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(HANSARD)

Thursday, May 12, 2016

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 12, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, entitled “Main Estimates 2016-17: Vote 1 under Canadian High Arctic Research Station and Votes 1, 5, 10 and L15 under Indian Affairs and Northern Development”.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following eight reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: the first report, on Chapter 3, “Mental Health Services for Veterans”, of the fall 2014 report of the Auditor General of Canada; the second report, on Chapter 6, “Nutrition North Canada—Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada”, of the fall 2014 report of the Auditor General of Canada; the third report, on Chapter 5, “Support to the Automotive Sector”, of the fall 2014 report of the Auditor General of Canada; the fourth report, on Chapter 2, “Required Reporting by Federal Organizations”, of the spring 2015 report of the Auditor General of Canada; the fifth report, on Chapter 3, “Tax-Based Expenditures”, of the spring 2015 report of the Auditor General of Canada; the sixth report, on Chapter 5, “Information Technology Investments—Canada Border Services Agency”, of the spring 2015 report of the Auditor General of Canada; and the seventh report, on Chapter 4, “Access to Health Services for Remote First Nation Communities”, of the spring 2015 report of the Auditor General of Canada.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to each of these seven reports, and the eighth report in relation to the committee's studies of the main estimates for the fiscal year 2016-17.

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, in relation to Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act and to provide for certain other measures.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, in relation to Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying).

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, in relation to Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations Act and the Income Tax Act.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendments.

* * *

EXCISE TAX ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-271, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (batteries for medical or assistive devices).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House, with thanks to my honourable colleague, the great member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, who is seconding this bill.

I think all Canadians know that fair, intelligent tax policy is critical to our nation.

Routine Proceedings

There is a general consensus in our tax policy that there ought to be no taxes on medically required devices or products. While medical devices in this country are exempt from GST, the batteries that must be purchased to power those devices are still subject to tax.

I was contacted a few years ago by a senior citizen in my riding, who alerted me to this and suggested that it was unfair. Every time he had to buy batteries for his medically assisted device, he had to pay GST. He thought that was not fair.

This is a perfect example of showing the wisdom that comes from our citizens and the reflection of that in the House of Commons. Therefore, I owe this idea to my constituent.

I am proud to table this bill that would remove the GST on batteries that are required for medically assisted devices.

With the NDP's leadership on removing the tax on feminine hygiene products, I think we continue to see NDP leadership on smart, fair taxes in the House.

I hope the government adopts the bill, or I look forward to an NDP government bringing in this kind of smart policy.

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

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STATISTICS ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-272, An Act to amend the Statistics Act (fire and emergency response statistics).

He said: Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to thank the seconder, the hard-working member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

This is a bill that would require Statistics Canada to collect better data on fire and emergency response.

This month's catastrophic wildfire in Alberta reminds us that more needs to be done to plan and prepare for fire emergencies across Canada. We can and should learn from this tragedy, and others, to better equip our first responders for inevitable future fires.

I began drafting this legislation last Parliament at the request of and with consultation of Canadian firefighters. At its core, this bill would establish a process of creating a national data repository so that firefighters across Canada can access information not otherwise available to them.

Firefighters have told me that modern materials, chemicals, and building construction techniques are changing the way that fires behave and are fought. We need this data so that firefighters across the country are not siloed.

On May 9, Fort McMurray Fire Chief Darby Allen told Canadians that this fire "is rewriting the book...the way it behaved." He said that we need to rewrite our formulas on how we fight them.

Those words of Fire Chief Allen underscore how urgent it is for governments to re-examine our approach to fire and wildfire management. With fire seasons expected to get worse over the coming years, this bill would help to lay the ground for better planning by providing firefighters with data collection.

Finally, it would require Statistics Canada to collect data and publish a yearly report on fire events, including the total number of forest fires, monetary losses, the number of deaths and injuries, the number of fires intentionally set, the number of fire emergency responses by department, and subject matter of response calls.

In my frequent conversations with firefighters, I have often heard concerns about the lack of data available—

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

● (1010)

The Speaker: I want to encourage members to keep their comments brief when introducing a bill. It is not necessary at this point to go through all of the details of the bill. It is important to make a very brief summary of it so we can get on to other business. Of course, during debate on the bill, members will have a fuller chance to discuss its contents.

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NATIONAL SEAL PRODUCTS DAY ACT

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-208, An Act respecting National Seal Products Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Senator Hervieux-Payette for providing Bill S-208.

The bill proposes to create May 20 as seal products day in this country.

There is a rich history to this particular legislation that stretches back several hundred years for Atlantic Canada and eastern Quebec. It all started in a major industry that provided seal oil for the lamps of the streets of London, England, and through hundreds of years it has created a mass industry for Newfoundland and Labrador and for eastern Quebec.

We have seen national seal products in their earliest form through seal oil and through the fur itself.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans comes in here every day sporting his tie that proudly shows his indigenous heritage.

I would like to quote from the preamble of the bill: "Whereas Canada's Indigenous peoples and coastal communities [including my own] have developed traditional knowledge of how to use ocean resources;"

Again, the bill proposes to deem May 20 national seal products day in Canada.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time)

* * *

PETITIONS

JUSTICE

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want Parliament to know about the tragic story of Cassandra Kaake, who was 31-weeks pregnant when she was murdered in Windsor, Ontario, just over a year ago. Tragically, there will be no justice for Cassandra's preborn baby girl Molly, who was also killed in that violent attack. That is because in Canadian criminal law, a preborn child is not recognized as a separate victim in an attack against a mother.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to pass legislation that would allow a separate charge to be laid in the death or injury of a preborn child when that child's mother is a victim of crime. Canadians want justice for victims like Molly.

These petitions are signed by many individuals from Alberta, mainly from east central Alberta.

[*Translation*]

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition to present, this one signed primarily by people from communities in British Columbia, from Surrey, Coquitlam, and Abbotsford. This petition is about the scourge of impaired driving. The petitioners are calling on the government to recognize that a person who causes death commits a crime, that of manslaughter, and that there are minimum sentences for repeat drunk drivers who cause death. We have a bill on this that members can speak to. I would like to present this petition on their behalf.

• (1015)

[*English*]

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present this morning that truly do reflect the hearts and minds of constituents in my riding.

The first petition calls on the Parliament of Canada to enshrine in the Criminal Code the protection of conscience for physicians and health care institutions from coercion or intimidation to provide or refer for assisted suicide or euthanasia.

JUSTICE

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the Parliament of Canada to protect a pregnant woman and her preborn child when the child's mother is a victim of crime.

The petitioners request that the Parliament of Canada bring in a law that would make it an offence to commit a crime against a woman who is pregnant and the expected child is killed or harmed.

Business of Supply

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the petitioners call upon us, as legislators, to hold a referendum on any proposed changes to the Canadian electoral system.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, given the importance of trade to Canadian jobs and long-term growth, as well as the government's commitment to strengthen ties within North America and the Asia-Pacific region: (a) growing protectionism threatens the global economy; (b) the Trans-Pacific Partnership is the best opportunity to strengthen the multilateral trading system and develop rules that protect Canada's economic interests; (c) the government should send a strong signal to Canadian businesses and its closest allies that it supports international commerce; (d) Canada's position on the Trans-Pacific Partnership should not depend on political developments in the United States; (e) the government should stop prolonging consultations on this important agreement; and (f) the government should declare Canada's final position on the Trans-Pacific Partnership in time for the North American Leaders' Summit in Ottawa on June 29, 2016.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the trans-Pacific partnership, the largest trade agreement in the world, one in which Canada can show leadership. I have always believed that Canada must be a leader, not a laggard, on trade.

Why trade? We have to ask ourselves that question. I think most Canadians understand that Canada is one of the great trading nations of the world. We operate today in a globalized trading environment, a globalized marketplace. Whether one believes in globalization or not, no one is going to be able to turn back the hands of time on globalization. It is a fact and Canada needs to adapt.

If we were going to promote trade, the first place we would want to do that of course is under the World Trade Organization, which is the pre-eminent forum in the world for rules-based trade. However, with the rise of emerging economies, there has been a significant shift in the economic balance within the global economy. Emerging economies are flexing their muscles and it has become much more difficult to actually make headway in establishing new rules for trade at the World Trade Organization.

Business of Supply

As that organization has become somewhat comatose and unable or unwilling to move forward with new rules to adapt to a rapidly evolving global trade environment, Canada has to seek new ways of promoting its trade interests around the world. How do we do that? There are a number of different ways.

We can certainly negotiate bilateral trade agreements and investment agreements. We have done that with many countries around the world.

We can get involved in plurilateral negotiations. Canada is involved in those as well. There are three I am thinking of specifically. One is the environmental goods agreement, where like-minded willing partners are negotiating a global agreement on services, technology, and environmental goods.

We can also get involved in regional trade negotiations. If we are not going to make headway in the short term or medium term at the World Trade Organization, the best way to do this is to bring together like-minded trade partners and like-minded investment partners and negotiate an agreement that not only eliminates tariffs on goods, but also eliminates many of the non-tariff barriers behind the borders, the ones that frustrate our exporters so much. That is essentially what the trans-Pacific partnership would do.

What is the trans-Pacific partnership? It is 12 like-minded partners. It is not only Canada. It is the United States and Mexico, our NAFTA partners. Our free trade partners, Peru and Chile, are members of that partnership. Then there are countries that we do not have free trade agreements with which are now part of the TPP, countries like Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam, and I would be remiss if I did not mention the third largest economy in the world, Japan.

This agreement is truly the largest trade agreement of its kind in the world. It represents somewhere in the order of 800 million consumers and somewhere around \$29 trillion of the global economy. Canada needs to be part of this. What we are suggesting to the government is that rather than hiding behind the skirts of further lengthy consultations, the government should now stand up and declare its support for the TPP. That is what this motion does.

Just to be very clear, I would like to repeat the motion for the information of not only members in the House but also the many viewers who are watching these proceedings. The motion states in part:

(a) growing protectionism threatens the global economy; (b) the Trans-Pacific Partnership is the best opportunity to strengthen the multilateral trading system and develop rules that protect Canada's economic interests; (c) the [Liberal] government should send a strong signal to Canadian businesses and its closest allies that it supports international commerce; (d) Canada's position on the Trans-Pacific Partnership should not depend on political developments in the United States; (e) the [Liberal] government should stop prolonging consultations on this important agreement; and (f) the [Liberal] government should declare Canada's final position on the Trans-Pacific Partnership in time for the North American Leaders' Summit in Ottawa on June 29, 2016.

● (1020)

The Liberal government has gone out of its way to try to proclaim its bona fides on trade. The Liberals' record is quite poor. Members may recall that over 13 years under the Chrétien and Martin governments, they got virtually nothing done on the trade file.

It was only in 2006 that our former Conservative government embarked upon the most ambitious trade agenda Canada had ever seen. We not only embarked upon that plan, but we actually executed on that plan. Over a short period of less than 10 years, our Conservative government was able to conclude negotiations on trade agreements with an astonishing 46 different countries. The previous Liberal government's record was three small trade agreements. We got left far behind within the global trading environment. Under our government, of course, we caught up very rapidly, but we are not finished.

Now the torch has been passed to the Liberal government. The Liberals have claimed that they are supporters of free trade and supporters of trade agreements, but let us see them stand up in this House and support this agreement.

One of the reasons it is important Canada be part of the TPP is that if we are not part of it, our North American trading preferences with our NAFTA partners, Mexico and the U.S., will very rapidly be undermined. Right now we have highly integrated supply chains across our borders, where we trade freely among ourselves. That is a platform also for us exporting goods to the rest of the world, because not only do we compete with the United States and Mexico, but we also do business together. When we look at the auto industry, in the typical car that comes off the assembly line, there are parts that have crossed the Canada-U.S. border and the Mexico border more than seven times. We can see how these parts, these manufacturing inputs, flow across borders seamlessly to create prosperity for our country and for our NAFTA partners.

If we are not part of the TPP, very quickly it will be the United States and Mexico that pick up many of our trade opportunities within the Asia-Pacific region. We will lose out. We will also see our investment preferences disappear very rapidly.

Think about it. If Canada is not part of the TPP, but the United States and Mexico are, and Mexico already has a trade agreement with the EU, and the United States will very quickly have one under TTIP, think of where investment would flow. Someone making a decision to, say, invest in the auto industry is going to invest in a jurisdiction that has the best access, free trade access, to markets around the world. The United States and Mexico would have access to the European Union. They have access within the North American marketplace under NAFTA. They have access now to the Asia-Pacific region. Canada would not have that kind of broad access.

Where is investment going to flow? Not to Canada. There is a huge risk of Canada being on the outside looking in, seeing its trade opportunities rapidly eroded around the world, seeing our investment advantages rapidly eroded. Let me give an example of where this happened and why Canada has to be so assertive in staying ahead of the curve when it comes to trade.

Business of Supply

Members may recall that the United States, the European Union, and Canada were all negotiating a free trade agreement with South Korea. We were doing it at the same time. Then something happened in Canada. We had the BSE crisis, which hit our cattle and beef industry. South Korea and countries around the world closed their markets to us temporarily, until we could assure them that our beef was safe, that it was healthy to eat. Then those markets opened, except for two markets, Taiwan and South Korea. South Korea said, "No, we don't think that your beef is safe to eat". It was wrong. Ours is the best beef in the world. However, South Korea, for its own purposes, probably protectionist purposes, chose not to open up the market, so we had to take it to the World Trade Organization and we had to do dispute settlement.

At the end of the day, of course, Canada won, but in the meantime, we lost a couple of years in negotiations on a broader trade agreement. Of course, the European Union and the U.S. got their deals in place. Those deals were in effect in 2012.

● (1025)

In the subsequent year, when Canada did not have a trade agreement with South Korea, but the EU and the U.S. did, Canada lost 1.5 billion dollars' worth of exports in South Korea. That is the cost we pay when we do not actively negotiate open markets around the world for Canadian exporters and for Canadian manufacturers.

That is the risk that the Liberal government takes by not declaring its support for the trans-Pacific partnership. We want to stay ahead of the curve. We want to be leaders not laggards on trade. That is our reputation over the last 10 years. Very quickly, we see that reputation waning under the new Liberal government.

We have had strong support from stakeholders across Canada. When we were in government, we worked very closely with the provinces and territories to make sure they understood what it was we were negotiating in the TPP, to make sure they understood the benefits to each one of their provinces and territories.

We also consulted broadly with stakeholder groups and industry organizations across the country. Overwhelmingly, they supported Canada being part of the TPP. Overwhelmingly, they supported the outcome of the TPP when it was finally announced, even the supply-managed sector, which many had said were going to go to the barricades on the TPP, that they were going to hate this agreement because we were providing some marginal extra access to the Canadian marketplace for products such as chicken, eggs, turkeys, hatching eggs, and dairy.

At the end of the day, when we announced it, and we had provided them with assurances that this was not going to decimate their industry, they saw the deal in front of them and said that the Conservative government actually negotiated a pretty darn good deal. The access was limited to very small amounts coming across the border, in addition to what access they already had. In fact, I have spoken to those organizations since, and they will very quietly admit that the agreement actually ended up being much better than they had expected, and that we had done a phenomenal job of negotiating an outcome that services their industry interests.

Members may recall that we were not only able to minimize the impacts on those industries, but we also provided two packages. One

of those was a compensation package to compensate those industries for any loss in quota value suffered as a result of opening the market a little more for those products. The industries embraced that.

By the way, the compensation that we announced, which we believed was fair and which those industries embraced fully, is now in doubt under this new Liberal government, which has always stood up and said that it supports supply management. The Minister of Agriculture, almost daily in the House, is asked about supply management and about compensation. He stands up and says that they strongly support supply management, but the government will not actually commit to the compensation package that was negotiated as part of the TPP outcome.

The same thing is true on mitigation measures. Our American friends are very good at exploiting loopholes in our trade laws. For example, they could not get large amounts of broilers, chicken, into Canada, so what they would do is create sauce packs. The World Trade Organization rules in our NAFTA agreement are not 100% clear on whether sauce packs are included or are prohibited. The Americans would send these sauce packs across the border, circumventing the spirit of our custom controls.

There are many other loopholes that our friends to the south were exploiting. We said to the industry that we were going to do everything we could to plug those loopholes. We came up with a package, a set of promises that we were going to undertake to address those challenges.

No sooner had the new Liberal government been elected, then it was questioning whether, in fact, it would be implementing those mitigation measures. Again, the industry, the supply-managed five are very upset. They will not get assurances on the compensation package, and the federal government has not been moving forward with addressing the mitigation measures that had been promised to them.

● (1030)

The Prime Minister has boasted that his government is a champion of trade. Over the last six months, sadly, we have seen virtually no progress, no clear pronouncement on whether the Liberals support the TPP. In fact, I have been looking for any new trade agreements that the Liberals have started negotiating, and there are not any that I can tell. I am looking for new international investment treaties that the Liberals might be negotiating; I am not aware of any. Where is this claim of being champions of trade?

What the Liberals have done is they have sent a chill into our Canadian investment market and into the international investment market. They have increased taxes on Canadians. They refuse to reduce the taxes on small businesses in Canada, breaking an election promise. What they have done is add more red tape. Even yesterday in the House I spoke about how the current Liberal government and a private member are trying to impose additional red tape on our small businesses. What is the result? Despite the low dollar, our exports have lagged terribly.

Business of Supply

In fact, I have the most recent statistics from the Minister of International Trade's own department. In January, exports were \$35 billion. That is just exports to the U.S. In February, those went down \$2 billion. In March, those exports went down \$2.5 billion. It is a terrible record over the last six months for the current Liberal government.

We know that the Prime Minister has been hobnobbing with President Obama. We know that the Minister of International Trade has been travelling all over the United States, going on talk shows—embarrassing herself there—and talking supposedly about trade. If her performance is any indicator, Canadians would be well served if she actually stayed at home and focused on the work that has to be done here to promote our trade interests because she is not getting the job done internationally. There is a tremendous failure on the part of the current Liberal government to live up to its promises on trade.

Beyond that, when we look at some of the other challenges facing Canada around the world, we see that we cannot count on a low dollar to sustain our competitiveness. We have to ensure we continue to open up markets all around the world. Let me say this. For the Liberals to wait for the U.S. to ratify TPP is an abject abdication of their responsibility to be leaders not laggards in trade. What we are doing is calling upon the current Liberal government to move forward and to boldly pronounce at the three amigos summit on June 29 that Canada will be supporting the TPP. President Obama has done that. The Americans have already said they support the TPP.

Here we are as Canadians, and our government just will not tell Canadians where it stands. Can members imagine the leadership we could show by standing up and saying that we believe trade is good for Canada; that we believe open markets around the world are good for Canada; that we support this largest trade agreement of its kind in the world and we are part of it; and, that we are setting the rules for 21st-century trade within the Asia-Pacific region? Would that not be an amazing pronouncement to make?

Right now, it is not looking good on the Liberal side when it comes to trade, with declining trade performance and declining investment performance. This is one thing we can do to actually generate this thing that is perhaps the most significant driver of economic prosperity in Canada.

It is no longer appropriate for the current Liberal government to hide behind the skirts of consultations. There were comprehensive consultations that took place before the agreement was signed. There have been comprehensive consultations that have taken place post-TPP being concluded. It is time to step up and let the world know, let Canadians know, and let our partners and allies know where we stand on trade.

What would this achieve? It would assist the U.S. in its own ongoing work of ratifying the agreement. It would restore waning public confidence in the Liberal government's commitment to a robust trade agenda, and it would restore Canada's reputation as a trustworthy global leader on trade, not a laggard.

I am very pleased to be able to promote this agreement. It would be a transformational agreement for Canadians and for exporters. It would also be a transformational agreement for Canada's consumers,

who would benefit from lower prices because of the elimination of tariffs.

I strongly encourage the Liberal government to step up, speak to this agreement, and say, "Yes, we support the TPP."

• (1035)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments and for his work on international trade over the years. While he was minister, did he have consultations with civil society groups and other groups who have now come out and opposed the TPP? They seem to be telling us that they were never consulted on any of this.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. In fact, before Canada ever embarks upon trade negotiations or investment agreements and negotiations agreements we post our intentions in the *Canada Gazette*, which is a public statement that we are inviting input into the consultation process. There is not one Canadian who was prevented from submitting his or her views on the TPP or any other trade agreement that Canada has ever negotiated.

However, I also travelled across the country. I have met with so many organizations that are on both sides of this issue. There is a small group of Canadians who are ideologically opposed to trade. We understand that and they have a voice. They have an opportunity to submit to government their concerns. At the same time, across Canada, industries and industry organizations overwhelmingly supported Canada being part of the TPP and supported the outcome when we announced it.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague on his speech. He was a very hard-working minister of trade. I know he is a fervent proponent of free trade agreements.

There are a number of different perspectives on trade though. One of them is a defensive one. Some argue that if the U.S. and Mexico ratify the TPP, then Canada would have little choice but to do so, particularly because it would give preferential access to our competitors to the Japanese market. On the other hand, a recent economic study has come out that estimated that 10 years after the TPP were to come into force that Canada's economy would be only 0.28% larger than without it, in other words, only about five billion dollars' worth of economic activity in a \$1.8-trillion economy.

When my colleague was minister, his government announced that it would have to pay \$4.3 billion in compensation to the agricultural and auto sectors, which would obviously be damaged by this agreement or they would not pay the money. Could he tell us if he thinks that \$5 billion of economic activity 10 years out compared to \$4.3 billion of compensation paid out is really that much of an advantage considering the job losses that the TPP has been estimated to cost Canada?

