason Groleau: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Lapointe, go ahead for five minutes, please.

[Translation]

Linda Lapointe: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I welcome you and thank you for joining us here again so soon. It was not just the minister; you too had to prepare to meet with us. I thank you for that.

Ms. Speirs, earlier you said there were several opportunities to promote support for entrepreneurs. I was in business before I entered politics. Businesswomen talk a lot about promoting themselves to seize opportunities.

You mentioned trade delegations. Do you promote yourselves to attract women and, specifically, to include women entrepreneurs in trade delegations? I met with several women entrepreneurs from the Réseau des femmes d'affaires du Québec, and they said that to successfully build relationships, it's not enough to be part of trade delegations just once. You have to build relationships and continue to be part of them so that, at some point, you can get things moving.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: Thank you for your question.

As I said, we use a variety of means to promote exports and opportunities for Canadians in markets and, above all, to inform businesses about the opportunities offered by our trade agreements. There are promotional programs, the trade commissioner service and programs here in Canada to provide training and information to prepare businesses to become exporters and succeed in new markets.

As you said, it is true that it takes several attempts to build relationships with customers or investors in other markets. Trade missions are one of the tools we use. We have already organized trade missions exclusively for women entrepreneurs. In addition, we will always use trade missions open to small and medium-sized businesses. We seek out and develop programs to connect businesses with other businesses in their specific sector. We develop opportunities specific to certain sectors in various markets.

Women entrepreneurs can follow two paths. On the one hand, we can put them in touch with companies or groups run by women. On the other hand, we can also help them position themselves in their sector or market of interest.

In my opinion, thanks to these two methods and several other mechanisms we have in place, it will be possible for them to develop their businesses and create opportunities in various markets.

• (1235)

Linda Lapointe: Thank you. I had heard about it in the field, but I wanted you to tell me more about it.

I also met with representatives from the Business Development Bank of Canada, or BDC. At BDC, money is set aside for women entrepreneurs. It's part of a continuum. It's not just BDC that is helping women entrepreneurs; businesses in general are as well.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: It's the same with the trade commissioners. They have programs targeted at women entrepreneurs to encourage and train them so that they learn how to take advantage of the opportunities available.

Linda Lapointe: You had a discussion earlier with my opposition colleague about obtaining information. You were saying that there were open emails. If an entrepreneur has specific questions, whether it's on the CP—

Mary-Catherine Speirs: It's the CPTPP, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Linda Lapointe: When I started, it was the Trans-Pacific Partnership. They added two letters.

If an entrepreneur is looking for information, what website can they visit?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I don't have the specific links with me, but we can send them to you.

There is information on our department's website. We have websites that are managed by the trade commissioner service. We still have email inboxes, through which Canadian entrepreneurs can either ask technical questions or request information on all of our trade agreements and arrangements.

Linda Lapointe: I had other questions for you, but my time is already up.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I've been a bit more flexible, giving 10 or 15 seconds more. I have to make sure that everybody gets an opportunity.

Monsieur Savard-Tremblay, you have two and a half minutes.

[Translation]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Let's pick up where we left off, Ms. Speirs.

I finished by saying that I didn't understand your method for calculating the net benefit. You say that Canadian companies—and when you say “companies”, you mean “private equity”—have received more money than foreign companies have obtained at Canada's expense. In both cases, it's public money, but at the end of the day, that amount leaves a lot of data out, because to talk about a net benefit, you would have to have a complete picture, the data on losses and wins, and knowledge of the total cost to the government.

It's all well and good to talk only about the money paid out in the event the Canadian government loses, but there are other factors, such as the costs of the duration of the lawsuit. Right now, under NAFTA—even though NAFTA no longer exists—a lawsuit related to the GNL Québec project in Saguenay is coming to an end, if I'm not mistaken, unless it has already ended.

There are cases like that, but also out-of-court settlements. However, even an out-of-court settlement results in a partial setback in

political will, even if it's not a total setback, as in the case of a foreign company's victory.

Don't you think that, before we talk about net benefit, we should adjust the way we calculate all that?

Did I speak too quickly?

• (1240)

Mary-Catherine Speirs: No, I understood.

I'm not going to comment on the method, but I have more information to share.

In all of our agreements, Canada won 21 cases and lost 10. As I said, those 10 cases were all under the original CUSMA—

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: So it's NAFTA.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: —by U.S. investors.

As I said, in terms of overall gains and losses, Canadian investors who took advantage of these mechanisms earned \$4.3 billion. For lost cases or cases subject to settlement, we paid \$208 million.