• (1040)

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what study the member is referring to, but I suspect it is probably the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. There are some very left-leaning organizations out there that are virulently opposed to trade, ideologically opposed to trade.

Business of Supply

Studies that have been done by, for example, the Peterson Institute, which the member knows, have estimated that the benefits to Canada once the agreement is fully implemented on an annual basis is somewhere between \$9 billion and \$10 billion. The Fraser Institute has come out with a study that apparently says that the benefits to Canada from the TPP are even greater than that, so I do not know what study the member is referring to.

We rely on well-respected, unbiased think tanks, which do this kind of work, review exactly what the benefits are, and come up with a realistic assessment of what Canada stands to gain. They are very clear that Canada will be a big winner under the TPP.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the work that he has done to position Canada better in regard to our GDP because of the trade opportunities that will come about by signing the TPP and the hard work that he did to get it, to the point where we were able to get it before the Canadian Parliament. I applaud him for encouraging the government to move quicker on this.

He indicated that there were many trade barriers and lots of trade tariffs that are in place. I am wondering if he could name a couple particularly in relation to beef in some areas of the world. In relation to the last questioner, I appreciate all questions coming from members of the House, but it is the old “glass half empty versus half full” approach and I think that he has always been one who has seen the full glass in relation to trade and the benefits for our country. Could he comment as well on the fact that this is a \$27-trillion economy on an annual basis that we will be looking at?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, it is actually \$29 trillion. This agreement is so significant because it represents close to 40% of global trade. Imagine Canada being on the outside looking in and how much that would cost us.

With respect to the question about these non-tariff barriers, often we refer to them as SPS, sanitary and phytosanitary standards, that are applied, for example, in the food and agriculture industries, every country around the world establishes standards, rules and regulations for the quality and the health of their food products. We want to ensure that what we eat is healthy.

However, those standards and rules can be manipulated to act as protectionist measures. Therefore, they are not applied for the purposes for which they were first created; they are applied in a way that discriminates against foreign products. Free trade is all about not discriminating against foreign products. The beef industry suffered greatly when the door to South Korea was closed. It was our Conservative government that moved forward and opened that market again, and now we have the free export of beef into that marketplace. Our cattle and beef folks are very happy with those deals and also with the TPP. We are opening up huge markets within the Asia-Pacific region.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saenich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is remembering the record of the previous Conservative government. I am not quite sure if the Conservatives are looking at it with rose-coloured glasses or what hallucinogens are involved in thinking that was a great record for trade. Negotiating a lot of country deals that then failed to deliver for Canada is not a great record. Passing in secret an order in council that binds Canada until the year 2045 so the People's Republic of China can bring

arbitration cases against Canada without the benefit of debate in this place is not a great record. With respect to the deal with Korea, within months Korea put an embargo on Canadian beef.

My question to the member is this. Why on earth would the Canadian Parliament want to ratify a deal when the leading contenders for the White House have said that they do not like the TPP?

● (1045)

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in the House understands the member's orientation on trade and investment. She is opposed to it. She always has been and always will be.

With respect to the member's comments on investment treaties, the reason we signed an investment treaty with China was to protect Canadian companies when they invested in China. I have a clear example of where a Canadian company has invested in China. A mining company invested a lot of money in prospecting and exploring, and it finally hit a motherlode. It was a gold find. After it had done that, it applied for a production permit. Guess what happened to that Canadian company? The local and state governments said that they preferred to have local Chinese companies and would not issue it a production licence. They are still working on that. That is exactly the kind of case we want to protect Canadians against. If there is a dispute like that, it is lifted into the international context where there is an international arbitration by arbitrators who are fair and impartial and who will make a decision that is fair and protects the interests of Canadians when billions and billions of dollars are invested in a foreign marketplace.

Sadly, that member does not get it.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic that with the number of trade deals the hon. member has mentioned, our trade balance went from a \$54 billion surplus under the Liberals to a \$13 billion deficit under the trade deals that have been signed. Perhaps the hon. member could comment on the importance of international relationships between countries and businesses to actually promote trade versus having photo ops to sign trade deals.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals and the Prime Minister would know all about photo ops.

What is the bottom line when we open up new markets around the world for Canadian exports, trade and investments? What is the measure we are looking for? It is job creation. Who led the G7 in job creation over the 10 years this Conservative government was in power? We did because trade creates jobs, and the more we open up opportunities for Canada to trade, the more jobs we will create.

Earlier I quoted in my comments the appalling record on exports under the Liberal government. Over six months there has been a precipitous decline in Canadian exports abroad. What is the trade minister doing? She is spending time appearing on the Bill Maher show and embarrassing Canadians. That is not the way to do it. A lot of work was done under our Conservative government. We work all around the world, and our record proves that.

Business of Supply

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this very important topic.

Canada is a trading nation and our government understands the importance of trade for economic growth for a strong and prosperous middle class. In fact, our country depends on global trade. Trade opens markets for Canadian goods and services, helps Canadian businesses expand, fosters innovation, strengthens our economy and provides Canadians with opportunities in markets around the world.

When we assumed office, the damage that the Conservatives had inflicted on Canada's standing in the world was glaring. They had failed to promote Canada's interests abroad, especially with our most important trading partner, the United States.

COOL, country of origin labelling, is a prime example of the damage the Conservatives did to our relationship with the U.S. For years our beef and pork farmers suffered from punitive, unfair U.S. country of origin labelling provisions, while the previous government stood by and did nothing. The Minister of International Trade resolved the issue in her first eight weeks in office.

The former prime minister even cancelled the three amigos summit, an important forum for advancing key files of Canadian interest. We cannot advance issues if we do not have the meetings, and we have corrected that. We will have a three amigos summit soon.

Keystone XL is yet another example of the Conservative failure to promote Canadian interests with our southern neighbours. On the thinning border with the United States, it was our government that finally made substantial progress during the state visit in Washington, D.C. on March 10.

It is the same story with Europe. Despite all the fancy parties and the champagne photo ops, the previous government failed to have CETA signed and implemented. When we assumed office, the deal was completely stalled. However, yet again the new Minister of International Trade's progressive approach to free trade is what allowed us to build support for CETA on both sides of the Atlantic and to get the deal back on track and signed.

In short, in the 10 years in office, the previous Conservative government displayed a fundamental misunderstanding of geopolitics and of the importance of the Canada-U.S. relationship in particular.

Trade agreements are an important means by which the Government of Canada can open new markets and level the playing field for Canadian business, while providing predictable and transparent international rules for exporters and investors. However, we need to ensure that our trade agreements are in Canada's best interest.

With respect to the TPP, the government is committed to being fully transparent and open with Canadians, and to hearing what Canadians have to say on the merits of the TPP. We are conducting extensive consultations to provide Canadians the opportunity to have their views heard. The Minister of International Trade, myself, cabinet colleagues and government officials have met with Canadians across Canada. Unlike the previous government, we are

meeting with people who disagree with the accord, and we will continue to do so before the government considers whether to ratify the agreement.

To date, we have learned that some Canadians feel the TPP represent significant opportunities. Others have serious concerns with aspects of the agreement, and many have simply not yet made up their minds. These different perspectives speak to the importance of ongoing consultations.

The government signed the TPP this past February to ensure that Canada would remain at the table to give the government the opportunity to continue consulting Canadians. Signing the TPP was only a first step that did not amount to ratification by our government.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade is also holding its own consultations on the TPP and has been travelling across the country as part of its outreach. The committee has already held hearing in eight cities across the country. Today it is in Windsor, Ontario, meeting with representatives of labour, automotive, agriculture and business sectors. In addition, that committee is accepting written submissions from anyone who wishes to share his or her views.

● (1050)

[*Translation*]

We promised to hold consultations, and we are keeping that promise. Since November, we have organized over 250 consultations with more than 400 different stakeholders. In addition, the government has received over 20,000 letters and emails as part of the consultation process. The Minister of International Trade and I have visited over a dozen cities across Canada to hear what Canadians think about the TPP. Consultations were held in Edmonton, Vancouver, Montreal, Halifax, Oakville, Windsor, Regina, Winnipeg, Quebec City, St. John's, Fredericton, Charlottetown, and Guelph.

During our visits, we held meetings, round tables, site visits, and town halls. Hundreds of Canadians shared their opinions with us during this process.

Canadians from all kinds of backgrounds participated in the consultations. We heard from provincial representatives, business women, innovation companies, farmers, think tanks, the forestry and lumber sector, the fish and seafood sector, environmental groups, small and medium-sized businesses, unions, auto workers, auto parts manufacturers, port authorities, academics, students, and business leaders.

Over the coming weeks, the Minister of International Trade will be organizing a public meeting in Toronto for May 25 and another in Montreal for June 6. We invite everyone to take part and share their points of view on the TPP. We will do everything we can to give Canadians an opportunity to study the agreement, ask questions, and tell us whether they think it will be good for the people of this country.

Business of Supply

Let me summarize some of the comments we received. As I mentioned earlier, although some people said they support the TPP, other people expressed some concerns. For instance, civil society organizations and unions are concerned about the impact the agreement will have on jobs in Canada, the scope of application of the investor state dispute settlement mechanism and certain provisions regarding intellectual property. Some people are saying that Canada should call off the signing of the agreement altogether.

Still, other stakeholders are urging Canada to ratify the agreement as quickly as possible. More specifically, Canadian companies that are export oriented and some industry associations support the agreement. Those players see the TPP as an essential tool that will allow Canadian businesses to compete in Asia-Pacific countries, a region that is going through a period of strong economic growth, and to access priority markets or increase their presence in those markets.

The impact of TPP rules on intellectual property and innovation in Canada is another subject that people cannot seem to agree on. Some people believe that these rules will stifle innovation. Others have talked about potential benefits, including a more predictable rules-based system to protect the intellectual property of Canadians who are engaged in trade in the region.

We have heard that the TPP could cause significant job losses in the auto sector. However, we have also heard some say that the TPP provides the sector with an opportunity to penetrate new markets in the Asia-Pacific region.

When it comes to labour and services, the government has heard from representatives who are certain that the TPP would create opportunities for Canadian service providers seeking to expand their activities in the Asia-Pacific region. Other stakeholders are concerned that the TPP would make foreign workers more competitive.

The government has held consultations with the agriculture and agri-food sector with a focus on exports and Canada's supply management system. We also heard about the opportunities that the TPP would create for Canada's beef, pork, canola, and pulse industries. However, we have also heard concerns over the repercussions that the TPP might have on supply-managed sectors.

Each of these consultations has contributed to an important pan-Canadian dialogue on the spinoffs from the TPP, and will continue to do so. The purpose of the consultations is to understand the point of view of Canadians and Parliament, and to conduct an exhaustive assessment of the benefits of the TPP and its possible spinoffs.

• (1055)

So far, these consultations have been quite instructive. They will continue. No timeline has been set yet for the consultation process.

I want to point out that signing the TPP was just the official start of the government's review of the agreement. The government will weigh the results of the consultations before deciding whether to ratify the TPP or not.

This is a complex agreement and it takes time to conduct a thorough review. It is important and encouraging that Canadians are pressing us for more information about the repercussions that this agreement will have on Canadians in every region and every sector.

[English]

I will now talk about some next steps.

According to the terms of the TPP agreement itself, countries have two years to complete their domestic ratification process. Following that two-year period, a smaller group of at least six countries could bring the agreement into force, provided that they together account for at least 85% of the combined GDP of the TPP countries. This requires the U.S. and Japan to bring the agreement into force. As of today, no TPP country has ratified the agreement.

When the Minister of International Trade met with all TPP ministers on the margins of the TPP signature event in New Zealand in February, she relayed the importance that the Canadian government places on transparency and public consultations for the TPP. When the minister meets again with her counterparts next week on the margins of the APEC trade ministers meeting in Peru, she will convey the same message.

As part of our objective to consult with Canadians, the Global Affairs Canada website for the TPP is currently under review, and updates will be available over the coming weeks. However, the website remains active, and I would encourage all Canadians to submit any public inquiries through the consultation portal on the website. They will also find the full TPP text, which is available in both English and French. I would also encourage Canadians to follow our continued consultations over the coming months.

As a trading nation, Canada's economic growth is directly linked to international trade. The government strongly supports free trade as a way to open markets to Canadian goods and services, grow Canadian businesses, and create good-paying middle-class jobs.

The government has committed to bringing forward the TPP to a debate and discussion here in this House, so that we can hear from parliamentarians. The fact is, we have committed to open consultations with all groups, whether they are opposed to the TPP or for the TPP, and that marks a significant departure from the previous government. It is a promise we made during the election campaign, and it is one that we are seeing through.

• (1100)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his remarks, but I think we are hearing some selective history. It is a bit interesting to hear a member of the Liberal caucus criticize someone else for an overemphasis on photo ops. I wonder what his leader would think of those comments.

Business of Supply

Over the course of our Conservative government, we negotiated trade deals with countries representing over 60% of the world's GDP, in the context of both CETA and now the TPP. That is a big change in terms of the kind of trade access that Canada will have. That is a very important shift, and it was undertaken through active negotiations with the government. These are Canadian accomplishments. It is a bit rich for the government that has just taken over to immediately try to claim credit for all of these things.

Will the government agree about the importance of this trade agenda, and help us move forward by pushing forward the TPP as quickly as possible?

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, certainly the government agrees with a trade agenda that moves Canada forward, but it has to be a trade agenda that is based on consultations with all sectors, including sectors that do not necessarily agree with that agenda. That is what the previous government failed spectacularly to do.

We are hearing in consultations across the country that a wide sector of Canadians were never consulted while other sectors were effectively at the negotiating table. That is no way to put forward a trade agenda, which we want to do, that will benefit all Canadians.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today, while there are hearings in Windsor, to talk about this important issue that affects my constituents, especially the auto sector that is very valuable.

What I find very interesting is the criticism of the Conservatives, which is fair enough, with regard to consultations or lack thereof, and the new path we are going down that includes all of that, despite the fact that the Liberals supported a number of previous trade agreements. They supported every single one. Every single trade agreement that walked into the House and threw itself down on the floor was signed by the Liberals, despite the criticism of non-consultation. Somehow, eureka, they found it. It is unbelievable.

I want to ask a specific question. In the auto sector, there is a 20-year phase-in for the United States, a 12-year phase-in for Malaysia, and only a 5-year phase-in for Canada. Will the parliamentary secretary commit to at least meeting Malaysia's standard of a 12-year phase-in for the automotive sector, and how he is going to specifically accomplish that?

• (1105)

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I grew up at the other end of Highway 3 in the Niagara Peninsula, so I have driven that highway from Fort Erie all the way to Windsor more than once, and I must say I enjoyed it.

That is precisely one of the reasons that we are consulting. As a government, we did not set the criteria for our very able negotiators. The difference in phase-ins is one of the things that we have to assess. Sadly, the agreement is take it or leave it. We are going to have to decide whether the differential phase-ins for the auto sector, which have been criticized by a number of different stakeholders, will push us toward not ratifying, or whether there are counterbalancing effects or benefits that account for or help to mitigate that disadvantage.

Ms. Karina Gould (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech on this very important and timely topic.

What struck me was that the first member to speak on this talked about the World Trade Organization and how the previous government viewed it as something that was irrelevant and did not matter anymore. That was even though he had also discussed the importance of renegotiating the entry of Canadian beef into South Korea, which was done through the WTO.

I am wondering if my colleague could comment on the World Trade Organization and the importance of the international system in trade.

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very good question.

There are a number of different trade instruments, so to speak. We need to be in the game or at the table with respect to all of these instruments.

We admit that there are difficulties with the WTO, but there are also certain advantages that one can have if one pursues the options properly. For example, WTO tribunals can make rulings that allow us to impose countervailing duties, something that ISDS proceedings in the bilateral agreements do not allow for. They are strictly for damages.

There are advantages to being at the WTO table. Certainly, in principle, we want to act multilaterally whenever we can. We want to act in concert with the rest of the world when we can. Therefore, it is important to be at the WTO table, notwithstanding its challenges.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has become a hallmark, and again with the TPP, of this young government to postpone and procrastinate on making tough policy decisions on the basis of the need for further consultations. The government is going to have to make a number of tough decisions, which are going to make some Canadians unhappy one way or another, until the proof of the pudding in the good policy decision that we know the government will sooner or later have to make.

We can remember how faint-hearted the Liberals were in the negotiation of Canada's greatest trade treaty, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and how, if they had been in power at the time—they lost an election on the issue—they would have listened to the faint hearts who did not recognize the great benefits which would follow from signing the NAFTA agreement.

My colleague has said quite clearly that this is a take it or leave it agreement. We know that the Liberals, in the end, will take it because it is a good deal for Canada. The cost-benefits have been done across the board. Why postpone? Why not bring the debate to Parliament, as Conservatives have brought it today?

Business of Supply

•(1110)

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member that we have already made a number of difficult decisions in our budget, for example, in our commitment to deal with aboriginal peoples on a nation-to-nation basis. We have made a lot of gutsy decisions, which had not been made for 10 years.

With regard to the TPP, sadly that side of the House only heard one side for 10 years. We are taking the time to listen to the other side, and then we will take a decision in terms of what is best for all Canadians.

There are plenty of studies out there. They are conflicting studies. The previous questioner mentioned a study from Tufts University in the United States, which is a hallowed institution. The Peterson Institute and other institutes are giving us different numbers. We are doing our own studies. We need to assess all of that before we make a decision.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is important to all Canadians is a trade balance.

One of our colleagues pointed out earlier that when the Conservatives inherited government ten years ago, they inherited a multi-billion dollar trade surplus. Over the years, they converted that surplus into a multi-billion dollar trade deficit. As a direct result, the Liberal government now has to clean up their mess. It is not just the overriding trade deficit that we have to clean up, but we also have the additional responsibility of consulting with Canadians before we have a vote in the House of Commons.

Would the member not agree with that assessment?

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, indeed it is something that we need to deal with. It is a mess that we need to clean up as we move forward, and before we make other kinds of commitments.

There is some light. While we are still in an overall deficit position, our exports were \$1.2 billion higher in the first quarter of this year than the last year when the Conservatives were in office. We are moving. We are trying to remove impediments. We managed to get COOL out of the way, which the previous government failed to do. We are working on new markets through CETA. We are getting there.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the excellent and highly respected member for Windsor West.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the House to speak to this opposition motion concerning the trans-Pacific partnership. I have to admit that I find the debate very amusing. In fact, both the government and the official opposition are arguing and quibbling about which one of them is the staunchest supporter of free trade. I believe this is going to make for an interesting day, but we are losing sight of the crux of the matter. What we are presently debating is a trade agreement, which is simply a contract between various nations that establishes terms and conditions, in this case, for trade. We can support trade agreements and recognize that Canada is a nation

whose economy depends on trade and, at the same time, disagree with the terms of the contract.

When Conservatives and Liberals negotiate trade agreements, it seems that the details are not very important. This debate is about whether we should or should not sign the contract without even looking at the details.

I find this particularly interesting because the current government and the previous government made accusations implying that we approve or reject agreements without even having read them, which is completely untrue. We learned about the details of the trans-Pacific partnership during the election campaign, since the agreement was announced during the campaign. I remind members that this agreement was negotiated behind closed doors and that we knew nothing about it before the campaign. We therefore had enough problems with the agreement that we were able to take a stance on it.

I find it quite interesting to hear the Minister of International Trade accuse us of having made up our minds without even having read the agreement. I remember very well that during the previous Parliament, in which I served, the Conservative prime minister showed up with a signed agreement with the European Union and announced it to the House. In his first question in the House, the member for Papineau, who was the Liberal leader at the time, congratulated the prime minister on signing the agreement, saying that the Liberal Party would support it and asking when the Liberals would have access to the agreement.

We will therefore take no lessons from either side about the NDP's positions on extremely important contracts. I believe that such agreements should be assessed on the basis of their content and their consequences.

There are problems with this agreement. I listened carefully to the speech given by my colleague, the parliamentary secretary. I thank him for mentioning the supposed strengths and weaknesses of this bill. However, there are other factors that he did not mention. One of them is of particular concern to me.

People generally expect a trade agreement, or a contract between nations to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers, to have to do with trade. However, the agreement in question contains clauses that will affect specific aspects of people's daily lives, and so far, those clauses have not been talked about here in the House as part of the debate on the trans-Pacific partnership.

Business of Supply

Privacy is one such issue. Right now, Canadian data, such as banking information and confidential information, are stored on Canadian servers, which are obviously not accessible to the United States at the moment and do not fall within the scope of the USA PATRIOT Act. However, the provision that requires these types of data to be stored on Canadian servers may be removed. It is therefore quite likely that these data could be stored on servers on American soil, where they would be accessible to American security intelligence agencies. That means that the CIA and other agencies would have access to these data under the USA PATRIOT Act. Are Canadians aware of that? I do not think so because Canadians assume that trade agreements have to do with tariff and non-tariff barriers.

My colleague from Windsor West asked an excellent question. We have a non-reciprocal agreement with regard to the auto industry.

• (1115)

Tariffs will be phased out over a period of 20 years for the U.S. auto sector and 12 years for Malaysia, but that phase will be just five years long for Canada. Not only does this agreement lack reciprocity, but the Canadian and U.S. sectors are closely integrated. Having two different tariff elimination timelines, one over a 20-year period and the other over a five-year period, will cause huge problems for the industry and jeopardize its integrated nature. This will cause problems that do not get a lot of air time in the House.

Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Conservatives and the Liberals have an agreement about takeovers, which are subject to a strategic review if they hit a certain threshold. The agreement will raise that threshold to allow more foreign takeovers without prior review by the government and what used to be called the Department of Industry. That is a problem because some takeovers affect strategic sectors here. More and more of these kinds of acquisitions will not have to undergo a review to assess their impact on Canada.

I have my eye on both parties, but I will be paying particular attention to the current government. Federal assistance to Bombardier comes with strings attached by this government. I do not take issue with the need for such conditions to ensure that Canada's investment includes oversight of Bombardier's operations. We agree on that. This is similar to the model that was proposed and applied by the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec. However, it bothers me when the government tries to use this assistance to change the share ownership structure at Bombardier in order to get rid of multiple voting shares.

We could argue about the effectiveness of this system, which has served Quebec well so far. This system is used mainly in Quebec. However, getting rid of multiple voting shares paves the way for foreign takeovers. I cannot figure out why the government would want to impose a condition to make foreign takeovers easier when we see what is happening right now with Rona and Couche-Tard. Multiple voting shares in those companies may be eliminated if nothing changes, making it easier for a takeover to occur.

As I was saying, we need to know the ins and outs of this agreement. An impact study is needed in order to analyze the details. Independent studies have estimated that Canada will lose about 60,000 jobs if the agreement is ratified, and 20,000 of those jobs will

be in the auto sector. This is an important issue that needs to be raised. If the government has already done a study regarding the impact of such an agreement on the Canadian economy, it should be made public so that Canadians can see it. So far, they have been left in the dark.

In light of the many debates that have taken place in recent years on the trans-Pacific partnership and the treaty with the European Union, I have to admit that it seems as though the dice are loaded. The government can talk all it wants about consultation, but that means nothing if it is done only for appearances' sake and if the decision has already been made. This is also known as paying lip service.

• (1120)

[English]

We have consulted, but we have decided.

[Translation]

It is all smoke and mirrors when it comes to the much-touted consultation. In fact, much of the consultation mentioned by the government took place as part of the proceedings of the Standing Committee on International Trade. The government is taking credit for it, but it would have happened anyway.

What is more, I seriously doubt that all 20,000 emails and letters people sent will be translated into the other official language, for one thing, or seriously considered by the government, for another thing. To hear the Minister of International Trade and the Conservatives talk about the agreement, it is clear that a decision has already been made and that this exercise is basically a charade so that the government looks good and appears more open for having done this consultation.

The bottom line is that the decision has been made. That is extremely unfortunate because it means that we will not get to hold a very important debate about the provisions and the consequences of the agreement. If a study has been conducted on the economic impact that this agreement will have on Canada and our economy, I appeal to the government to immediately make it public.

[English]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask a question, but, first, I was disappointed to hear the member across the floor take credit for the COOL agreement. We know how much our colleague, the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster, did on that file. It is very disingenuous for him to take credit for that work.

I understand we will be on different sides when it comes to how we feel about trade, but I agree with the member when he says that consultation for the sake of consultation will not necessarily get us anywhere.

Would the member rather us see the Liberal government bring this agreement forward to debate in the House, sooner rather than later? The consultation has been done and now is the time to get this agreement in front of the House of Commons.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. The answer is no. What I would like to see is real consultations where the government would respond to concerns about the agreement.

In my speech, I talked about the impact that this agreement could have on privacy. I have not heard the government say anything about the impact that the agreement will have on Canadians' privacy. Members need to know about that before they can vote in an informed manner, unless of course their minds are already made up and they think that all trade agreements and contracts are good regardless of what measures they contain.

Without that information, we cannot make a decision in good conscience and in keeping with the principles of good governance. Independent studies have been conducted. I am asking the government to table the studies that it likely has done on the economic impact such an agreement would have on Canada and all of our industries. Members will all agree that there are winners and losers in any trade agreement. We want to know what the government's analysis of this agreement says. We would like the government to make it public.

• (1125)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his comments, especially those about privacy.

We have heard the criticisms in that regard. There is a quid pro quo because a number of Canadian companies in the financial services and insurance sector have told us that the cross-border flow of data is very important. I have an honest question. I would like to ask my colleague whether he believes that the flow of data could compensate for the loss of privacy.

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, clearly, Canadian data are at greater risk than American data in the cross-border flow of data.

Americans have the USA PATRIOT Act, but we do not have such a law. Therefore, I believe that there are two problems. First, the data that are currently protected will no longer be protected under the provisions of the trans-Pacific partnership. Second, Canadians for the most part are not aware of this.

I think that they would have quite a different opinion of a treaty such as this one if they were aware of this. If the government is concerned about transparency, is willing, and truly wants to have meaningful consultations, I urge the government to put this issue at the forefront in consultations so that Canadians are aware of it.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, emerging in this conversation is a very fair critique of the previous government's approach to trade. Its trade performance was abysmal. It has already been pointed out that it inherited a trade surplus of about \$60 billion. By the time it left office, there was a trade deficit of about minus \$20 billion. We set monthly records in trade deficits under the previous Conservative regime.

Any of us in the House who tried to stand up and talk about fair trade or who tried to analyze these trade agreements in substance were dismissed with this ridiculous charge that somehow or other we

were not in favour of trade. I wonder if the Conservatives wonder why they lost the last election, with that kind of simplistic approach to politics.

I want to turn my attention to the issue of human rights. The TPP includes two countries that have abysmal human rights records. Brunei has brought in a form of sharia law that punishes homosexuality and adultery by stoning to death. Vietnam still uses prison labour and child labour.

I have not heard a peep out of the Conservative government about human rights. Former minister John Baird did say that with respect to Iran, the Conservatives would never trade with a country that disrespected the rights of homosexuals. However, here the Conservatives were signing a trade deal with Brunei which had the worst record on homosexuals in the world.

Could my hon. colleague comment on that, and does he think Canada should be rewarding countries with abysmal records on human rights with preferential economic terms?

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, my colleague raises an excellent point, and that is one of our focuses when we are assessing the impact of the trade agreements we sign with other countries.

We were the only party in the House on the Standing Committee on International Trade that opposed the trade agreements with Colombia and Honduras. Respect for human rights was behind our opposition to these agreements.

Successive Liberal and Conservative governments that have negotiated these types of agreements have missed a perfect opportunity to use the agreements to improve the standard of living and enforce human rights in the countries with which we are negotiating. They refuse to do so.

Unionists are being murdered in Colombia and Honduras. The situations in Brunei and Vietnam have come up, and these are other situations in which we refuse to use these trade agreements as leverage to enforce and increase the protection of human rights and improve the standard of living and labour standards in these countries. These things are simply not part of any trade agreement.

• (1130)

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on such an important debate in the House. I thank my colleague for his intervention and his work on finance. It is very important for many reasons, but the depth of the file is very important for Canadians especially given what we are seeing here today.

Business of Supply

I am currently diagnosed with red-green colour blindness, but I now can see quite clearly that I have red-blue colour blindness with regard to this chamber because what we are seeing is a continuation of policies. I give the former minister of trade credit for being very clear about his position on this, even though we disagree, and hence the motion coming forward today.

The Liberal position is clearly middle ground, trying to reach but making no sense considering what is happening right now. I would like to thank the member for Essex in particular. She has been travelling this country with the trade committee. It is interesting to hear a parliamentary secretary or a minister talk about using a committee as a vehicle or a reason to take action and later on talk about how committees are their own masters in deciding what they want to do independently. Again, it is the suck and blow type of approach the Liberals have on this type of issue. They use it for benefit at one point, and later on when it becomes a problem for them, they distance themselves from it.

As people listen to this debate the Liberal position is peculiar because they are saying they are having consultations across the country in different formats, whether it be meetings or the input coming in, but then they are here admittedly with an agreement that does not require or can never really have any real meaningful consultations right now because the agreement cannot be amended. In the first hour of debate we heard that.

Of particular concern to me and many Canadians because it is a significant employer, a value-added employer with innovation, which we are struggling to move forward in terms of developing the economy and having value-added jobs and services available, is that the auto industry is particularly at risk with this deal. In fact, this is so much so that when the deal was proposed, the auto industry was offered up as a sacrificial lamb for other types of industries, as in many other deals, despite the fact that in the trade agreement the vast majority of tariff issues do not exist with most of these countries.

The former minister of international trade talked very importantly about non-tariff barriers, which are critical to any trade agreement. We have seen that in the South Korea trade agreement with the United States, and now with the Canada and South Korea trade agreement, in regard to the auto industry. What is meant by non-tariff barriers is that, for example, in the auto industry tariffs go down to export into that country, but they make it more difficult to export into that country through regulations, other fees, and the difficulties supporting that import post-sale. It is a more difficult to set up dealerships. Importing parts and importing service standards are more difficult, all that becomes heightened. We end up with a consumer over there looking at a product that comes from Canada that competes on price and value, but if it cannot be fixed or serviced, that is a huge problem. That consumer will decide not to purchase that vehicle. Hence, the disaster that has been going on.

● (1135)

There were meetings in Windsor yesterday between the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Unifor. I thank the leadership of those organizations for hosting a round table, which included the Province of Ontario, as well as Mr. Tanguay, the auto czar for Ontario, that called again for a national strategy for the automotive sector. That is

a common thing for manufacturing, to have that structure in place to support a national vision.

Ironically, the Liberals call for it, despite never implementing it when they controlled, or at least held government in many provinces. Their dysfunctional relationship with their provincial cousins is also more clear and evident with the TPP. They have dysfunctionality with the provincial cousins to the point of hostility, with Kathleen Wynne, the premier, expressing concerns about some of the auto sector and the agricultural issues around supply management.

We see it with Brad Duguid, another Ontario minister, who says:

We have concerns about the provisions in the agreement with regard to auto.... In particular, the provisions where tariffs will be reduced in Canada to zero in five years, and in the U.S. it's 25 years.

That's an unlevel playing field and we think the federal government failed to negotiate effectively on that measure.

What we are left with is that, despite the auto integration that we have with the United States, the continual struggle to keep that is so important for manufacturing. If one is not familiar with the auto sector, a vehicle could literally cross back and forth many times as it is being built to reach the final product, because we have that high level of integration. With that high level of integration, we have a lot of expertise and jobs to protect, because it is clearly important for retooling and future jobs.

How is it we have the importation of vehicles under NAFTA? We were talking about the three amigos summit previously. That is what the government was talking about and how important that is. We have Mexico, the United States, and Canada with pretty well an integrated automotive sector, but the United States gets 25 years in the same agreement of exemption on the auto industry and we get five.

Trade agreements are just that. We all support trade. We all do it from early ages to later on as adults. I remember that when I was trading a Gretzky rookie card, I knew not to get a Dave Semenko card. I have nothing against Dave Semenko; I am a goalie, so I like those kinds of players around me, especially when the crease gets hot. However, the reality is that there is a certain value on one versus the other. But that is what we got.

Imagine then that we have the international powerhouse of Malaysia versus Canada. Malaysia gets 12 years, more than twice that of Canada. It is insulting, coming from a city that helped found the auto industry with the Ford Motor Company and others, to have a country like Malaysia outmanoeuvre the then-Conservative government.

Business of Supply

That is why a national auto strategy is important, because trade agreements affect all the investments that we make, whether it be labour investments, incentives, or tax reductions, all those policies and investments by all of us across Canada make a difference. What do we do with this? We undermine all those investments: training opportunities; people going to school, college, university; high-end development of a future; patent development; innovation that actually branches out beyond the auto industry. Look at Auto 21 in Windsor, where many of the auto manufacturing issues led to spinoffs to other patents in the development of technology. All of those things are put at risk for the great unknown.

The Liberals know there is a problem, because they talk about \$1 billion to the auto industry for amelioration, but they have not said how or when and they have not put it in their budget.

• (1140)

The end consequence is this. We put at risk so much that we have publicly invested in as capital, training, in the future of innovation, and the manufacturing industry, without even a study, a peek, or a glimpse of the consequences, and we have been out-negotiated. There is no way around it.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remember spending some great time with my colleague from Windsor on the industry committee, and I have a lot of respect for the work he does here in the House. His community, like my community, is very much affected by the auto industry. Although we may have different approaches, I think in the big picture of things we want to do what is best for our communities.

Let me turn to one of the concerns I have about the TPP. As we know, Canada is in a very unique situation in the world. With the European free trade agreement, we now have access to 500 million new customers, some of the most affluent customers in the world. If we have the TPP agreement, that will bring another 800 million, which means Canada will be the only G7 country that has access to some of these affluent countries around the world, with the potential for growth.

I think the member is aware that this is a contract year that is very important for Oshawa. As he said, everybody knows where the Conservatives stand, and we know where the NDP stands, but it is the uncertainty right now, in a contract year, when these international companies, American companies, want certainty about where Canada is going to be playing in the field internationally.

These are American companies. If Canada does not sign on to the TPP and America does sign on to the TPP, what is the NDP's solution to that? If we are left out, these American companies, like the ones in my community, will have no incentive for staying in Canada, and their incentive will be to go back to the United States.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the opportunity to work with him on the industry committee over the years. It has actually been very positive. If there are differences of opinions, at least they are expressed with respect and decorum, which is very nice.

With regard to the industries, it is a dog's breakfast in terms of who will be the winners or losers. For example, Dianne Craig of Ford Motor Company has said that the TPP is a setback. Quite

clearly, we have issues related to that. Often, General Motors has expressed concerns on different trade agreements. Some feel different about CETA than they do about TPP.

Our solution is what we called for in the last election, iCanada, a one-stop shop for the development of a national program for the auto industry, which is being discussed in many places, including in the summit that we had for the auto industry in Windsor the other day with all of those players from the industry, the unions, and economists talking about how we actually go forward with a national auto policy.

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

Mr. Speaker, at times it is very interesting to watch NDP members stand and talk about trade as if in some fantasy world they actually think trade is good, because their actions do not follow their words in terms of belief in trade. I have been here now for five years, and with the exception of the questionable voting that might have or did not take place regarding the Jordan trade agreement, the NDP have consistently only voted one way, and that is against trade. Canada is a trading nation, and it is of critical importance that we do have world trade.

How does the member justify the NDP's position, even before the ink on the agreement finished drying, even before the election was over, that it made very clear the NDP will oppose the TPP? It does not matter what Canadians have to say about it, the NDP will oppose this trade agreement.

Does the member believe that the NDP has any credibility on this issue to carry it forward in terms of debate, and to carry it forward to the Canadian public? It seems to me it is only the Liberal Party that is doing that.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his fifth year here. Tomorrow, it will be my 14th year here, and I have seen basically the Liberals' position switch back and forth all the time.

We do have credibility with the auto industry, starting with our green car strategy with David Suzuki, which was launched with labour and some proponents from the industry as well.

Most importantly, the parliamentary secretary talked about cleaning up the mess. Well, the mess he talked about cleaning up has been supported by the member's party every single time in this chamber for all the years that I have been here. Tomorrow I will have been here for 14 years, and we have supported trade deals. The member is wrong again, but do not let the facts get in the way, and he never does.

Business of Supply

We will make sure that we hold the government to account for jobs and for the auto industry. We have gone from fourth in the world in auto assembly and production to 10th, and it is expected to go lower than that, and that has been primarily on the watch of the Liberals.

● (1145)

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

It is an honour to come to this House to speak to something that is quite significant for my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex. I am going to focus on my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, which is in southwestern Ontario. It is a little bigger than the province of Prince Edward Island. Prince Edward Island is a beautiful province, as is the riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex. It is made up of small towns, small businesses, and energetic people. The largest urban area has 14,000 people. I know that in some of the ridings around here, members can jump on a bicycle and go around their riding in 15 minutes. They likely have as many constituents in a couple of high-rises that I may have in my whole riding.

Let me tell members the significance of the trans-Pacific partnership. I happened to be on the international trade committee at the time of the trade discussions on CETA and the TPP, and also the agriculture committee. International trade, agriculture, and Lambton—Kent—Middlesex have so much in common. The business of my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex is agriculture and includes many of the supporting industries that make agriculture so significant and also very successful. They have had successful years because we as a Conservative government always took the lead in determining what we could do for those industries and manufacturers in our province and in our country. What is the purpose of these trade agreements?

I want to thank the member for Abbotsford, the previous minister of international trade, so much. A comment came from across the aisle a little while ago about the new international trade minister travelling around. I think she might want to stop some of the travel to the vanity shows in Hollywood and actually call the previous minister, the member for Abbotsford, to find out how to work with countries around the world and successfully walk through win-win situations for those countries involved, including Canada, to sign some 46 trade agreements.

I will go back to the start. What is the purpose of these agreements?

Actually, to boil it down—and that is what I like to do; in my business of agriculture, we like to get to the point—it is about jobs. We create trade. That is what the trans-Pacific partnership and CETA are about. To my colleague across the way who took the credit for COOL, I am glad that somebody bought the pen for them so that they can sign the work that was done that got COOL resolved. That is actually what they are doing now. Whether it is with CETA or the TPP, we need to just give them the pen, because all the work has been done, to get the job in place, so that people in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, in fact in all of Ontario and across this country can move forward, be competitive, and be a part of the largest trade pact in the world.

The NDP actually does not support any trade, but I want to talk about the significance of what the Liberals are creating by delaying moving forward on this. It is all about investments.

In Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, and across this country, we have investors of all sizes. We have investors who come in and make parts for the auto industry. In my riding, they make parts for the aerospace industry. They do not sell directly to the aerospace, car, or truck manufacturers; rather, they make the parts for a company that further produces an end product. Every day they get up, go to work, do their job. They work with this. If we continue to build trade, these companies in our ridings will continue to grow.

In my riding, there was a small tool and die manufacturer, a family-run business, which made parts for the auto industry. It was a third-generation family, and the youngest had taken the lead responsibility for the business. When the recession came, they announced the expansion of their business. I said to the grandfather, the founder, “This is quite amazing to think that this is off the main roads of Ontario and Middlesex centre. How does this work? We are in a recession and you are actually expanding.” He said, “It’s because of that young guy over there”, and he pointed to his grandson. “He researched what we could do with respect to ventures for small businesses to grow and open markets so that we could be competitive with our production and get into markets that were not hindered as much by certain tariffs.”

● (1150)

We went through this whole debate with respect to the trans-Pacific partnership. I sat on the committees. I will focus on agriculture because it is my passion and because all of the businesses in my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex benefit from it. The auto industry is also doing amazingly well, but they do amazingly well when agriculture does well because agriculture tends to buy a number of vehicles, as do the agriculture equipment dealers. I want to touch on how important it is for these businesses to have access to opportunities to move forward.

At committee we heard from Ontario stakeholders, commodity organizations, the Grain Farmers of Ontario, and the beef, pork and canola farmers from across Canada, anything in agriculture, from direct producers to those who were in processing. I will admit that some of the processors were faced with the challenge of being able to meet some of the demands. I think we need to fix some of those terms with respect to labour. We all agree on that.

My time for debate is wrapping up, so I will close by saying that this is an opportunity for the Liberal government, the Government of Canada, to step forward and be a leader. It is not the time to take away from investments. It is not the time to take away credit from those investors who are waiting. They say that Ontario is an opportunity, and that Canada is an incredible opportunity. We have seen that in past trade agreements.

Business of Supply

My plea to members is this. I see some members of the agriculture committee sitting across the way. I appreciate that they have taken the time to be a part of this, because we know the significance of this agreement to our greatest and largest industry in Canada right now. Therefore, I would just ask that they use their influence not only with the Prime Minister but also with the trade minister to put the pen to paper and get it done so that investment and growth in this great country can proceed with another great trade agreement.

• (1155)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with my colleague on the agriculture committee. The interactions have always been positive in looking at what we can do to improve business in Canada. Also, the industry committee has similar concerns around improving business in Canada.

For me, the result that we are looking for is improving our balance of trade. Could the hon. member comment on where he sees balance of trade as an important part of the mix going forward and how we could possibly help those young business people in rural communities to develop opportunities to increase our exports, business to business and country to country?

Mr. Bev Shipley: Mr. Speaker, we have heard about trade deficits and trade surpluses and about what they did and what we have done. We were told many times that there was a great balance between trade surpluses and trade deficits. They all create jobs. We want to remember that this is about creating jobs.

I will take a different analogy. Why, when we were in government during the greatest recession since the Great Depression, did we have a trade deficit? The Government of Canada of that day, the Conservative Party of Canada, dealt with the economy in such a strong manner that the people in Canada had the resources to buy from those countries because we still had the money in our pockets. Those countries that went through the recession did not have the money to buy what we had in Canada. On the plus side, Canadians did well in respect to other countries. In fact, that is likely the main reason why we had a deficit in exports as compared to a surplus.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss this in relation to my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith. We are very proud of, and very reliant on at a local industry level, local agriculture and food security. Value-added cheese and winery industries are very important to us, and value-added forestry. We are very committed to trying to do what we can to make up the 21,000 lost jobs in value-added paper and lumber manufacturing that have fallen over the last decade. Raw log exports are a very visible part of our community.

When we read the headlines in Nanaimo—Ladysmith, we see with the TPP a weakening of regional content rules, which might block local food security. We have acceleration of already soaring prescription drug costs. We see a facilitation of corporations suing our governments for standing up for health and environmental standards, in secret tribunals. Then we see the C.D. Howe Institute saying that gains from TPP may be relatively modest.

How, on balance, could this deal ever be good for people in my community of Nanaimo—Ladysmith? How, in particular, does the member view the apparent failure of the government to continue to

offer compensation to local farmers and local industries that would be harmed by this deal?