The legal fees for processing cases are determined within our department by the trade law bureau. So they are determined within the government. If Canada wins a case, we try to recover the costs.

[English]

by the defendant who has lost the case. We seek to recover costs in those cases.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We appreciate that.

Mr. Chambers, you have five minutes.

Adam Chambers: Thank you.

Thank you for appearing at committee and for the work you do on behalf of Canadians to expand our relationships and get our goods to more markets.

I wonder if you could educate me a bit more on the process with respect to our concerns that producers have raised about the non-tariff barriers the U.K. has imposed on beef and pork, as an example. How do we resolve those issues?

Do you worry that the U.K. will bring some of that thinking into the CPTPP agreement such that it impacts the way other countries view Canadian agriculture products?

Matthew Smith: I'm happy to start with a response, and if my colleagues want to add to it, I'll invite them to.

There are two parts to the question I heard, Madam Chair.

One, some of the work that's happening is to continue to advance and resolve those non-tariff barriers that our agriculture exporters face, and for that we are using every opportunity we have to engage with the U.K. government. Some of that is done regularly through our people on the ground at the high commission there and at the level of government representatives who visit and engage with the U.K. We also have structures in place to specifically talk about the types of regulatory issues we face in the sanitary and phytosanitary space.

We have a committee structure where we are able to get dedicated access to the types of officials who would be responsible for the regulatory policies in question in the U.K. That's one of the advantages of having a live free trade agreement with another partner government, like the continuity agreement.

I'll ask my colleague from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to say a bit about the committee work. On the impact that the U.K. would have on the agreement, I think there are a number of other partners to it. Everybody will be looking at, for example, which countries will accede in the future and what standard we will hold those countries to.

The U.K. is now going to be a part of that group in looking at others, absolutely, but it's our intention in Canada to make sure we're applying the very high standard we expect of any country that would come into that agreement with regard to how they let our products into their market and how they handle them. It's a big consideration when we look at the accession of further countries to it.

• (1245)

Evan Lewis (Senior Director, Market Access Secretariat, Canadian Food Inspection Agency): Madam Chair, I'm happy to supplement that, with your indulgence.

My team in the CFIA does a number of relevant things in this space.

One, we support the broader interdepartmental and government effort to negotiate free trade agreements, specifically chapters on sanitary and phytosanitary measures. We also, in parallel to that, work on addressing and resolving the day-to-day market access barriers that are there with various partners, whether we have a free trade agreement with them or not.

I represent Canada on a number of the committees that are established under FTAs, including the committee on sanitary and phytosanitary measures with the U.K. that is in place under our bilateral trade continuity agreement, as well as representing Canada on the committee on sanitary and phytosanitary measures under the CPTPP.

We use our bilateral committee, as well as regular day-to-day interaction with our counterparts in the U.K., to advance resolution on a number of the specific issues that have been mentioned here today that we are well aware of and remain problematic for pork and beef. For example—

Adam Chambers: I'm just going to jump in because I want to keep to the chair's time here, with not even 30 seconds left.

Is it your testimony that there are current discussions and official negotiations under way with the U.K. about these non-tariff barriers?

Evan Lewis: Yes. The—

Adam Chambers: Here is the final question: How long before we can give the producers some comfort that there is a path to a resolution here? Is this a years-long thing, or a months-long thing?

Evan Lewis: It depends highly on the nature of the issue.

We're working very closely with the Canadian Cattle Association, for example, on the issue of carcass washes. The ball is actually in industry's court to make the next steps with respect to U.K. approval there.

With trichinella, for pork, for example, that's another issue that's well under way. We will see when that is able to be resolved based on sound science.

Adam Chambers: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Fonseca, go ahead.

Peter Fonseca: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our officials for being here with us today.

We set a goal of increasing our exports by 50% by 2025, and we reached that in 2024, outside of the United States, so those are exports outside of the U.S. Now we've set this lofty goal of doubling that and increasing it by 100%. It's about \$300 billion over the next decade of exports outside of those to the United States.

Can you tell me how this accession of the U.K. to the CPTPP will factor in to achieving those numbers?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I think the CPTPP, as one of our largest trade agreements, already plays a very important role in how we can continue to diversify and grow our exports and our trade with new markets. I'll quote a couple of stats that I believe Minister Sidhu already noted earlier. Since the CPTPP entered into force for Canada in 2018, we've increased our trade between Canada and CPTPP partners up to \$135.4 billion, which is a net increase of 38.3% since 2018. We've reached a record high of \$37.5 billion of exports of merchandise to CPTPP partners, including the U.K., and the CPTPP will only encourage this to grow. The U.K. is a very significant market of 67 million consumers. We already have a robust trade and investment relationship. As the U.K. joins the CPTPP, we'll just expand that one agreement further.