• (1200)

Mr. Bev Shipley: Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate questions that the concern small business people, particularly in agriculture.

I just do not get it. I know it is coming from the NDP. The New Democrats have a little trouble comprehending the financial aspects of a \$9 billion or \$10 billion benefit that the TPP would bring if we get it signed. We have to get it signed or those numbers will drop because people lack the confidence in their companies to invest. It is pretty simple stuff.

I agree that with anything we do, we should always do it alongside our businesses so they have the resources and the research behind them to add value to whatever the product. When we were in government, we involved others in our cluster funding for research. We brought industry, the public, and businesses to the table with the researchers and the universities so they could work together to determine what was the best way forward to add value and prosperity to their industry.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Windsor West has been in the House for 14 years and we cannot figure out how to modulate his volume when he gives speeches. He is very loud, but very passionate.

Canada is a trading nation and from our earliest days we have focused on trade. Whether it was the indigenous peoples trading furs and fish with some of the earliest explorers to the forming of the company of adventurers of England trading, which we now know as the Hudson's Bay Company, Canada has always been a trading nation.

Today I want to talk a bit about my riding, the Asia-Pacific region, and how this agreement will be core to Canada's growth.

As I mentioned, Canada is a trading nation, and the rapid economic growth of the Asia-Pacific countries is and has been reshaping our global trade flows for quite some time. The Asia-Pacific region is expected to represent two-thirds of the world's middle class by 2030 and one half of the global GDP by 2050.

The trans-Pacific partnership agreement would ensure that Canada would be the only G7 nation with free trade access to all of the U.S., as well as the Americas and the Europe and Asia-Pacific continents, granting access to over 60% of the world's economy, a market of over 800 million consumers, with a GDP of over \$29 trillion. Add that to our market of already 500 million consumers.

Business of Supply

The TPP agreement would do so much more than that. It would protect and create jobs, economic opportunities, and financial security for workers and businesses in all regions of Canada. I find it humorous that our colleagues in the NDP continue to talk about fighting for jobs. Those very jobs that they are fighting for are predicated on having business and trade. We all have cellphones. The New Democrats are against trade, but the cellphones they have are here because of trade. The computers they have are here because of trade.

In my very first speech in the House, I spoke about my riding of Cariboo—Prince George, which is adjacent to the riding of my hon. colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley. In our combined ridings, there is the port of Prince Rupert, the closest and fastest marine port to Asia, which allows the competitive advantage that our goods can travel one to two days faster to Asia than any other west coast port. It means that Canada has a competitive advantage in trade.

Our ridings also have the fastest and greenest road and rail networks into the U.S. Midwest markets, running straight through my region. There is also the airport that I am so proud to say I was part of building and marketing in my region for so long. It has one of the largest runways in Canada. By air, it is equidistant to Europe and Asia. We can compete on the global trade market. We can compete on the global transportation market. Those are just a few of Canada's competitive trade advantages in and near my riding.

I come from the beautiful province of British Columbia, which has one of Canada's largest ports, the Port Metro Vancouver. It is North America's most diversified port. It trades up to \$75 billion in goods with more than 160 trading partners. It is substantial.

B.C.'s economy is leading our nation. Why? Because we are taking advantage of the competitive advantages that we have and because of the Conservative government previously opening the doors for trade and allowing investment in our ports, airports, and transportation routes. The Liberal government is narrow-minded and not thinking it through. It is putting us further and further behind. We have said this before. We need to lead, not lag because we will fall further behind. We are falling further behind already in the past six months.

• (1205)

I raise all of these points because our nation is dependent on resource development. Our economy is predicated on trading the commodities we produce, and the government has failed to place any importance on this.

As a mid-sized economy, Canada is better when we have multilateral rules to protect our economic interests so we diversify the markets that we are dependent upon, so we are not putting all of our eggs in one basket.

More important, trade represents an opportunity for us to grow our economy without spending billions of dollars we do not have, although I think the government has already done that. The Liberals continue to spend billions of dollars with no plan to get us out of deficit, to find a way for us to grow our economy. We have two significant agreements on the table today, the softwood lumber agreement and the TPP, which the government continues to vacillate

on and take its time. As it does that, we continue to lag further and further behind.

As I have mentioned before, Canada is a nation built on exports. We are a trading nation, and I think we can all agree on that. We need free trade. We need to access markets around the world. Given the opportunity, Canadian producers can thrive. It was our Conservative government that recognized this opportunity.

The former government met with farmers, manufacturers, the auto industry, just to name a few. All that to say the work that was put in prior to the Liberals taking office set them up very well. They are taking credit for COOL, but it was the work of the Conservative government and our former trade minister that set them up well so they could take advantage of that. It was the Conservative government that looked out for Canada's interests. We set Canada up for the future.

I would like to use a hockey term, which I have mentioned before. I am a diehard hockey fan and sadly there are no Canadian teams in the playoffs. We see a government that for six months has taken every opportunity to "rag the puck" on one of the most important trade agreements in modern history.

The Minister of International Trade and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have both publicly stated that the Liberal party is pro-free trade. They fly that banner. With all the travel they have done across the border, the state dinners, etc., they have yet to come back with one signed agreement.

The last time the Liberals were in power they neglected this crucial file. Since 2006, the previous Conservative government signed free trade agreements with 46 countries compared to 5 from the previous Liberal government; that is 46 to 5, which almost sounds like a Canada versus Belarus hockey game.

Under our Conservative government, Canada became a global leader on trade liberalization and in the fight against protectionism. Ratifying the trans-Pacific partnership at this time would give the Liberals the opportunity to prove that they really are serious about the file, that they really are serious about trade in our country, that they really are serious about growing Canada, about protecting high-quality, well-paying jobs, about looking out for Canadians who work in the industries that are the backbone of our country. One in five jobs is tied to trade. Canada needs to lead, not lag.

I know my time is short but let me get one thing very clear. Throughout the TPP negotiations, the Conservative government kept Canadians informed. We consulted extensively to assure the agreement would meet the needs of Canadians. We received valuable input and we adjusted. We took the information they gave us into consideration and we adjusted our stance.

Business of Supply

I want to bring up a few names that were in support: The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade; the Mining Association of BC; the Council of Forest Industries; the Canadian Chamber of Commerce; the Canadian Cattlemen's Association; the Agri-Food Trade Alliance. The Agri-Food Trade Alliance said this was an historic moment for Canadians and Canadian families that were dependent on the agri-food industry. However, the government would not understand that.

• (1210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives like to exaggerate at times. I find it interesting when they say they have signed 30-plus trade agreements. What they do not say is that one of those trade agreements, which was not technically signed, was with the EU, which was 28 countries. It was one agreement, 28 countries.

The good news is that this government is actually following through on a lot of the work that was done by the Conservatives. However, it will depend on this government following up to ensure that we get that particular agreement signed.

My question to the member is, why do the Conservatives tend to oppose working on and having due diligence on important trade agreements? What is wrong with having some patience and allowing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I find the question humorous, coming across the way from a government that has campaigned on open and transparent ways and how it was going to change the way that Canadian government is being seen.

All it has done is put Canada back in the Dark Ages. He talked about the EU agreement and the 28 countries. I am not quite sure how the hon. member can point fingers, when under their former government it was five agreements to our 46.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the commentary from the member for Cariboo—Prince George.

He stated something along the lines of how after 14 years, I would have learned how to moderate my volume. I find that of particular concern—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to remind the member to allow the question to be posed so that the member could have an opportunity to answer. Be respectful.

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, it is important to note the effects of this trade agreement for a constituency like mine.

I have no problem bringing passion to this House. The auto industry, for us, has meant everything. It created the Rand formula in Canada, which created a meaningful opportunity for social justice, gender equality, and a number of different initiatives, including money to the United Way. Most recently, our Unifor Local 444 donated \$250,000 to the Fort McMurray disaster that is taking place right now. I have no difficult whatsoever wearing that pride on my sleeve.

I know that men and women have worked every single day for a century to contribute back to this country, and their future and their children's future are at risk. I make no apologies for that whatever.

• (1215)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, there was no question there.

I want to stand and apologize to my colleague. I was not pointing fingers at him. I was merely saying that in 14 years, “we” have not been able to modulate our volume when he gets up because of his passion. I commend him for his passion.

I hope he accepts my apology. I appreciate his passion for his riding.

As I talked about earlier in my speech, Canada is predicated on trade. For the very people that our honourable colleague from Windsor West is talking about, this agreement protects jobs. It gives them jobs, high-paying jobs. Whether it is for our agri-food sector, auto sector, or manufacturing sector, TPP is good for Canadians. There are measures in place.

I hope the government does its due diligence and allows us to sign off on this, and allows Canada to continue to lead the global industry.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in this House today.

[*Translation*]

Canada is a trading nation. International trade and investment are very important to Canada and Canadians. International trade and investment are essential to our standard of living and to improving the standard of living of people all over the world.

Trade helps us open markets to Canadian goods and services, promote the growth of exporters, create jobs, and give Canadian consumers more choice and lower prices.

Trade accounts for more than 60% of Canada's GDP. One out of five jobs in Canada is tied to Canadian exports. Exporting companies pay 14% higher wages than companies that do not export.

Free trade agreements do not just connect Canada to the rest of the world. They also guide our economic growth. Just look at the North American Free Trade Agreement, which gave rise to 3.4% growth in Canada, or the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement, which is expected to increase Canada's GDP by 0.77%.

[*English*]

At a time of stagnant economic growth around the world, this boost from trade is especially valuable.

Trade is important across all regions of our country. In the Atlantic provinces, trade represents almost 74% of the region's GDP. In Ontario, total trade as a share of GDP is 71%. In B.C., almost 40% of exports are destined for the high-growth Asia-Pacific markets.

Business of Supply

Canadians are traders, and our government energetically supports trade. Our party was elected on a pro-trade platform, and we will continue to support and work for high-quality trade agreements and opportunities. When the U.S. adopted discriminatory labelling practices that disrupted supply chains for our beef and pork producers, it was the enforcement of international trade rules at the WTO that gave our government, working closely with Mexico, the opportunity to fight back against U.S. protectionism. And, we won. That was a victory for multilateralism. It was a victory for Canada. It was a victory for beef and pork producers. I was proud to engage in that fight and to win it just eight weeks after we formed government.

Protectionist actions by our trading partners harm the Canadian economy. Maintaining an open, predictable, and fair international trading system is essential. Canadians understand this. However, it is also undeniable, as today's motion itself argues, that we are living in a time when protectionist sentiment is rising around the world. Since taking office, I have spoken to hundreds of Canadians about trade, including 84 interactions with 209 stakeholders on the TPP specifically.

[Translation]

Canadians want to be involved in the conversation. Important questions about how we negotiate trade agreements have been raised many times. Canadians are particularly concerned about the lack of transparency and consultation.

People feel that the previous government did not consult Canadians enough. That is why our government is so committed to building strong political consensus about progressive international trade.

● (1220)

[English]

That democratic, consultative approach is the only way to maintain public support for trade in this protectionist era, and it is the right thing to do.

Considering CETA, our work on this landmark agreement should leave no doubt about our commitment to free, fair, and progressive trade, and of our ability to get deals done. Early in our mandate, we recognized the importance of our relationship to Europe. We also recognized the clear need for progressive improvements if this deal were to be implemented. We responded to Canadians, to EU citizens, and to our businesses. We responded to concerns about fairness and transparency. As a result, this progressive trade agreement now enjoys wide support on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the investment chapter, we strengthened the right to regulate. This is something I am very proud and pleased to do. The sovereign right of democratically elected governments to regulate, in particular on issues like the environment, is something Canadians believe in, and so do Europeans. The secondary issue where we made important modifications was to the dispute resolution process. We made the system more ethical, more fair, and more transparent. I am proud of that too.

Last month, I travelled to Brussels and to Berlin to promote CETA, and I was very encouraged by what I heard. I was delighted to meet with the German Vice-Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, the leader of the country's Social Democrats. He previously had concerns about

CETA, but said at a press conference, alongside me, that "it is clearly a good agreement". He called the new CETA a sign of good governance, consumer protection, environmental protection, and employee rights.

[Translation]

In June 2015, Matthias Fekl, France's minister of state for foreign trade, said that if France's proposals on the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism "are not taken into account, there will be no majority in France to ratify this treaty". Thanks to our government's work, Mr. Fekl said that the comprehensive economic and trade agreement, CETA, is actually "a good agreement".

[English]

Our work on CETA should leave no doubt as to our commitment to trade. It is concrete proof that our progressive approach can get deals done where the Conservatives failed to get the puck in the net, notwithstanding the hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars they spent celebrating an unfinished, troubled deal.

Now turning to the TPP, many of us were at the unveiling yesterday of the portrait of the Right Hon. Paul Martin, a man I am proud to call my friend. The comments he made yesterday bear directly on this issue. Let me quote them.

Parliament is important. [...] And I believe if Canadians are to take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead in this ever-changing world, they will have to be presented with the choices before them. [...] And that means that Parliament must reclaim centre stage as the place where those choices are made.

Mr. Martin went on to say he applauded us, this Parliament for wanting to restore Canada's Parliament "to its proper function as the locus of the nation's great debate". He continued on to say that he believes that parliamentary committees are one of the most valuable instruments that can be there, both for the government and for the opposition. I could not agree more, and I quote him for the parliamentary record for one particular reason.

[Translation]

I am very pleased that members of the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade are touring the country as we speak to consult Canadians in their own communities about the trans-Pacific partnership.

Today, committee members are in Windsor listening to Canadians. This week, they were in Montreal and Quebec City. Tomorrow, they will be in my city, Toronto. Last month, they talked to residents of Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg.

● (1225)

[English]

The committee is also urging Canadians to submit their views in writing, and I hope people will do so.

I applaud the leadership of this committee and its members from all parties. In the words of our 21st Prime Minister, this committee is embracing “the inherent strength of a Parliament that sends its committees out to meet the people.”

Our government has held consultations with over 400 stakeholders from across the country on the TPP. Over the next few weeks, I will personally be hosting two more town halls, one in Toronto and one in Montreal.

Canadians' views about this deal are particularly important because of the secretive and closed approach of the previous government. The Conservatives did not consult the essential groups, including, shockingly, trade unions. Even the car parts sector, which in 2015 shipped over \$25-billion worth of goods, was shut out.

Do not trust me on this. Listen to Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, who recently said to the press:

No one in a position of authority invested in industry consultation before being dealt a terrible hand by major trading partners that did not have Canadian interests at heart when they negotiated the terms in our absence.

That was wrong. Our Prime Minister made a clear commitment in the campaign to ensure Canadians' voices would be heard. In fact, one of the first consultations I held on the TPP as minister was on November 30 with the auto parts manufacturers.

While we cannot make up for Canadians having been left in the dark by the Conservatives, we can provide opportunities for their views to be heard and considered now. We have the time to hold these essential discussions. Under the terms of the TPP agreement, all 12 signatories have until February 2018 to debate and discuss the agreement at home. That is what our partners are doing.

It is important for this House to understand that none of the 11 other TPP countries have yet ratified the agreement. Japan and Australia, in fact, will hold elections before moving ahead with their domestic processes. The U.S. is likely to do so as well.

The Conservatives know this, and the Conservatives should explain why they are today urging that Canadians alone do not deserve to have their voices heard.

Let me finish where I started. We are a trading nation. Trade is essential to our prosperity, to our standard of living, to growth, and to good-paying middle-class jobs. An open, transparent, fully democratic debate to inform an inclusive approach to trade is the only way to ensure that we are a successful trading nation in the 21st century and that we can beat back the waves of protectionism that are consuming so many other countries.

That is why it is essential to give Canadians an opportunity to debate and discuss the TPP, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and for the work she is doing as the new Minister of International Trade.

I just want to disabuse the member of one thing. I met with Flavio Volpe well before trade negotiations on TPP were completed. In fact, it was Canada that walked away from the table in Maui exactly because the auto part outcome was not to our liking and because the supply management outcome was not to our liking. We walked

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away, and then when we went back to Atlanta to finalize the agreement, we got a superior outcome on both of those.

I did take note of the fact that the member was praising NAFTA. I think what she is doing is engaging in revisionist history. The member may remember that back in 1993 it was Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin who actually threatened to tear up NAFTA, the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement, over which an election was fought in 1988. The Liberals vociferously opposed that agreement, yet today here they are praising those very agreements that Conservative governments negotiated.

I remind the member that CETA was negotiated by a Conservative government, and that TPP was negotiated by a Conservative government. In fact, of all the trade agreements Canada has with countries around the world, 48 of them were negotiated by Conservative governments and only three were negotiated by Liberal governments.

My question for the member is this. As she moves forward with ratifying TPP, which I hope she will do, will she be a leader rather than following the United States' lead? Will she be a leader rather than a laggard on trade?

• (1230)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the member for Abbotsford for his really hard work on Canada's trade agenda. As trade critic, I enjoyed working with him when he was minister.

To the point that the member makes, the reality of Canada's trade relationships with the world is that it takes a Liberal government to get the deal done. That was true with NAFTA and that will be true with CETA. The member knows very well that the agreement was not signed and the legal scrub was not completed on his watch. CETA was languishing from September 2015 until we came into office. With CETA, we were able to get the deal done.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for speaking to the House about the Conservatives' opposition motion.

[*English*]

I would just like to comment, as the member was speaking a lot about consultation and being progressive and transparent. At the agriculture committee, I had a motion on the floor when we were to, hopefully, study the TPP. It was actually voted out by some of the Liberal members on the agriculture committee, which was quite shameful and sad.

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One of the questions I would have for the Minister of International Trade is this. The Conservatives proposed compensation for the dairy industry. It was \$4.3 billion. It was not honoured in the last budget, and I know that the government is going to be consulting. I was just wondering whether the minister could follow up on where the Liberals are on the compensation package; and, if she could maybe comment on the importance of dealing with diafiltered milk because that was part of the compensation for the industry, which is being negatively impacted by the trade agreements.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her hard work on this issue.

When it comes to compensation, I spoke in my remarks about the need for a progressive trade agenda, an agenda that engages Canadians and builds their trust. Assuring Canadians that compensation for sectors of people displaced by trade agreements will be forthcoming and appropriate is an essential part of that progressive trade agenda. That is why with CETA, where we have pledged with the European Union to sign the deal in the fall and we hope it will come into force at the beginning of next year, we have begun consultations with, among others, the agricultural producers on compensation.

On TPP, as we are discussing today, our government's belief is that now is the time for discussion and debate about the agreement itself. However, we understand the need for compensation, absolutely.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Minister of International Trade has done a good job of explaining the importance of expanding trade and market access for Canada. Early in her mandate, she was in British Columbia consulting with the stakeholders. In my own home province, 40% of the exports are destined for high-growth Asia-Pacific markets.

Protectionist rhetoric seems to be spreading across the globe as economies face difficulty. Could the minister elaborate on how the government's approach is working to overcome this protectionist sentiment in order to protect Canadian jobs linked to trade?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, as I said in my remarks, and as he suggested, now is a worrying time for all of those who, like us, appreciate the importance of trade and of an open world economy for good-paying Canadian middle-class jobs.

The only way for us to fight that protectionist current is to advance a truly progressive trade agenda. There are two essential ways to do that. One is to have an open, democratic, and consultative process so that people do not fear, as they have sometimes done in the past, that deals are done behind their backs and in secret. The second is to advance truly progressive goals, like protection of the environment, like strong labour standards, like rights for women in small businesses in trade agreements.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon Marcell (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would remind the minister that before anyone quotes Mr. Martin, it is important to remember the Canada Steamship Lines scandal. He was hiding money in tax havens when he should have been paying taxes on it here. She should maybe think twice before she quotes the former prime minister.

I know we are talking about the TPP and some of the progressive compensation that will be paid, but can the minister explain why the budget makes absolutely no mention of the \$300 million promised to Quebec's cheese producers as part of the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement? Not one red cent of that money has been delivered.

• (1235)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

First of all, I am very proud to quote Mr. Martin because he was an excellent finance minister and an excellent prime minister. I am proud that he was a Liberal.

As for compensation, as I have already said, we are currently in talks with agricultural producers. We have said so publicly. It is a very important discussion. We will reach an agreement on compensation, because we are absolutely in favour of that.

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister a question about the mitigation that the previous Conservative government promised to the supply-managed sector.

The United States is well known for exploiting loopholes in trade laws to try to get products into Canada that should not be in Canada. For example, there is the ultra-diafiltered milk issue, the spent fowl issue, and the sauce-pack issue for the chickens.

We had made clear commitments to the supply-managed sector that we were going to plug those holes. One of those holes we plugged already was the pizza-kit issue. That was under our previous Conservative government and the industry was very happy with that.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government has not yet committed to implementing those mitigation measures. I am wondering if the minister can now, in the House, tell us that she will actually move forward to address the concerns of our supply-managed farmers.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Madam Speaker, I have the utmost respect for the member for Abbotsford.

Since I only have a brief answer, I will say that you had from 2011 to plug that hole and you guys did not get the job done. It was the same with COOL, so—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will remind the minister that she needs to address her questions to the chair, because, yes, I would have gotten the job done as well.

I just want to make sure that you are not insinuating anything on my behalf. Thank you very much.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

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Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Oshawa.

It is a pleasure to speak on the motion. Before I start, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Abbotsford, who worked diligently on this file. We were in Bali together, along with the former prime minister, to talk about and negotiate the TPP. He put incalculable hours into it and, finally, we reached an agreement.