Of course, it's only one of our number of trade agreements. There are markets that we are seeking to expand in. These are new and expanding markets of opportunity for us in the CPTPP. It builds on to the existing agreements that we also have, of course, with the EU as well as our other network of FTAs.

Peter Fonseca: What you're saying is that with the U.K. accession into the CPTPP, there's a multiplier effect. Canadian businesses that are already doing trade with the U.K., as the U.K. now increases its trade within the CPTPP, will in turn do more business and provide more opportunities. Is that what I'm hearing?

• (1250)

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I think that's exactly it.

Peter Fonseca: Okay.

Mary-Catherine Speirs: We're integrating the U.K. into this very high-standard, very robust market in the CPTPP. It just helps us to grow the overall opportunities in that way.

Peter Fonseca: I want to go down to a micro level. In my riding, I was approached by a construction company that is interested in doing some building overseas with Canadian forestry products. Knowing full well how the forest sector industry is being hard hit by the tariffs from the U.S., will this be an opportunity also with the U.K.? Beyond the U.K., how can we help companies, like the one I mentioned that wants to take this opportunity, and help Canadian businesses? They're in construction. They want to construct with Canadian lumber in other parts of the world. How can you help?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I'm not going to speak specifically to CPTPP provisions, but more broadly, we are working with a number of partners and markets around the world to establish and expand the wood-building standards and to continue to build and offer more opportunities to demonstrate how wood can be used in construction. I think this is one important avenue where Canadian technology, and our skill, and some of the products and technologies we've developed with respect to wood construction, can be better adopted and understood in new markets. That in turn creates those opportunities for the sector to export to those new markets.

Peter Fonseca: When you have a company in Canada that's ready to go—they want to export and they want to use those materials and build in another place—how does your department help them? I did send them to our trade commissioner service, but it didn't seem that it was the right avenue. What should or could I have done? Where can we get help for a company like this that's looking to help our country?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I'll be very honest and say that I work in international trade, so we're really looking at trade policies and rules. As I noted, one of the key factors we are seeking to develop with partners in different markets on wood is, for example, construction standards and understanding and having a recognition of the safety and nature of those wood construction standards.

That is definitely outside my area of expertise in trade, but I believe our Department of Natural Resources does lead on some of those MOUs and other work that we are doing, as well as some of the sector organizations.

Peter Fonseca: I have one last question on branding. Madame Lapointe brought up branding. Canada has such a strong brand, but we're not really marketing it as well as I think we could around the world. Again, from your end, what are you doing on that brand, showing the quality products that Canada is able to produce and export and with the trade agreements that we have?

Mary-Catherine Speirs: I'll come to it from my perspective of trade agreements, which is very much about opening those markets

and creating those opportunities. Of course, within Global Affairs Canada we work very closely with colleagues on the trade promotion side, with the trade commissioner service.

I'd say there's a variety of tools that are used. It can be the trade missions, where we take sectors and showcase Canadian expertise in a given sector in a market of opportunity. We bring businesses directly together in that context. There's business-to-business interaction. We also work through trade shows and other sectoral opportunities. The potentially best approach to take depends a little bit on the sector. Of course, we leverage our network of trade commissioners at our posts abroad, who are there to develop that local knowledge and to be able to bring that back and help Canadian companies and Canadian sectors determine where their opportunities are and how they can seek to advance those opportunities to showcase Canadian capacity and Canadian products in those markets.

Peter Fonseca: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Everyone has had an opportunity. If there's nothing earth-shattering that someone has to ask, we will adjourn the meeting.

Go ahead, Mr. Savard-Tremblay.

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: My question is not for the witnesses.

Before we adjourn the meeting, I would like to know one thing. Generally, when we send our proposed amendments, they have to go through the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. Given the timeline, if the chair can be responsible....

There's no interpretation. Is that correct?

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry, I don't have any interpretation.

Would you please start over again?

[*Translation*]

Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Yes.

We've been advised of the timeline. Thank you to the chair for adding two hours. However, the fact remains that there is a short period of time between the final witnesses and the submission of our proposed amendments to the bill.

Given that the deadline is quite short, I imagine that the Office of the Law Clerk will be inundated with proposed amendments, since we generally go through that office before they are then sent to the chair for subsequent services.

Could the chair or the committee take it upon itself to inform the Office of the Law Clerk that a number of proposals may be sent to them in the time slot between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. next Tuesday?

• (1255)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much. That's good advice and a good suggestion.

We will adjourn.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>