If I listened carefully enough to the Liberals and the Minister of International Trade, they all agree with the TPP. They just do not want to move ahead because, as they said during the campaign, they want to be a little different from the Conservatives. They do not want to give us credit for it. To be very frank, they will agree to this because it is a great deal for this country.

The minister already elaborated in her speech how great the trade agenda is for the government. She quoted the former prime minister, who was very well known as Mr. Dithers. The fact of the matter remains that the TPP is a great deal. It is a good deal for this country.

I have travelled across the world with my colleague from Abbotsford and the former prime minister. One of the most important things for this country is trade. The Conservative government had a great record, contrary to what the Liberal government says, of signing trade agreements around the world. It signed more trade agreements than when the Liberals were in power before the Conservatives took over.

Nevertheless, it is recognition of the fact—and I am sure my colleagues on the other side will recognize it as well—that we all have to work toward ensuring our prosperity. We are a resource-rich country and have excellent industries. We are a powerhouse on the world stage, and we want to remain a powerhouse on the world stage.

There will be some issues, but in the end, the TPP agreement will put Canada in a place where it will have access to markets that make up 60% of the world's population. That is a huge benefit to businesses and exporters.

The Liberal member for Surrey—Newton raised a question about the protectionism that is taking place around the world. There is a referendum taking place in Britain, and yesterday the former governor of the Bank of Canada, Mr. Carney, for whom I have a great deal of respect, announced that Britain would go into recession should it leave the European Union. Why would that be? It is because it would suddenly lose market access. We have to look at the factor of having market access. We are a medium-sized country with a very small population. We are rich in resources and we have to sell them.

Look at what is happening in my province of Alberta. Due to low oil prices, Alberta has been massively impacted. It is not only Alberta, but the whole country has been massively impacted by the low oil prices, the resource that we export. One of the biggest problems in Alberta right now, which everybody is talking about, is how to export our resources. We all agree that it should go through environmentally friendly reviews with first nations and everything else, which is a good thing.

However, ultimately, my colleagues on the other side, in the NDP and even the premier of Alberta, Premier Notley, agree that resources must reach tidewater so that we can sell them. If we do not sell them in the world market, then we will be facing massive problems, which we are already seeing right now in Calgary, in Alberta, where thousands of people are losing jobs. This impact is going across the country.

● (1240)

During the recession of 2008, we had massive infrastructure spending. Our government rose to the occasion. We helped the auto industry stay on its feet. The auto industry is an excellent example of why the export market is necessary. Most of our cars are marketed in the U.S.A.

Let us look at the huge market with respect to the TPP: Chile, Argentina, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia. The TPP will put us into this massive market. Our businesses look forward to the TPP.

When I was the parliamentary secretary, business delegations would travel with us to other countries. Even the previous Liberal government took a lot of business delegations around the world in order to build a vibrant export market for Canada. Canada needs an export market to ensure we have good jobs and an economy that will be able to meet all the other important social needs such as health care, education, and other things.

We encourage the Liberals to get the message out. There is nothing wrong with us taking the ball and running with it. The minister has said that we will wait for the others but we do not need to wait for them. This agreement would be good for us. We are ready to go forward and sign it. We want to go forward. We do not want to wait for others to tell us. The Conservative government had an excellent track record of doing things.

The minister spoke about the trade committee. She talked about Paul Martin. I have been in this Parliament for 18 years so I know our committees are important. Canadians can appear at committees and give their views. Committee travel is not something new that the Liberal government has just come up with. When we were in government, committees travelled. That is their job. The Liberal government needs to understand that committees belong to Parliament. They do not belong to the government. Our committees respond to Parliament. Therefore, committee travel is a normal part of the consultation process. I am glad the committees are there.

We need to listen. We all know we need trade agreements for our country to prosper. We are a resource-rich country, and the agreements we have signed have always been in favour of Canada. NAFTA is an example.

● (1245)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn might recall how great the Right Hon. Prime Minister Paul Martin was. He was the one who put our country on the strong financial footing, which we all enjoy today.

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Coming back to the TPP, I had the opportunity to sit on the international trade committee. We travelled to the member's hometown of Calgary. We listened to the people across western Canada. Some people were in favour of the TPP and others were not.

The committee and the minister are doing great work consulting with Canadians. The member for Calgary Forest Lawn has to understand the importance of consulting with Canadians.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Let me get it straight, Madam Speaker. The member just paid a great tribute to former prime minister Paul Martin for balancing the budget, for getting it right. What is wrong with his government which is now going into deficit? Why is his party not willing to take any lessons from the gentleman who the member called such a great prime minister because he balanced a budget? His government is now going on a massive deficit spending spree without even having a plan on how to get back to a balanced budget. Maybe he should take some lessons from his former finance minister.

The fact is that we have been negotiating the TPP for a long time. It is better to send out the message to everybody that the TPP will be favourable to Canada. That is what we are trying to say.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I would like him to explain how he reconciles his support for the TPP with statements made by experts like Joseph Stiglitz, who called the TPP “the worst trade deal ever”, or Jim Balsillie, who said that there will never be another large Canadian tech company under the TPP.

[*English*]

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, we expect some people not to agree with the TPP. However, the best example is NAFTA. When NAFTA was being negotiated, the Liberals and her party fought against it. The ultimate result is that we all agree NAFTA is a benefit for Canada. That should answer her question.

There are questions, and maybe people do not like the TPP, like in the case of Mr. Balsillie. His company is already facing problems, but nevertheless BlackBerry is a great company.

NAFTA, which faced massive opposition by the others, has turned out to be a great agreement and has benefited Canada.

• (1250)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member across the way for his work in the House and on behalf of the Canada-India Parliamentary Friendship Group, which started up again last night.

This motion would not recognize the work of the committees, which he was defending as an important part of Parliament, where discussions are ongoing right now. We have not heard back from the trade committee, yet, on these talks.

Would the hon. member comment on not only the value of listening to Canadians, but taking their opinions into consideration when we are making decisions in the House?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Madam Speaker, it is very important to listen to Canadians. Committees do that. It is great when they come back. The committee is already out there doing that. The committee will come back with recommendations, and the recommendation will be to move forward with adjustments here and there.

It is a great thing that the committee is out there listening to Canadians. There could be other venues where they can also consult Canadians. However, it is not wrong for the government to say that in principle it supports the TPP. It is time for the government to say that it is ready, in principle, to support the TPP.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Oshawa, I rise in the House today to speak about the trans-Pacific partnership, a partnership that will allow our quality Canadian goods access to new markets in Asia-Pacific continents.

The proposed trade deal is a commitment that I hope the Liberal government will stop dithering about and make before June 29, as it is a strong indicator of the increased trade relations, which means good things for my community of Oshawa. Oshawa is where manufacturing in the automotive sector is extremely important, and we will be able to export our domestically made vehicles to these newly established markets.

The Canadian-European trade agreement opens Canada's market to over 500 million new customers. The 28 different countries that will be included in the Canadian-European free trade agreement have a combined GDP over \$20 trillion, allowing Canada to access sound economic prosperity through the export of our domestic goods.

The previous Conservative government had laid down the groundwork of beginning the negotiation process and strived to ensure that Canadians would prosper as a result of the trade relations that had been freshly established in these markets. Our manufactured goods, including the vehicles that have been prepped for global sale by Ford Canada and Honda Canada, are seeing new investment because of access to the European market. Hopefully, with the TPP, vehicles manufactured in my community of Oshawa by General Motors will now have the increased ability to access markets, not only in Europe but also the Asia-Pacific.

As Oshawa is facing a contract renewal year in 2016, the establishment of new markets is pivotal for the decision process. It is also pivotal to companies making long-term decisions and long-term investments, especially those aimed at our export markets. After all, 85% of Canadian cars made are exported, meaning an expanded market will be beneficial to Canadian automotive manufacturers. This sort of commitment and flexibility is exactly what is needed for the automotive sector.

As I said, Oshawa is facing a contract year. This type of commitment will help decision makers understand the importance of investment and the potential that Canadian communities like Oshawa have to bolster exports and, simultaneously, the Canadian economy.

If the TPP goes through, Canada will be the only country in the world with access to North America, Asia, and the European Union, which is 1.3 billion new customers.

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What is crucial for the Liberal government to understand is that we can grow the economy without spending billions of dollars that we do not have. Access to over 800 million new customers through the TPP is exactly the kind of trade partnership that will allow Canada to grow our economy and participate in the new reality of trade in the 21st century. Supporting the TPP will send a clear signal to Canadian businesses, allowing exporters the opportunity to prepare and take advantage of preferential market access with lower tariffs and further integration of global supply chains, setting the rules for trade within North America and the Asian-Pacific region for generations to come.

Under our Conservative government, Canada became a global leader in eliminating the barriers affecting trade and the fight against protectionism. Ratifying the TPP at this time gives the Liberals a chance to prove they are actually serious about trade. Canada needs to continue to be a leader of trade relations and eliminating barriers and red tape.

Job creation and manufacturing has unfortunately become a stalled priority for the Liberal government. As a Conservative government, we understood that jobs were a vital part of our economy, in any climate. Even during the global recession, under our Conservative government, we saw the creation of 1.1 million net new jobs. That is because we know the recipe for job creation. The method includes freer trade, lower taxes, minimal red tape, and responsible spending of taxpayer money. Why do the Liberals not respect these principles?

Job-creating businesses will not invest in the Canadian economy if they do not know the cost and the environment of doing business. The Liberal government has failed to deliver a strong plan to support the manufacturing sector. From the start, the Liberal government has ignored the sector in its Speech from the Throne and continues to offer nothing concrete to support manufacturers. This is not surprising, considering the Prime Minister actually said that Canada needed to transition away from manufacturing.

Frankly, the Prime Minister and the Liberal government are out of touch with the lifeblood of many Canadian communities. My community of Oshawa has been an automotive manufacturing hub for many years. Manufacturing is a significant driver in our local economy and provides thousands of good-paying middle-class jobs across our country.

• (1255)

I was proud to sponsor a petition put forward by a local union shop steward that calls on the government to immediately release its plan to support manufacturing in communities like Oshawa.

The Liberal government has chosen to extend the automotive innovation fund and promised to be flexible with how it operates, but many of my constituents from the auto sector in Oshawa want to know why the government has not included any details about flexibility. A strong position on the TPP will give certainty to international investors, who will see Canada as the preferred location for new investments for access to more markets around the world.

If we establish this new trade deal, there will be no need to transition away from manufacturing, as the Prime Minister wants to do. In fact, we should see even greater manufacturing, good jobs,

and more investment, as Canada's role in the world expands through TPP.

Instead, unfortunately, the Liberals have only offered more confusion. This year, as I said, is a contract year for auto manufacturing at Oshawa's General Motors plant in my riding. A decision needs to be made sooner rather than later for the TPP, so we can be established for future investment of industry in Oshawa.

Manufacturing provides thousands of good-paying middle-class jobs in Oshawa, and it is a shame that the Liberal government has not done more to promote the industry and build a competitive atmosphere where businesses would want to invest. Instead, they only offer confusion. The cost of doing business will increase with some of the Liberals' policies on new taxes, such as carbon taxes. The Ontario Liberals put in their pension plan. They want to put in a CPP payroll tax and extreme hydro rates. It is killing the industry and making us less competitive. The TPP will help offset some of these poor policies by the Liberals.

The automotive industry and union members need more certainty, not more confusion. Automotive investments are made five to 10 years into the future. They need certainty. They need commitment for their investments in order to create good-quality jobs. That is why a decision on the TPP is required sooner, not later.

During this new trade deal, there will be no need to transition away from manufacturing. In fact, this will be great for our Canadian economy. Canada will be the hub for manufacturing in North America, Asia, and Europe. We are the only country that will have access to these markets, and it is a great opportunity. We should not be afraid of it.

During the economic crisis, we, as the Conservative government, were flexible, looking forward, and I was very proud to be part of a government that saved the automotive sector in Canada. As a result of that flexibility, we managed to do what needed to be done to save jobs and save operations in Canada. Trade deals like CETA and TPP are central to growing an economy and promoting investment and job growth in Canada for communities such as Oshawa.

I would like to finish by talking about some of the numbers we have seen. On trade, I have heard the Liberals today talk about our exports versus our imports. If I could quote some numbers from Stats Canada, between 2010 and 2014, our exports increased from \$103 billion to \$528 billion. That is a 32% increase in just four years. Our imports grew from \$413 billion to \$524 billion. This shows that our approach to growing the economy has worked by opening freer markets.

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What it means, quite simply, is that our exports grew 32%. In the worst economic recession since the Great Depression, we were able to create 1.2 million net new jobs, and Canadians had more money in their pocket. They were able to buy more things and we were able to import more things.

In closing, I want to encourage the Liberal government to stop dithering. Businesses and communities such as mine need certainty. In Oshawa this year, there is going to be a decision made. During this contract year, please stop dithering. Give a solid signal to the business sector, to companies that want to invest in Canada, that want to be part of Canada being a world hub for export and automotive export around Asia, North America, and Europe. Allow that to take place by making a decision on the TPP.

• (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is important that the member realize that there are 12 countries participating in this; that none of those countries have actually signed off on the TPP; that Canadians, as a whole, have a great deal of concern regarding it; and that the Government of Canada made a commitment during the last election that we were going to work with Canadians, the different stakeholders, and do a proper consultation job, something that was not done by the former government.

Recognizing how important trade is to Canada and the world, and the benefits of it, the Liberal Party has a good record in supporting and getting behind trade.

The question I have for the member is, why does he believe that Canada has to be the first country to sign this agreement when in fact all the other countries are doing their job and due diligence, and consulting with their citizens? Does he not believe that Canadians have the right to know the context?

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for a very important question. However, it is about certainty. The reality is that this is an agreement on which one is either in or out, and the Liberals do have to decide. I would ask the member in return what the Liberals' plan is if we do not sign on to the TPP.

As he knows, in communities such as mine, with the automotive sector, these are American companies that have invested in Canada. These are American companies that are creating good-quality manufacturing jobs in Canada. If the Americans do decide to sign on and Canada signals that it is not going to be signing on, what does that mean for communities such as mine? Why would an American company continue their operations in Canada if we are not signed on to the same agreement as the American government?

Therefore, it is extremely important that the Liberals stop dithering and make a decision.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. He spoke about the importance of supporting the manufacturing sector.

I represent Quebec's agri-food capital and, therefore, I am concerned about the impact of the TPP on the agriculture sector. I

am also worried about the 60,000 jobs that could be lost with the ratification of the TPP.

I wonder what my colleague thinks about the fact that the government does not seem to be making any definite commitment to provide compensation to sectors, such as the agricultural sector, that could be directly affected by the ratification of the TPP.

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, I have a lot more confidence in Canada's agricultural sector than the member across the way. The reality is, when Canadians have the opportunity to compete, we win.

What this agreement means for Canadian agricultural products is that we will have access to 800 million new customers. To put that into perspective, Canada is a country of 35 million people. We will suddenly be able to sell our goods not only to some of the biggest economies in the world, but some of the fastest-growing economies, and we can do that in a preferential way. By signing on and being part of this original agreement as well, Canada is in a preferential role for any new agreements for anybody who wants to sign on to this agreement moving forward.

Of course, there will be the naysayers and the people who are concerned, but the reality is, with the free trade agreements that we have signed in the past, we have always done well. However, without this agreement, it is actually going to put our agricultural community at a disadvantage for future trade.

• (1305)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is great to hear the member talk about the auto sector. I was working as a staffer at the time our government was involved in that, and it was a lot of hard work by the member and many others to get that done.

[*Translation*]

The government says that it would like to hold more consultations on the trans-Pacific partnership. However, when the previous government announced the partnership and the planned compensation, a number of groups were very enthusiastic. The only group opposing this treaty also opposes all economic agreements.

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, I didn't quite get the gist of the entire question, but I did get the idea that, with consultation, there were some very enthusiastic groups about the agreement. That is the reality.

Very rarely does Canada get the opportunity to open up a new market that has 800 million, almost one billion, people in new markets for our products. It is something that we should be applauding and making sure we are a part of.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Hull—Aylmer.

Business of Supply

I am pleased to speak today to the considerable benefits of international trade for Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry. This sector accounts for more than \$60 billion of Canada's exports, generates more than \$100 billion, or almost 7% of Canada's GDP, and creates jobs for more than two million Canadians.

Approximately half of Canada's agricultural production is exported. More than one-third of our wheat harvest is destined for foreign markets. Two-thirds of our pork, 85% of our canola and 90% of our pulse crops are exported.

I am proud to represent a region that has a wealth of agricultural activity. Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has many grain, beef, pork, lamb, and even rabbit producers, as well as many dairy farmers, whom I am proud to represent. These local producers all benefit from international trade opportunities.

Take soybeans, for example. Soybean production is booming in eastern Ontario and the rest of Canada. Soybeans were planted on 5.4 million acres in 2015, which is an increase of 77% over 2008. Soy is the fourth-largest crop in Canada. This agricultural sector alone generated \$2.4 billion in 2015. This extraordinary growth would not be possible without access to foreign markets.

Canada has a solid record as a reliable supplier of high-quality seed to international markets. We have export capacity on the east and west coasts. We have modern, efficient infrastructure, as well as world-class management. Half of all jobs in crop and seed production depend on exports, and one in four jobs depends on food processing.

Trade benefits more than just producers and processors. In 2015, Canadian farm equipment manufacturers exported \$1.8 billion in products to 154 different countries.

These business opportunities translate into economic growth here in Canada, growth that is essential to rural communities. We must continue to provide business opportunities to Canada's farming sector. That is why our government recognizes the importance of international trade.

I would like to remind hon. members that the government is in favour of international trade. The Government of Canada supports free trade as a means of opening markets for Canadian agriculture and agrifood producers, growing Canadian farms, creating well-paying jobs for Canadians, and providing choice and lower prices to Canadian consumers. In short, Canada is a trading nation. Trade agreements help Canada's agrifood sector to further develop its exports for the good of our country and our economy.

The trans-Pacific partnership provides business opportunities for Canadian agriculture. It goes without saying that the government will take a responsible approach by carefully examining all of the details of that agreement.

We are committed to holding a full and open debate in Parliament. That is what we are doing here today. That is what the Standing Committee on International Trade is doing right now, and that is what we are going to do later by debating this issue here in the House, as we promised. We are also committed to ensuring that Canadians are informed and consulted about this important agreement, something that the former government did not do. The

hon. Minister of International Trade and the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food have already met with a wide range of representatives from all areas of the agrifood industry, including supply management agencies. Supply management is an important issue for me and the people in my riding. The ministers want to hear these representatives' opinions on key issues.

Canadians have the right to know what impact this agreement will have on our country's various industries. We are going to continue to talk with them about the TPP and other issues. The government also recognizes the important role that the supply management sector plays in keeping Canada's economy strong. This sector accounts for nearly 300,000 jobs and \$32 billion in economic gains.

• (1310)

If the TPP comes into effect, the Government of Canada is well aware that the supply-managed sectors will need mitigation measures.

I am one of the biggest proponents of the supply management system. This system has a proven track record, and it has a place in Canada's economy. We must consider the agricultural sector as a whole, and not as an industry divided between supply management and the free market. We have an approach based on growing the agricultural sector as a whole, and this is the best solution for all Canadians.

I set up a local agricultural committee in my riding, to bring together the various agricultural sectors in my region. This committee has been widely applauded. The various agricultural sectors have much in common, and we all win when we work together.

In closing, I would like to say that we are at a time of tremendous opportunity for Canada's agri-food sector. Agricultural exports are at an all-time record high. Producer incomes and balance sheets are expected to remain at historic levels. The agri-food sector is one of Canada's most dynamic export sectors. It is estimated that up to 50,000 new agriculture-related jobs will be created across Canada in the next five years, both on and off farms, on top of existing vacancies. Some estimate those vacancies to be in excess of 25,000 jobs. With our small population and huge production capacity, Canada is the world's leading agricultural trader on a per capita basis.

Meanwhile, global demand for food is projected to increase by 60% by 2050. Our farmers have the responsibility and the ability to feed the planet. For farmers and food processors, this is tremendous news. The future is bright for Canadian farmers and food processors, with growing demand for the excellent products we grow here in Canada.

The government will work hard to open new markets for farmers and food processors. We are doing the right thing: consulting them and all Canadians on the TPP.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member is a strong voice for agriculture and is one heck of a hockey player. If there is ever a team looking for a player, they should pick him up.

The member talked about the importance of the supply management sector. A large part of my riding in southern Alberta is dairy farming, and they are very concerned about the role that supply management will take in the trans-Pacific partnership.

Initially, when we announced that negotiations were taking place on the partnership, the supply management sector, especially the dairy farmers, were very pleased with the agreement we had reached, and especially with the compensation package that was there, that should they suffer due to the trans-Pacific partnership, there would be a safety net there for them.

However, we have not heard from the Liberal government that there is a compensation package in place. Is a compensation package part of the TPP in supply management?

• (1315)

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madam Speaker, I am not sure I am that great a hockey player, although that is what my colleague here says.

We have a proven record in terms of negotiating with the dairy sector for compensation when free trade agreements are signed and ratified. We are talking about CETA. We have engaged with the dairy sector. If we do decide to ratify TPP, I know I will be fighting for the dairy sector to ensure that there is compensation. I know the Minister of Agriculture will negotiate with the dairy sector to ensure that there is proper compensation.

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech in the House. It is a pleasure to work with him in the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

My colleague knows full well that trade agreements undermine our supply management system. Last year, we lost more than 250 family farms in the dairy industry in Quebec. The trans-Pacific partnership and the Canada-European Union trade agreement also undermine our supply management system. The former Conservative government promised compensation.

Given how important and urgent it is to resolve the problem of diafiltered milk, the Liberal government is now saying again that it is consulting the dairy and poultry industries.

I would like my colleague to comment on the importance of compensating for losses and strengthening and defending our entire supply management system, as well as on the urgent need to act as soon as possible on the issue of diafiltered milk.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

The dairy sector is important to me. In my riding, there are more than 300 dairy farmers. We promised to consult the farming sector and dairy farmers on compensation in the Canada-European Union

trade agreement, and that is precisely what we are going to do in three weeks' time.

Diafiltered milk is a very important issue and others are as well. We will continue to work with the dairy farmers in order to find solutions not just for the short term, but also for the long term, in order to ensure growth in the dairy sector.

As I said, in my riding more than 300 farmers work in the dairy sector. I want to ensure that young people will be able to take over the family farm. We must work to help the next generation of dairy farmers.

[English]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for his speech today and also for the work he does on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food on which we both serve together.

In the previous question, the member for Berthier—Maskinongé indicated it was shameful that this committee was not studying the TPP. Maybe the hon. member could explain why that is so.

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madam Speaker, at the time, we were not sure where we would go with the committee, but the committee on international trade decided to embark on a cross-Canada consultation, and they have already met with the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, the Alberta Wheat Commission, National Farmers Union, British Columbia Cattlemen's Association, Canadian Agri-food Trade Alliance, Manitoba Beef Producers, Cereals Canada, Manitoba Pork Council, and more.

I can assure the member, the chair of the committee is a farmer himself and the agricultural sector will be consulted.

• (1320)

[Translation]

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada is a trading nation and has always depended heavily on international trade and investment for its economic well-being.

We live in a vast country with a relatively small population, and we enjoy a high standard of living. We produce more goods and services than Canadians consume. As a result, we sell our products and services abroad, which helps maintain a strong economy.

Canadian consumers also reap the benefits of international trade, which gives them a greater variety of goods at better prices. We are striving to maintain access to international markets, since a free and open environment for international trade and investment helps businesses prosper and gives middle-class Canadians access to better jobs.

This point can be found in the Minister of International Trade's mandate letter and in her commitment to increase Canada's trade and to attract job-creating investment to Canada, in particular by implementing free trade agreements and expanding the existing ones.

Business of Supply

These trade agreements provide access to international markets for Canadian goods and services and help combat protectionism. These agreements improve operating conditions for our companies by committing signatory countries to transparent, rule-based systems. These help establish a more predictable environment for trade and investment. This is important to a middle power like Canada.

The hon. Minister of International Trade is working hard to secure access to these international markets and to generate opportunities for our Canadian companies outside our borders. I remind my hon. colleagues of one of her first successes back in November 2015, when she managed to get the Americans to eliminate their requirement for country of origin labelling, also known as COOL.

The previous government tried, unsuccessfully, to convince the Americans to eliminate this mandatory labelling requirement. With our new government's new approach, we were able to eliminate this non-tariff barrier to trade and enable Canadian companies to expand their markets into the United States.

This kind of success stems not only from our new results-oriented business approach, but also from our new political approach regarding the United States. The U.S. is our largest trading partner. The previous government failed to establish a strong political relationship, which was of no benefit when it had to address such issues as mandatory country-of-origin labelling.

The Minister of International Trade is also working very hard toward the successful conclusion of another file, namely the free trade agreement with Europe. The minister has had several meetings with her European counterpart, Cecilia Malmström, in order to establish a working relationship with her and build strong trust so we can advance this trade issue that is important to Canada and Canadian businesses.

The minister also travelled to Berlin and Brussels in April to promote this important free trade agreement and to speak with politicians and economic stakeholders, in order to ensure that this agreement will be ratified this year and will go into effect in 2017.

Expediting the entry into force of this agreement is a key priority for our government, but it is not the only priority. Canada also recently updated its free trade agreements with Chile and Israel and entered into a free trade agreement with Ukraine. The timely implementation of these agreements is also a priority for the Minister of International Trade and our government.

Furthermore, our government is exploring ways of developing our trade relations with China and India.

• (1325)

Regarding the trans-Pacific partnership, the government is engaging in a full and open consultation process, including in Parliament.

I also want to inform the House and all my constituents in Hull—Aylmer that I am organizing a public forum to discuss the TPP. It will be held on May 31 at 7:00 p.m. at the Université du Québec en Outaouais. I hope that many of my colleagues will also participate by joining my constituents in having a good discussion of the trans-Pacific partnership.

Apart from free trade agreements, the government uses other tools and instruments to improve access to international markets for Canadian businesses. Canada's foreign investment promotion and protection agreements, or FIPAs, are bilateral international investment agreements that provide a rules-based legal framework. Canada has 30 FIPAs in place that provide a stable, predictable, and transparent trade environment for Canadian investors operating abroad.

Air transport agreements also support trade by governing the opportunities for scheduled commercial flights between Canada and over 100 other countries around the world. These agreements, which are often the first agreements reached with many partners, facilitate the flow of passengers and goods and foster competition. They therefore facilitate trade and investment, as well as people-to-people ties.

In closing, our government is committed to ensuring that Canada is well positioned to take advantage of economic opportunities through international trade.

The mandate letter to the Minister of International Trade includes a commitment to increase Canada's trade and attract job-creating investment to Canada, for instance, by implementing and expanding Canada's free trade agreements with other countries.

Our government considers this a top priority and is working hard to deliver on it.

[English]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, the members of the current government have again gone on and talked about open and transparent ways and said that they are going to consult with Canadians.

The members of the Conservative Party believe that we must have true consultation with Canadians, and that Canadians need to be part of the process. I want to make sure the current government understands that, if it is going to consult with Canadians, it should at least allow Canadians to have factual information and be able to have all the facts about an agreement in place and the benefits of it.

I am asking this for my hon. colleague. Does he not believe that having true consultations means providing the right information and factual information so that Canadians can make the best decision?

Mr. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I would like to say for my hon. colleague from Cariboo—Prince George that of course we agree that Canadians should have the facts and the factual information available to them.

That is precisely why, as an example, the Minister of International Trade had signed the trans-Pacific partnership. It was so we would be able to share the information with Canadians and we would be able to provide the agreement. That does not say that we have ratified the agreement. That will be a discussion to be had among Canadians and among their representatives here in the House of Commons, so that we can take a decision together.

Business of Supply

The reason why we signed the agreement is so we could share that information with all Canadians. That is the reason why I am organizing a public forum in my riding to discuss the trans-Pacific partnership, for and against, and to listen to what Canadians have to say.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech in the House.

The Liberal government often likes to talk about transparency and the importance of consulting Canadians.

[*English*]

It says it will do things better and do things right, which is good, but when looking at trade deals, it is important to look at the economic impact. Has there been a study? No, there has not. Is this public to Canadians? No, it is not.

What certain countries have done, like New Zealand, is release economic impact studies to parliamentarians so that they can easily evaluate the impacts, positive and negative, on the economy. I was wondering if the hon. member would comment on why the government has failed to produce an economic impact study on this important trade deal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé for her question.

I have to say that I am a little confused. If I remember correctly, during the 2015 election campaign, the hon. member adopted a stance that was in line with her party's, a stance that may not have been entirely logical. The New Democrats opposed the trans-Pacific partnership without ever having read the agreement.

How interesting that they are in this situation now, asking me questions. As the government, we signed it, and we are going to give the information and the text—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

The hon. member for Guelph. Please keep the question brief.

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to expand on that. I thank the hon. member for his commitment to this, as well as the file on innovation.

The Conservatives want us to sign it right away and not discuss it, and New Democrats want us not to sign it because we do not need to discuss it. I would ask the hon. member to expand further on the value of discussion and conversation with Canadians on this file.

Mr. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with the hon. member. It is important for Canadians to make an informed choice, and in order to make an informed choice, they have to have information in front of them, at the very least the text. They are being given that opportunity, and that is why we are having this debate in the House.

I am very glad to listen to all the members who are giving speeches and I look forward to carrying on this discussion.

VOTES ON OPPOSITION MOTIONS

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That at the conclusion of today's debate on the Opposition motion in the name of the Member for Abbotsford, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions,

That at the conclusion of tomorrow's debate on the Opposition motion in the name of the Member for Peace River—Westlock, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

OPPOSITION MOTION—TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Saskatoon—University.

I am pleased to stand today and talk about the trans-Pacific partnership agreement.

I think we heard very clearly from the member for Abbotsford, as he opened the debate today, why this deal is important, what the motion actually said, and the tremendous amount of work that has gone into the deal in terms of creating the agreement among the 12 nations.

First of all, I want to make a couple of general comments. I do not think I need to repeat some of those important facts that the member stated, but I will make some general comments, and then I want to focus in on British Columbia and some of the important elements of this particular free trade agreement for British Columbians.

I was not elected until 2008, and of course, the previous government was elected in 2006. Over the years, I came to appreciate that the Conservatives had a plan that was elegant, comprehensive, and well executed. This is not just a plan about free trade agreements, and I can give members a very specific example.

Business of Supply

In 2006, we announced the Asia-Pacific gateway initiative, and we have spent over \$1 billion. The Asia-Pacific gateway initiative was a recognition of how important our trade was for western Canada, and somewhat for the east, but most importantly for western Canada. It was recognizing the importance of the supply chains and how we moved our goods and products in both directions.

What did this \$1 billion-plus do? It did so many important things. It was a system of transportation. It included roads in the lower mainland, to make sure that there were no bottlenecks. It included ports, such as in Prince Rupert and in Vancouver. It included rail connections that reached across western Canada. In particular, there were a number of inland ports that were created. It also involved things such as major airports and border crossings. Of course, there was a lot of work done with the U.S. in terms of having a fluid border. This was one component of what was a comprehensive plan to make Canada prosperous.

At the same time as we were creating the ability for our supply chain to work effectively and efficiently, we embarked on a very comprehensive free trade agreement, and we are part of the trans-Pacific partnership.

I have to take a minute and contrast that to the Liberal approach to economic opportunity. What we were doing was trying to create opportunities for trade, and trying to reduce barriers to ensure the flow. However, the Liberal response that I can see to date is to say that we have a sluggish economy and that we need to spend taxpayers' dollars to help the economy. However, I would argue, that is exactly what we do not need to do.

What we need to be doing is moving forward with the tax decrease for our small and medium-sized businesses to continue the work of ensuring the free flow of our goods and services. I think members can see that we came to government with a comprehensive plan to ensure that Canada had a prosperous and robust future.

Having sort of talked about the comprehensive plan, it will be important to dig in to exactly what is happening in British Columbia and how important this deal is to British Columbia.

Between 2012 and 2016, there was \$20.6 billion in exports to the Asia-Pacific region. As members can imagine, that is a huge piece of the economy of British Columbia.

Members will see a smile on my face, because I was looking through the products and the opportunities that are going to benefit. This is so much for the province that I am proud of in terms of how it is going to be able to exercise this opportunity.

● (1335)

There are things like duty-free market access to industrial goods, aluminum products, and iron and steel products. When we think of British Columbia, we have the iconic salmon and the beautiful oceans and, of course, the very healthy seafood that comes from our oceans. I think we can all appreciate the ability to have duty-free access to fish and seafood products, which include salmon and shrimp.

In the Lower Mainland, we can see the beautiful cranberry fields which provide us all with the cranberries we use at Christmastime and other times of the year. The Fraser Valley is a very critical

supplier and exporter of cranberries. We have blueberries, a very healthy fruit. The beautiful, large blueberries of the Fraser Valley will now have increased market access.

There will be duty-free access for wood and other forestry products, including lumber, plywood, and veneer panels. I am going to use a local example. To be frank, I am not sure if this company currently exports its products, but it makes amazing doorframes and windows. The quality is superb. The company is Century Glass in Kamloops. It is a medium-sized business that sometimes has 50 or 60 workers. There is enormous opportunity within this agreement if the company decides to expand its market. Not only is it going to have tariff-free access, but there is a whole chapter for small and medium-sized enterprises that could take advantage of those opportunities. A company which might have 50 employees now will have access to a market of 800 million people predominantly tariff-free. These are quality products. We could then compete with the best of the world.

When the Liberals, hopefully, finally ratify this agreement, I will be delighted to bring the opportunities to our community of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

This is another important example. Sometimes we underestimate the importance of this particular issue. There is a company in Kamloops that had very highly technological medical equipment which came from overseas. There was no one in Canada who had the ability to service the equipment or the expertise to repair it. I received a phone call from this particular company. It was very concerned because there were so many constraints with respect to temporary entry to bring the skilled workers into Canada so that they could actually fix this piece of equipment. There was so much red tape and so many barriers that it took a number of weeks. That was a number of weeks during which a critical piece of medical equipment was unable to be serviced because of barriers which go both ways.

Not only will skilled Canadian workers have the opportunity for temporary access into countries where we might export some devices, but it will go both ways. In this case, we can imagine it would have made an enormous difference for this particular company to have had the ability to get its equipment fixed without involving an enormous amount of paperwork.

I could go on and on in terms of the specifics, but one thing that is important for ridings in British Columbia, Alberta, and throughout Canada, is our cattle industry, our beef industry. I would like to quote the general manager of the BC Cattlemen's Association:

For the beef industry, the Trans-Pacific Partnership is a must. It's opening up that door to Japan and putting us on an even playing field with the 12 other countries involved.

It will help our industry by quite a bit, possibly tripling some of our markets into those areas, so any time we have a market open up, it gives us opportunity to sell not only more animals but get a higher cut-out value for them.

I hope the Liberal government has been listening and will recognize that this is critically important for Canada, and critically important for British Columbia. It would be very advantageous to move forward with this particular agreement.

Business of Supply

• (1340)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the issue has been raised before. Let us do a bit of contrasting. On the one hand, the NDP's official position is that the agreement does not matter: who cares; just do not sign it as it is not in the interest of Canadians. The NDP wants nothing to do with the TPP. Then there is the Conservative approach which is that we do not need to consult with Canadians, and we should just go ahead and sign it.

There are 12 countries that have participated in this. We have plenty of time to actually consult with Canadians, work with the different stakeholders, and do exactly what it is the government is doing. We can follow the lead of the Minister of International Trade and actually work with Canadians to get a better sense of whether or not this is good for Canada. Then we can look at the possibility of ratifying it.

What does the member have against working with and consulting with Canadians? Why the sudden rush?

• (1345)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, the member has perfectly articulated the problem with the Liberal government. It wanders down the mushy middle and never gets anything done. It does not take definitive positions. It does not get things done. I would ask the member to look at the last time the Liberals were in power. How many free trade agreements did it get done? Was it zero? There might have been one small one.

That question perfectly articulates the Liberal government's reluctance to move Canada forward. The Liberals would rather spend taxpayers' money to support an economy we do not have and to put debt on our grandchildren than do things that will create a future for tomorrow.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I find it really rich, the comments coming from across the way, when it is that very government that will not consult Canadians on physician-assisted dying. It will not consult Canadians on one of the biggest decisions we are going to make here in Parliament, which is electoral reform. It is refusing to do that.

Our government did consult Canadians. It did consult industry.

Would the hon. colleague talk about some of the other comments in support of TPP that we got from other industries along the way?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, whether it is our agriculture, forestry, or mining industry, they will all enormously benefit.

I do think it is important to go back, and I will use the electoral reform issue. The member talks about consulting Canadians, and consulting and consulting.

The most important consultation the government could do, which would be a referendum on electoral reform, the Liberals have actually refused to do. The Liberals indicate they put a high priority on consultation, but when the metal hits the road, there is nothing.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is wonderful to have a discussion like the one we are having today,

where we can see the disagreements and then work on behalf of our constituents to try to get information forward that will help with decision-making.

I have heard some numbers from the Conservatives today showing that our exports and imports both went up after the recession. Is it not true that we look at whether we are winning in that game? Are there more exports than imports? Does the balance of trade not make a difference in this discussion?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the member's comment about consultations.

The TPP has been on the books for years. Members of Parliament in the Liberal Party of Canada had the option of consulting at every step of the way with constituents and industry, and they failed to do any proactive work. Now they are being reactive, and they are going to spend however much time repeating some of the work that, quite frankly, we have already done.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, I always find it interesting to engage in debates on trade in the House, because whenever I listen to people talk about it, I feel that many members of the House need to have a basic primer in economics, a basic one plus one equals two. When I hear people talk about needing more exports, fewer imports, and vice versa, those are really two sides of the same equation: exports equal imports. The reason we export is to get imports.

The example that is always given is someone's basic labour. I export my labour to my employer so I can import and consume things. When we talk about trade, sometimes the basics of economics get left out, so let me bring the basic argument for free trade.

I understand no trade agreement, the TPP included, is a perfect free trade agreement, but it is rules-based trade and it brings down tariffs and it brings down barriers. While it is not the academic perfect argument for free trade, all the trade agreements that Canada has signed going back to the FTA with the United States, is an improvement and something that moves us along the way to the ideal which is basically free trade.

The basics of trade agreements are that the fewer barriers, the fewer inefficiencies we have in the way, the more we can trade back and forth, the better off everyone is. This is not a zero sum game. We all win. If I can figure out some way to produce something better and more efficiently, I have more of it and I can therefore trade and give it to everyone else.

We see this in our individual lives. We see this when businesses engage in it at a very basic level. We understand it and no one argues the facts, even if in practice they do not follow it when it comes to interprovincial trade, but for some reason, we lose sight of this basic fact when it comes to international trade.

Business of Supply

Just because someone is in another country does not mean he or she cannot add to our wealth by trading with us the same way that I trade with my employer. This is something that while not unanimous in economic circles, is as close to unanimous as one can get when it comes to any issues involving economics. It is that basic principle of free trade that I am standing here to argue for today. I want to emphasize that because it is not just our exporters that win.

Many of my colleagues on this side of the House have ably discussed the specifics in their ridings, in their parts of the country, what specific exporter wins. I am from Saskatchewan. Everyone knows Saskatchewan for its agriculture. Particularly for an area involving the TPP, with the growing populations in both Latin America and Asia, anything that opens up agriculture export markets is marvellous. With the rising populations, the rising incomes in this area, the demand for high quality food, food that raises health standards and raises standards of living is extraordinary.

For Saskatchewan, this is a winner. No one can grow wheat quite like we can. As countries shift to healthier cooking oils, canola oil—or Canadian oil which is the root of the term—is a great winner. All these individual products do win. However, it is not just the exporters. We have to remember consumers win, too, because each and every one of us exports, produces something so that we can import. We go to work, receive a paycheque and we go out and buy a new vehicle, a house, a meal at a restaurant, clothing and things for the family. Those are the imports into my household.

The same thing is Canada will gain as it imports from these countries. As countries in the TPP produce goods in a more efficient way, we in Canada can buy them less expensively. We can import them. That is one of the basics that we need to understand about any of these deals.

Another thing I would like to explain to the people watching today and those who will read *Hansard* later is to understand why we are actually having this debate. The various parties are laying out their positions. It has been six or seven months. The TPP was negotiated over a long period, and yes, the absolute details of the agreement were not known, but the general ideas behind it have been known literally for years.

● (1350)

It basically boils down to this: the internal and external politics of the Liberal Party.

As has been pointed out, in the past the Liberals have had a habit of saying one thing on the campaign trail, while campaigning to get votes from New Democrats by arguing positions to labour unions, environmental groups, and other areas of the left that they would like to poach votes from, and then, once in government, reality sinks in and they want GDP and economic growth so that they can deliver and spend as they want to do. They did this with NAFTA. They denounced it and then adopted it.

Here is the difficulty. The Liberals understand that the TPP is good for Canada's growth. Most economists agree. There is a handful who do not, and we can dispute their data. Free trade works and this is a positive for the country. They know that. The problem is that they do not want to alienate certain voter groups on the left who they wish to appeal to and who often would vote for New

Democrats. Therefore, they are looking to bide their time until they know whether or not the TPP will go through. Right now, the U.S. Congress does not look favourably disposed to it. If the U.S. vetoes this deal, it will probably fail. What the Liberals need to do is to find a way to back out of it if it does not go forward, but to adopt it if it does go forward because Canada has to be a part of it. They know that from the macroeconomics. Therefore, they have come up with this farce that they are passing off as democratic consultation. This is what is going on.

As has been noted, the Liberals are trying to rush through changes to our voting system, a quasi-constitutional item, but at the same time, a trade agreement, which is significant in and of itself, they are delaying, buying time, and talking about consultations when the parties who are interested, which unfortunately does not mean most Canadians, have firm views on it. That is what is going on today. We are trying to force the Liberals to make a definitive decision and state whether they will support something that is for the good of the country or continue to talk this issue away, hoping they do not have to make a decision.

It is important that Canada make a decision. It has to do with the strategic understanding of where this treaty is going. Canada and the other countries that are involved in it need to make a decision to put pressure on the U.S. Congress and the U.S. government to understand the importance of this. We need to do that to force it to go forward because this is an agreement that will tie the broader Pacific regions together. It will provide economic benefits greater than we could supply through aid to some of the poorer countries in it. It will tie countries together across the Pacific Ocean in a positive way, to support one another and to bring them into our circle of influence, and by "our" I do not just mean Canada but the more advanced democratic nations, and therefore, have a positive influence.

That is one point I wish to make, because while it has been made clear today that this will benefit Canadian exporters and consumers, there is also the geopolitical strategic necessity of getting involved in this. For that, Canada should be a leader. We should not sit around and have a foreign policy that does nothing but contain beautiful words without any activity. This is something where Canada could take leadership and go forward.

With that, it looks like my time is close to winding up. Therefore, I look forward to any questions. However, I reiterate that I believe in this agreement because of what it does for Canada's strategic interests, for Canada's exporters, for Canada's workers, and for Canada's consumers.

Statements by Members

•(1355)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, at the very least, I wonder if the member would acknowledge that in every region of the country there has been an expression of concern with respect to the TPP. As a direct result of the government not doing its homework a year ago, we now have a situation where there is grave concern all over Canada with regard to the TPP. The government is doing the right thing. After all, it was an election commitment to consult with stakeholders to find out whether or not there is a net value benefit for Canadians by moving forward on the TPP.

Would the member not recognize that Canadians also deserve to have a role in this?

Mr. Brad Trost: Madam Speaker, of course I believe that Canadians have a role. However, when we look at who presents, what the NGOs are, and what their positions are, I think we will find they are entirely predictable. Therefore, this is not something that is particularly new. The groups that tend to be opposed to trade agreements tend to be opposed to this one. Those who tend to be in favour of trade agreements tend to be in favour of this one. I am not getting nearly as much written correspondence or people coming into my office with respect to the TPP as I am on other issues, particularly the government's assisted dying-euthanasia legislation, which the government has not provided nearly as much time for consultation on as they have with respect to the TPP.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was pleased to hear my colleague's speech because he really laid out economics 101 and the importance of opening up new markets.

I am wondering if the member could comment on this strategic opportunity for Canada. The European free trade agreement offers the potential of 500 million new customers for Canada and the TPP would provide 800 million. I am wondering if he could comment on the historic opportunity this would present.

•(1400)

Mr. Brad Trost: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it strategically puts us in a good position to trade with both blocs, particularly with the auto industry, because most of our automotive products are specialized. The few lines that we export, if my memory serves me correctly, is 80% to 85% of our auto products. This would put us in a good strategic position.

The Speaker: There will be two minutes and 20 seconds left for the member's questions and comments following question period, if he is available for that.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

*[English]***JAMES LAMB**

Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, West Nova is feeling the loss of an exceptional citizen. Unfortunately, James Lamb passed away on April 15. Jimmie was a well-known pork producer and businessman throughout the Annapolis Valley, where he operated the Meadowbrook Meat Market with the conviction of

promoting local products and ensuring that his customers could have trust in the quality of the products he sold.

Jimmie was a dedicated volunteer within the community he loved so much, contributing to the planning and construction of the Berwick Apple Dome and providing countless hours and resources to organizations such as the Berwick Rotary Club, the 4-H club, the Baptist church, and the Brigadoon children's camp.

On behalf of my hon. colleagues and the people of West Nova, I would like to express my sincere condolences to Mr. Lamb's family, and especially to his wife, Margie. The Annapolis Valley has lost a dear friend whose legacy will be remembered and cherished for many years to come.

* * *

*[Translation]***QUEBEC CITY FOOD CUPBOARD**

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I want to commend an organization called La Bouchée généreuse, which helps fight hunger among the least fortunate in the greater Quebec City area.

La Bouchée généreuse, which is in my riding, Beauport—Limoilou, provides front-line services by helping to feed the least fortunate from all walks of life. More specifically, this independent organization helps people in need by giving them all sorts of basic food products and a bit of human warmth.

This organization stands out not just because of the noble work it does, but also because of its volunteers, who actively help improve the lives of their fellow citizens.

These volunteers very generously give their time to make La Bouchée généreuse a success. They also influence the strategic direction of the organization. Three of the volunteers sit on the board and report to the other volunteers on decisions that will affect the well-being of the recipients.

This organization is necessary for the well-being of my riding, and I am proud to contribute to it as a volunteer whenever possible.

* * *

*[English]***EMERGENCY SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM**

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to congratulate six recent graduates of the emergency service achievement program from my riding of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. Through an innovative partnership between the Government of Canada, the Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service, and the Sackville Volunteer Fire Fighters Organization, youth in our region were offered the opportunity to gain work-experience practice in our community.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

This program is an excellent example of a Government of Canada initiative to help young people acquire the skills they need to work in the profession they are interested in.

[English]

I would like to give special thanks to Bernie Scott, the program coordinator, for his hard work and his dedication to these young students who have such bright futures.

* * *

SENIORS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, by 2050, one-third of Canada's population will be over the age of 60. We know that services will need to be vastly expanded and enhanced to address the growing demand of aging Canadians. We need to expand long-term care and radically improve home care. We need to support caregivers and ensure that seniors have access to affordable housing so they can retire with dignity and respect. This is especially true in my riding where, in communities like Qualicum Beach, the median age is 63 years old.

That is why I would like to showcase some amazing organizations in my riding.

I would like to congratulate the Glacier View Lodge in Courtenay, which is opening a new outdoor activity centre this Friday. We know how important it is to stay active, especially as we get a bit older.

I would also like to give special recognition to Bowser Seniors Housing Society, which is celebrating 10 years as a charity offering invaluable services to the community.

Canada needs a national seniors strategy that supports organizations like these and ensures our golden years are truly rich and fulfilling.

* * *

[Translation]

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S MEDAL

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the great pleasure of congratulating the 10 recipients of Quebec's Lieutenant Governor's medal from Châteauguay—Lacolle: Jean-Pierre Blais of Napierville; Yvon Bouchard of Châteauguay; Audrey Cécylre of the École Sainte-Martine; Aline Chevretils of Châteauguay; Jade Durette of the Collège Héritage de Châteauguay; Noémie Jacques of the École Louis-Philippe-Paré in Châteauguay; Odette Pottie of Châteauguay; Jean-Guy Robert of the Saint-Rémi Council of the Knights of Columbus; Janot St-Onge of Châteauguay; and Olivier Versailles of the École Louis-Cyr in Napierville.

The Lieutenant Governor's medal recognizes the volunteerism, determination, and selflessness of Quebeckers who make a difference.

● (1405)

[English]

Please join me in congratulating every one of our proud award winners.

* * *

ORDER OF CANADA

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Dr. Kathryn J. Hannah of Calgary who will be invested tomorrow into the Order of Canada for her efforts to promote the use of information technology to enhance nursing care in Canada and abroad.

Dr. Hannah, a proud member of the nursing profession since 1965 and a pioneer in the field of nursing informatics in Canada, has published foundational works and created practical applications of information technology to improve the nursing practice and enhance health care.

She was instrumental in the development of data standards that track the care of patients, which have allowed doctors and nurses to measure patient outcomes and which have provided governments with data to influence health policy.

I was privileged to have hosted her, her family and her two granddaughters, Alexis and Kinsley, for a visit of our Parliament this morning.

On behalf of the residents of Calgary Shepard, I want to congratulate her on this outstanding personal achievement.

* * *

VAUGHAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to recognize the 27th annual Vaughan Chamber of Commerce Business Achievement Awards, which celebrated the successes and contributions of exceptional businesses and their excellence in the city of Vaughan.

The highlight of this year's gala was presenting the Philanthropic Business Person of the Year Award to Mario Cortellucci, founder of the Cortel group. As an entrepreneur, philanthropist and conservationist, Mario has not only built communities, but also funded the Ontario Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre, a variety of charities and many sporting initiatives throughout Canada.

Mr. Cortellucci is a recipient of the Order of Ontario and the Queen Elizabeth Golden Jubilee Medal.

The city of Vaughan is home to over 11,000 businesses, employing nearly 200,000 individuals. By connecting, serving and empowering businesses through its three foundational pillars, voice, community, and culture, the VCC is an integral part of Vaughan's business community and a strong advocate for its continuing success.

Please join me in congratulating both the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Mario Cortellucci for their inspiring achievements.

*Statements by Members***MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH**

Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month. One hundred thousand people in Canada are living with MS, 12,000 in British Columbia alone.

This disease's unpredictable nature can have a profound impact on a person's ability to maintain financial security and navigate both health and community support systems. It also affects their families, which come together to manage the realities of MS.

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada is optimistic that we will see an end to MS because of the resources that continue to be invested in Canadian research. These resources are raised in part at the many MS walks taking place across the country this month, like the one taking place in my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country

I encourage members of the House and all Canadians to show their support by taking part in a MS walk in their own community. Together we can end MS.

* * *

[Translation]

MARC DAUPHIN

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 6, the Collège des médecins du Québec presented Dr. Marc Dauphin with its 2016 humanist award for his contribution to war medicine and for the remarkable work he has done in Quebec, Canada, and throughout the world.

After completing a medical degree at Université Laval, Dr. Dauphin enrolled in the army. In 2007, he was posted to the U.S. military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany, a transit point for soldiers injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. Upon his return to Canada, he was appointed to the position of commanding officer at the Role 3 Multinational Medical Unit in Kandahar. During that mission, he maintained a survival rate of 97%, a record for all times and all wars.

I, too, would like to tip my hat to this man who served our country with such remarkable skill and devotion.

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[English]

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 75 years after Lou Gehrig died from ALS, it is still a horrible disease with no known cause, no cure and no treatment.

We have all been touched by our friend and colleague, the member for Ottawa—Vanier, as we witness the very real impact of ALS on a tireless parliamentarian.

In Oakville, my friend and hero, Tim Robertson, has battled ALS for 12 years. Tim loves sports, “The Boss”, his family, friends and community. His daughter Lindsay Henderson, organizer of the Halton Walk for ALS, says that when Tim was diagnosed, he could still do everything on his own. Now he can do almost nothing without help.

On Monday May 23, please join me as I walk and raise money with Tim's Titans, at the Halton Walk for ALS at Bronte Creek Provincial Park in my riding, to raise funds to support Canadians with ALS and celebrate hope for a future without this devastating disease.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect their government to provide fast, quality services, whether online, on the phone, or in person.

According to data from Service Canada, far too many Canadians are not receiving the level of service they expect. When people lose their jobs through no fault of their own, they should not have to wait weeks, or even months, to get assistance and benefits from a program to which they contributed while they were working.

That is why we are taking steps and launching a national review to get feedback from key stakeholders and the public on how to improve the services provided to EI claimants.

The comments and suggestions we receive will be very useful in identifying the best way to improve services for EI claimants.

We know that Canadians have something to say, and we cannot wait to hear it.

* * *

[English]

TELUS DAYS OF GIVING

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2006, the TELUS Days of Giving has been a catalyst for bringing together local communities to make a difference. Tens of thousands of Canadians from every region have given their time to make their communities better places to live, work, and play.

On May 31, members of Parliament and senators will be contributing to this amazing effort. We will be packing school supply kits for children in our ridings, including more than 400 kits for students who have been impacted by the unprecedented devastating fires in the Fort McMurray area. This initiative reflects the generous spirit exhibited by so many Canadians across the country in support of wildfire evacuees.

Last year, over 100 parliamentarians participated in this fun and worthwhile event, and more than 1,000 children in Canadian communities benefited.

I would like to encourage all members of the House to join me in giving where we live by offering our hands and hearts to those in need.

YOM HA'ATZMAUT

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day, I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the tremendous contributions of our Israeli friends and the Jewish communities, large and small, both here in Canada and around the world. Canada is proud to call Israel a partner and ally. We unite in our values and our understanding of democracy.

As we celebrate Israel's vibrant culture and peoples, we also recognize the threat that Israelis continue to face in the form of terrorism, anti-Semitism, and hateful crimes, and we will always stand with them, proud and steadfast.

* * *

CANADA POST

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, residents of Hamilton Mountain do not need a special panel to tell them their postal service has rapidly declined. The majority of complaints I receive from constituents is about problems with their mail delivery. Many of those complaints are about broken or frozen community mailboxes, stolen letters, and many times mail just not being delivered in a timely fashion.

Hamilton Mountain residents also do not need a special panel to tell them the Prime Minister promised to restore home mail delivery during the election campaign. That promise can be seen on video. After the election, the Prime Minister said he only promised a moratorium on the previous government's plan. Now his minister says maybe two days, maybe three days, maybe nothing at all. Clearly, the Liberals are very confused.

The residents of Hamilton Mountain are not confused. They want their home door-to-door delivery back and they want the quality of their service restored. The Liberals should do the right thing, keep their promises to Canadians, and restore door-to-door mail delivery at once.

* * *

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Saturday, May 14, marks the eighth year of incarceration for the seven Iranian Bahá'í leaders. Their only crime is their religion and their efforts to serve the spiritual and social needs of their fellow believers.

The seven Bahá'í leaders were arrested in 2008, held for more than a year, put on trial, and wrongfully convicted on charges of espionage and "propaganda against the regime". They were initially sentenced to 20 years in prison, but in November 2015, that term of imprisonment was reduced to 10 years due to the delayed application of the new Iranian penal code. The seven are now eligible for conditional release.

The Bahá'í international community is launching a global campaign calling for their immediate release. The Bahá'í leaders should never have been arrested in the first place and their incarceration, based exclusively on their religious beliefs, is unjust, illegal, and immoral.

Oral Questions

I call on President Rouhani and the Iranian regime to follow the rules of its own national laws, respect human rights, exercise clemency, and to immediately release the seven imprisoned Bahá'í leaders.

* * *

● (1415)

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Asian Heritage Month, I celebrate the contributions of Vancouver Quadra constituent Mr. King Wan. Mr. Wan's career includes serving as a naval reservist, senior manager in Vancouver City Hall, Canadian Forces BC liaison officer, and commanding officer of HMCS *Discovery*.

The service and sacrifice of Canada's Chinese Canadian Armed Forces members in both world wars is a tale not told in our schools or in our history books. In his role as president of the Chinese Canadian Military Museum in Vancouver's Chinatown, Mr. Wan and his team preserve and exhibit the story of these brave Chinese Canadian veterans and their service to Canada, a country that had yet to grant them the right to vote.

Through his distinguished career and a lifetime of community leadership, Mr. Wan is a shining example of why we are proud to celebrate Asian Heritage Month every May.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Hon. Jason Kenney (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are fair-minded people, and that is why they know it is wrong for one political party to seek to impose an electoral system on this Parliament, and our entire country, over the objections of other parties and the majority of Canadians.

The Liberal governments in B.C., Ontario, and P.E.I. all understood this, which is why they held referenda on electoral reform.

Why does the current Liberal government have so much less confidence in the common sense of Canadians? Why will the current Liberal government not follow the provincial precedent of a referendum on electoral reform?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's desire to hear from Canadians, but I have yet to hear from him or his colleagues on how a referendum could help us hear from those who do not traditionally engage in the democratic process, like young people, women, indigenous persons, those with disabilities and exceptionalities, and those living in remote and rural regions of this country.

We need to ensure that we use—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. We want to hear the answer.

Oral Questions

The hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure that the tools we use to hear from Canadians are in line with the 21st century's needs and the possibilities to make sure that all Canadians across this great nation are included in this important conversation.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, their excuses for trying to rig the system are getting more and more ridiculous and transparent with that answer.

The minister is talking about a fake consultation process that interest groups will be involved in, maybe a few thousand people. We want the ultimate consultation that allows ten of millions of Canadians to decide how they elect their representatives.

Why is the current Liberal government so determined to be the first government of a major democracy to change the electoral system without a direct popular mandate expressed in a referendum?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the premise of the argument that my honourable colleague brings forward is false, I will go on to bring this forward.

Yesterday, the first day that we brought forward the conversation on electoral reform, the hashtag, #electoral reform, on Twitter alone, garnered nearly 12 million impressions in one day.

This is the 21st century way, and we will ensure that all voices who do not traditionally engage are included in this conversation.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently the minister wants decisions to be made by Twitter. We want decisions to be made by the people.

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

Parliament does not belong to politicians. Parliament does not belong to the Liberal Party. Parliament belongs to the Canadian people. Why is the government not allowing Canadians to make this decision instead of politicians?

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, change and much-needed reform require leadership and vision. Our government has a vision for a healthier democracy, and there is no lack of leadership on this side of the aisle.

It is my hope that all members of this House will share in this leadership and help bring our electoral system into the 21st century.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals have a problem, their solution is to form a committee. Problems with Canada Post? Form a committee. Problems with defence? Form a committee. Problems with free trade? Form a committee.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis has the floor. He is the only one allowed to speak right now.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I, for one, would like Canadians to be involved in democratic reform.

Is the Minister of Democratic Institutions prepared to consult with Canadians through a referendum on democratic reform?

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, listening to Canadians is at the heart of a healthy democracy.

We are committed to ensuring that young people, new Canadians, indigenous persons, those with disabilities and exceptionalities, seniors, and those living in the rural and remote regions of our country, have a meaningful opportunity to engage in this process.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the ultimate irony. The Liberals have made a complete mess of this.

We have gone from sunny ways to a democratic black hole. First of all, the Liberals give themselves absolute power by stacking the committee. Then they change the rules of democracy by ignoring and thumbing their noses at Canadians. We have seen a Liberal-style benevolent dictatorship. Now we are faced with a selective “consultocracy”.

Is the minister trying to engage in some sort of political sleight-of-hand in order to lead Canadians astray?

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind all members of this House that no changes or reforms have yet been presented to this House.

Yesterday, we announced the first step towards hearing from Canadians about how to bring their democracy into the 21st century. We have begun the first step, and that includes listening to Canadians across 338 ridings and making a thoughtful and evidence-based decision that way.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this makes absolutely no sense.

The Liberals say they want to make our system more democratic, and yet they give themselves a majority on the committee. They want to include the Green Party and the Bloc Québécois, but they do not give those parties the right to vote.

How can Canadians be sure that the process is not rigged from the start? Clearly, this reform is not off to a good start.

Will the government admit its mistake and give all parties the right to vote in committee?

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we took the leadership to ensure that non-recognized parties would be at the table.

Oral Questions

Under our proposal, members of the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party would be able to participate in developing the witness lists, question witnesses, travel with the committee for hearings across the country, and have the opportunity to provide their input into the final report.

The committee cannot do this work alone. It will require collaboration from all members of this House. I look forward to the contributions of every single member and every single party represented in this House.

• (1425)

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals were really willing to work with the opposition, they would not be ramming bills through the House and giving themselves false majorities on a committee.

How can they claim that they want to end first past the post, and then strike a committee that models itself on first past the post?

We are talking about a once-in-a-generation voting reform. Will the minister reconsider her decision to give Liberals the power to unilaterally change our voting system?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is indeed an historic opportunity for all of us to go out of our way to engage those Canadians who do not traditionally engage in the democratic process.

We are committed to creating a new electoral system that produces a Parliament that Canadians can be confident in, one that ensures their voices are heard and represented in this House. We all share this ideal in this House. I look forward to the contributions of all members towards that end.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's messaging around selling weapons to Saudi Arabia is really disturbing.

We have a video that clearly shows the kind of armoured vehicle we are going to sell to Saudi Arabia being used as we speak to crush the civilian population. The minister said that we are not selling those particular armoured vehicles and that we have not yet sold any to Saudi Arabia. That is not very convincing. He also said that there was an element of risk in the contract, but that it was a calculated risk.

Can the minister tell us how many dead civilians it will take for him to recalculate? What number would that be?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the party that is being consistent on this issue is the Liberal Party.

The NDP promised to uphold the contract to win seats, but now that it has those seats, it wants to tell the families that depend on the contract they will lose their jobs because it will not sign the export permit for these Canadian vehicles. The issue here is the export permit for a made-in-Canada vehicle, and we have no evidence that

it has been wrongly used even though Canada has been selling it since 1993.

[English]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that he would cancel the export permits of military equipment to Saudi Arabia if there were new revelations of human rights abuses. But yesterday, the Prime Minister basically said there will be no cancellations. This is about human rights. This is about Canada's international commitments. The question is simple: Who should Canadians believe?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they should believe the Government of Canada and the Prime Minister. This is not a party that switches views after the election, after committing to everything before the election.

The Prime Minister asked me to make sure that the power that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has to block the export permits, if equipment is built in Canada but is wrongly used regarding human rights or national interests of Canada and its allies, is used with a lot of rigour and transparency, which is what I will do.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's *National Post* says the government's committee process is no mandate for electoral reform. The *Toronto Star's* headline is, "Let the people vote". The media agree that there should be a referendum to approve any change to the voting system, and the people also agree. Polls say that two-thirds believe there should be a referendum. Why does the Prime Minister not agree with Canadians? Why does he refuse to hold a referendum?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an independent and constructive media is critical to the success and the health of our democracy. However, this particular reform process is about engaging those who do not have a platform to share their thoughts, their needs, and their aspirations, including young people, indigenous persons, women, those with disabilities and exceptionalities, new Canadians, those living in rural and remote regions of our country, and those of more humble socio-economic background. That is the inclusive approach that Canadians expect from us. That is what we will deliver.

• (1430)

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after 16 years on Parliament Hill, I can say there is no place that we are less likely to find a Canadian with exceptionalism, a disabled Canadian, a minority, a disenfranchised person than at a parliamentary committee.

Oral Questions

The government has articulated two contradictory positions on changing the voting system. The Prime Minister's tiresome oft-repeated line is that the 2015 election will be the last one ever fought on first past the post. That must mean no to a referendum under any circumstances, yet his ministers say that a referendum is a legitimate option. Which of these two positions actually reflect government policy? Will there be a referendum, or will there not?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I share, I hope with all members of the House, a great deal of respect for the work of committees in this place. This committee will be shaped by an important set of broad-based principles that include pursuing an effective and legitimate voting system which more accurately reflects Canadians' electoral wishes, a system that better engages all Canadians, one that fosters civility, consensus building, cohesion, an accessible system, one with integrity, and one that enhances the connection between representatives and their constituents.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are once again flip-flopping so much that they cannot even keep the same talking points together for a whole press conference. On the one hand, the Liberal House leader stated that all options are possible when asked if maintaining the current system was on the table. But then, a mere minute later, he stated that 2015 was the last first-past-the-post election. Flip flop. Maybe they can make it clear on one thing. Will the Liberals commit to giving each and every Canadian a direct say through a referendum?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have arrived in this place after the longest federal election in modern Canadian history, during which we were rather clear about our intention to reform our electoral system. Allow me to be clear for hon. members: 2015 was the last federal election conducted under the first-past-the-post system. It is time for a 21st century model of electing individuals to the House. That is what we promised. That is what we will deliver upon.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is time to remind Canadians that they are in charge. That is what the Minister of Democratic Institutions claimed yesterday, but their actions do not match their words. All decisions about electoral reform will be made by six Liberals who form the majority on the committee, and the minister also stated that the ultimate decision on what system is proposed will be made by cabinet, not by Canadians.

How can the Liberals claim that Canadians are in charge when the Prime Minister will not even trust them with an opportunity for a referendum?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the one hand, members' opposite ridicule the idea of listening to Canadians and on the other hand, they criticize us for not listening to Canadians.

Let me make this clear. The first point of contact for all of us will be hearing from those Canadians who do not normally engage in the democratic process, those who have often been marginalized. A healthy democracy is one that includes their voices.

The final decision will be made by members of the House as well as those in the other place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned about the Liberals' plan to change our democracy.

What was the first move by the Liberals? They are going to set up a committee with a majority of Liberal members. When you want to change the rules of democracy, the only majority that counts is the majority of Canadians.

Why not simply commit to consulting all Canadians through a referendum?

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to hearing from all Canadians in all 338 ridings across this great nation. We are relying upon a collaborative approach among every single member of the House to ensure that the voices of those constituents in their ridings who do not normally get heard, who do not normally have a platform, are included and recognized in this important dialogue prior to arriving at a final conclusion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, repeating oneself is not the same as answering the question.

When we see the Liberal majority on the committee and the government's insistence on not really consulting Canadians, then we wonder what is really going on here.

It is simple. Ontario, British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island held referendums in the past, which legitimizes the process.

Will the Liberals have the courage of their convictions? Will they promise today in the House to hold a referendum to change the voting system?

• (1435)

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our motivation with this whole process is to ensure that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Most members on all sides are able to listen to questions and answers that are often provocative without reacting. Let us have the rest do it too.

The hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Mr. Speaker, democratic reform is about ensuring that all voices are heard in the House. It is about ways that we can work together to ensure that we deliver the best government and the best governance to the people who sent us here.

I look forward to working with all members of the House toward that common goal.

*Oral Questions***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been almost four months since the shooting in La Loche and the Liberals are still not providing mental health care workers in my riding and many other communities. The government's budget allocated zero additional dollars for mental health care despite the urgent need. What about La Loche? What about Cross Lake?

Will the government finally ensure that all first nations communities are able to access the support they need and deserve?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians, indigenous or otherwise, need to have access to the mental health care that is necessary and this is a responsibility of all of us.

In terms of indigenous communities, I am pleased to inform the member that I am in conversations with my officials and the first nations and Inuit health branch on a daily basis about how we could increase access to mental health services in communities like La Loche and Cross Lake. We are working toward a plan to be able to enhance those services and I will be pleased to report our progress at a further date.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada officials have confirmed that no money was set aside to implement Jordan's principle. This flies in the face of two rulings by the Human Rights Tribunal that ordered immediate action to end the systemic discrimination against indigenous children. The government ignored the ruling with its budget and now it has ignored the deadline with the new estimates, so there is no money to close the funding gap for child welfare and zero for Jordan's principle.

What part of the word “immediate” does the government not understand? With \$30 billion in extra spending, could it not find a dime to help children who are still being denied their rights?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that child and family services on reserve must be overhauled and we have started working toward that process. We are investing money into child and family services and we are doing it across the board through various departments of government.

Our initiatives this year have provided \$600 million and more over five years to be invested in children and families on reserve. We are going to continue to do that because we know it is necessary, because we know it is needed, and we are committed to it.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Agriculture defended his chief of staff, saying that he wanted somebody with agricultural experience. Now his chief of staff has a very specific experience, that of owning a multi-million dollar egg empire.

However, that is the very experience that the Conflict of Interest Commissioner has specifically forbidden her from speaking about. If she cannot talk about the explicit experience that the minister said qualified her for the job, why is she still on the payroll?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate my hon. colleague across the way cannot focus on agricultural issues, but I can assure him we can. I can assure my hon. colleagues in the House that my chief of staff has completed all of the requirements of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and will be abiding by all guidelines set forward.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the question. It was not only the minister who thought that it was the chief of staff's experience that qualified her for the job, it was her understanding as well. As a matter of fact, she said, “My background through my family's business is pretty relevant to (the portfolio) so I think that's part of how I got the job”.

I would ask this of the minister. Why is she still on the payroll if the qualifications that made her qualified for the job are the things that she cannot speak about?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again my hon. colleague thinks the only requirement to work for the Department of Agriculture and the Minister of Agriculture is to have no experience in agriculture. I am sorry, but we disagree with that.

As I indicated quite clearly, my chief of staff has completed all the requirements of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and will abide by all guidelines set forward. It could not be clearer.

• (1440)

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the issue is not Ms. McFall's knowledge of the industry. It is the fact that she practically owns the industry. She claimed, as my colleague quoted, “my family's business is pretty relevant to (the portfolio) so I think that's part of how I got the job”.

She got the job because of her family and her company, and apparently the minister, in all due respect, did not see the conflict. However, I have to ask this of the minister. Why hire a chief of staff who has such a direct conflict of interest?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all I can say to my hon. colleague is that my chief of staff has completed all the requirements of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and is willing to abide by all guidelines set forward. Also, this includes—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I am going to ask the member for Abbotsford and others to settle down and listen to the answers. After all, they do not want to be invisible to the Speaker when they would like to speak.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has the floor. Let us listen.

Oral Questions

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): I am not really sure, Mr. Speaker, where you cut me off.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: However, the fact of the matter is that my chief of staff is an outstanding member of her community and has a deep commitment to agriculture.

Let us not have it that if someone knows something about—

The Speaker: It is always great to have help.

The hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner was very clear in her ruling on the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food's chief of staff. She must recuse herself from discussions on any files related to eggs. This affects important files on supply management and the trans-Pacific partnership.

Why does the minister want to keep his chief of staff when her hands are tied by her private interests?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I can say that my chief of staff is an outstanding member of her community and has a good understanding of agriculture. On the issue that my hon. colleague raised, my chief of staff has completed all the requirements of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and will be abiding by all the guidelines set forward. It could not be clearer. I am lucky to have this lady.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, clearly, the honeymoon is quickly drawing to a close.

Earlier this week, the Minister of Canadian Heritage proudly reminded members of her investments in the cultural sector. In fact, this year's budget allocates more than \$78 million to the NFB, Telefilm Canada, Radio-Canada, and the CBC.

Well, surprise, surprise. People can applaud all they want, but the money is no longer in the budget. There is no money.

Was the Minister of Canadian Heritage taken for a ride by the Treasury Board? What magic words will she use to explain to cultural groups that they will have to go on waiting?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the hon. critic had the opportunity to remind the House that we are investing \$1.9 billion in arts and culture, which are so important. In fact, such investments have not been made in 30 years.

I am currently working with my colleague at the Treasury Board to ensure that these funds are directed to the organizations concerned.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, no money is going there. I hope that the Liberals are doing something for culture somewhere, but the money is not going there.

It is shameful, but the 40 government members from Quebec are asleep at the wheel. I have two examples. First, the Government of Quebec made a proposal regarding the Senate and was treated like garbage by the government.

Second, a study has finally been completed regarding the construction of a rail bypass in Lac-Mégantic, which would help the people of that community to finally put this unspeakable tragedy behind them. However, instead of listening to them, the minister is ordering geography courses.

Rather than acting like immature, pathetic pawns, will the 40 Liberal members from Quebec stand up and defend the people of Lac-Mégantic?

• (1445)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are obviously very proud of the 40 Liberal members representing Quebec.

Of course, our thoughts are with the people of Lac-Mégantic who are recovering from the terrible tragedy that occurred in July of 2013. I can assure them that we are on their side. I was there just two weeks ago.

We have conducted over 100 inspections in the Lac-Mégantic region since 2013. We allocated funding for rail safety in the budget. We have looked at phase one of the rail bypass and we are examining it carefully. We are very much looking forward—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa South.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, partisan advertising has no place in government. Canadian taxpayers should not be footing the bill for government ads that advance the political interests of any party in power. They should be able to trust that government advertising is legitimate, purposeful, and informative.

When I was in opposition, I tabled a bill to put an end to partisan government advertising. It was opposed by the previous Conservative government.

Would this government, our government, inform the House what action it is taking to end partisan government advertising and enhance public trust?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Ottawa South for his leadership on this issue.

Today, we are delivering on our commitment to end the partisan use of government advertising. We are introducing third-party oversight of government ads, with a new definition of non-partisan communications: no more ads for government programs not yet approved by Parliament or within 90 days of a set election date.

We will work with Parliament, the Auditor General, and stakeholders to entrench third-party oversight legislation and ensure that partisan government advertising is a thing of the past.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has claimed time and again that he is a big supporter of international trade. Yet much like the NDP, every time the Liberals are asked to walk the talk, they are missing in action.

The TPP is the largest trade agreement in the world. Conservatives concluded negotiations over seven months ago, yet the Prime Minister will not tell us whether he will support the agreement. Canada must be a leader, not a laggard, on trade.

When will the Prime Minister finally tell Canadians whether or not he supports the TPP?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were very clear during the election that we support trade. We were also very clear that the TPP, which was negotiated in secret during the campaign, required broad national consultation. We promised that, and we are keeping our promise.

The trade committee, this week, is travelling the country to listen to Canadians. It is in Windsor today. It will be in Toronto tomorrow. It was in Montreal and Quebec City earlier this week.

I would also like to remind the hon. member that none of the 12 TPP countries has yet ratified this agreement and that we all have two years for an open, productive debate.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the globe-trotting trade minister embarrassed herself on American late night talk shows at taxpayer expense, Canada's trade performance was floundering. In March, exports plummeted by almost 5% and Canada suffered a record-setting \$3.4-billion trade deficit. With that kind of performance, Canadians would be better off if the minister simply stayed at home.

There is, however, one thing she can do to improve Canada's trade performance and that is to support the largest trade agreement in the world.

Will the Liberals now support the TPP?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that, in fact, in the first quarter of 2016, our exports were \$1.2 billion higher than they were during the same period last year.

We are reaching further. We are fighting protectionism as we did successfully with COOL, something again not achieved under his watch. We are opening up new markets with CETA, whose legal scrub has now been completed. That agreement will be signed this year, and not done under his—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

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ETHICS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week we learned the Prime Minister took 44 hand-picked people to Washington for the state dinner. The Liberals claim it had a total cost of \$25,000, but no one believes this cost to be true. We know this because it cost \$13,000 for three ministers and two staff alone. Therefore, will the Liberals finally come clean and tell taxpayers how much it cost for their five-star Washington vacation?

● (1450)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows very well that all of the expenses associated with all of these international trips are disclosed proactively every quarter. He is aware of that. What he also knows is that this was a historic visit to our most important trading partner. This was a visit where important agreements were signed for things as important to Canadians and Canadian businesses as pre-clearance, agreements on energy, and discussions around how we can grow the most comprehensive and expansive trading relationship in the world. Every dollar spent on that trip was worth it for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, will the government tell us how much that trip cost taxpayers?

From the beginning, the Liberals have been saying that it cost \$25,000 for 44 people. However, yesterday, TVA was clear: it cost \$13,000 for five people.

What did you do with the other 39 people? Did you stash them in your suitcases so that the trip would be cheaper?

Your story does not make any sense and you know it.

Will the—

The Speaker: Order. I do not believe that the member is asking me whether I know anything about this situation. He knows that he must address his comments to the Chair.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, in your case, when you travel, you properly assume your responsibilities.

Can the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons set the record straight for Canadians? How many people were there and how much did it cost? When they say that it cost \$25,000, they are taking Canadians for fools.

Oral Questions

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of setting the record straight on this historic trip many times.

As I have said before, this is the first time since 1997 that Canada has been awarded the honour of a state dinner at the White House. During this visit, a number of government ministers met with their American counterparts and also with members of civil society and the American legislature. At the same time, we made gains for Canadians on the topics of international trade, the environment, and energy.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's inadequate changes to EI left 800,000 Canadians behind, and many regions were left out of extended benefits, despite rising unemployment. Today, we find out from internal documents that workers in Edmonton, southern Saskatchewan, and the B.C. interior could apply. This is a positive step. However, the government is still leaving so many Canadians out in the cold. This is about justice. It is about making sure that Canadians can access the EI fund that belongs to them. Will the government step up and show leadership to fix EI for Canadian workers?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly this government has shown leadership. It stepped up decisively and quickly to respond to that sharp, sustained, sudden shock to the unemployment rate in those 12 regions. With respect to the most recent numbers we have received from StatsCan that have been impacted by the commodity downturn but also the fires in Fort McMurray, we are analyzing those. The minister is looking at them with her staff and will be responding appropriately.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, I asked the Minister of Democratic Institutions if she supports the candidate gender equity act. She stated that the Liberals "will study it on its merits when it is debated in the House". However, yesterday CTV acquired a leaked memo from the minister's office that confirmed that the Liberals were already planning to oppose the bill when she made this statement. Will the minister explain to Canadians why she did not give them a straight answer on Tuesday, and why she is forcing Liberal MPs to oppose a bill aimed at bringing gender equality to the House of Commons?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I came to this process with an open mind, and I certainly understand the challenges that women face in politics. While I congratulate my hon. colleague for his contribution to this important dialogue, this specific initiative is not the best way forward. As we look to evolve our democratic institutions, we will seek ways to encourage the inclusion of women, persons of other genders, and all individuals who are currently under-represented to be represented in politics. This will be a free vote.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, talk about power going to somebody's head.

Witness after witness at the trade committee last week agreed that the upcoming presidential election poses a threat to our new softwood lumber agreement. We do not have an agreement, and it is creating all kinds of uncertainty. Canadian job creators need certainty in order to run their businesses successfully.

Tick, tick, tick; why are the Liberals standing by and doing nothing on softwood lumber while the clock ticks down?

• (1455)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by reminding the hon. member that it was his government that left Canadians without a softwood lumber agreement. The previous agreement expired on his government's watch.

We are very aware of the importance of this issue. We have focused on it from day one. We raised this issue during our state dinner at the White House. We raised it at the highest levels.

I am working closely with the U.S. TR and with the industry. We will get this done.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was the Conservative government that put an end to the longest and most costly trade disagreement in history with the softwood lumber agreement.

The United States is Canada's largest market for softwood lumber. There are hundreds of thousands of jobs on the line, yet the Liberals would rather spend the time coming up with ways to stall the trans-Pacific partnership, because they are incapable of making good business decisions that are in the interests of Canadian jobs.

Will the Minister of International Trade stand up and commit to bringing home a signed agreement before November?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely seized of the issue of softwood lumber. I am working very hard on this issue with my officials, with our ambassador to the United States, and with the industry.

I would urge the hon. member to have a coffee with the member for Abbotsford, who will point out that there is no connection between the softwood lumber agreement and the TPP.

I also want to say that we are negotiating for a good deal, but not just any deal. We will get a good deal for Canadian producers.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, times are tough for the forestry industry. Major issues, such as job losses and the renewal of the softwood lumber agreement between Canada and the U.S., are creating uncertainty in this industry, which accounts for at least \$20 billion of Canada's economy.

All regions of Quebec and Canada would be affected if the agreement were not renewed, especially my region of the Lower St. Lawrence.

Why is the minister taking so long to finalize an agreement that is so important to our country and to all regions in Quebec?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government and I understand how important the forestry industry is to Quebec and Canada.

That is why I am in regular contact with my American counterpart, Michael Froman, on this issue. We are working hard to figure out how to resolve this issue. Our objective is still to maintain stable access to the U.S. market for our industry.

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EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Canadians often head to Service Canada offices when they need to engage with our government.

For quite some time now, people in Madawaska—Restigouche have been complaining about the service and the long delays they have to deal with when they are applying for essential programs, like EI.

Can the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development tell us about what he is doing to reduce wait times?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Madawaska—Restigouche for his important question and his efforts to support unemployed Canadians.

Our government has begun a national consultation to improve employment insurance services. I want to thank my parliamentary secretary, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, and the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia in advance for the hard work they will be doing on behalf of Canadians in the coming weeks.

The comments and suggestions we receive will help Service Canada find ways to improve its benefit services to unemployed Canadians, and I thank them in advance.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a letter to the Prime Minister, the Calgary Board of Education indicated that it has spent millions to accommodate the needs of Syrian refugee students.

Many of these students have complex learning needs, including overcoming severe language barriers. Alberta is facing difficult times right now, and this school board is already running a deficit. It expects it is going to have difficulty providing ongoing support for these students.

Why is the government offloading costs for its Syrian refugee initiative onto local school boards?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would question the premise of that question, but we will certainly look into it.

On the whole, we have had great success working with provincial governments on the refugees. I can tell the hon. member that, as of today, 98% of the refugees are in permanent housing, and I think I am about to run out of time.

* * *

● (1500)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, budget 2016 included \$65.9 million for a so-called world-class biking and walking trail through Jasper National Park.

This came out of nowhere, and yet the Liberal government refuses to give any details. The minister has not consulted the public or stakeholders, in spite of Liberal election promises that it would be open and transparent.

A project of this scale needs a robust public environmental assessment process prior to any decision being made. Why is the government following the Conservatives' lead, ignoring transparency, and putting the ecological integrity of a treasured national park at risk?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Parks Canada places belong to all Canadians.

We are committed to the ecological integrity of our national parks. We are also committed to making investments that ensure that Canadians have the opportunity to enjoy our parks.

This investment in Jasper National Park follows this principle. We are very excited that in 2017 we are providing all Canadians free access to national parks, national heritage sites, and national marine conservation areas. I encourage everyone to come on out.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the legacy of residential schools has indeed left a stain on Canadian history.

It was indeed a great moment when we achieved the residential school settlement in 2008. However, survivors of residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador were left out.

Business of the House

My question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, who is also the MP for Labrador. Can she inform this House what the government is doing toward reconciliation and healing for the survivors in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member and all my colleagues in the House of Commons for their support toward this issue.

It has been a long-awaited move of reconciliation with residential school survivors in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are very pleased that this week the Government of Canada and the survivors of five Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools reached an agreement in the settlement of a class action suit.

We are committed to moving past this sad and terrible chapter in our history, advancing—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I was joined by Bill Browder, an outspoken critic of government corruption, to announce new legislation.

Conservatives have tabled the Sergei Magnitsky law in both the House and the Senate. Sergei Magnitsky was wrongfully arrested, tortured, and killed in a Russian prison.

Legislation and sanctions on corrupt foreign officials who violate human rights were supported by the three main parties during the last election. Will the Liberal government now stand against abusive foreign officials and support this legislation, Bill C-267?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is completely right to say that what happened to Mr. Magnitsky is simply horrible.

I note that we are able to stop the perpetrators of this crime with the current Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, because it is checking eligibility at the border. We have this capacity.

The committee will have to review, very carefully, the Special Economic Measures Act to address this kind of problem.

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[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if the government wants to fiddle with democratic processes, then tradition, decency, and common sense dictate that it should attempt to build the broadest consensus possible.

The government got 39% of the votes in the election, but it hogged 60% of the voting rights in the committee that is supposed to improve representation. If it wants to improve democracy, it should start by looking at its own ways of doing things.

Does the Prime Minister want to reform democracy, or does he want to take control of it?

[*English*]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe all members in the House share an ideal and a goal to enhance our democratic institutions for us and for future generations.

Although the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party do not have official party status and do not normally have a seat around committee tables, we believe it is important to have a representative from each party at the table, to call witnesses, to travel, to provide input into the briefs that we will receive. We are looking forward to their meaningful and constructive engagement in this process.

* * *

●(1505)

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Saudi Arabia uses its armoured vehicles against the country's political dissidents, but according to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, that is okay because the images we have seen do not show Canadian armoured vehicles. I suppose the Canadian armoured vehicles are used to drive children to school.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister justified the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia by saying that he wanted to protect Canada's business reputation. How many human rights is the Minister of Foreign Affairs prepared to disregard to preserve Canada's business reputation?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that we never miss an opportunity to emphasize the importance of respecting human rights when we are in contact with the Saudi government. We never miss an opportunity, and we have had several of those opportunities. One reason why we have had several opportunities is that we have a relationship with Saudi Arabia. We will not make the mistake that the Conservatives made with Iran by cutting ties with a country.

With respect to export permits, as I have said repeatedly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has the power to cancel them if Canadian equipment is being misused.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the government House leader could give the House an update as to what we will be debating for the rest of this week and for next week as well.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, we will continue with the Conservative opposition day. Tomorrow will be a further allotted day. Monday, we will begin report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-10 concerning Air Canada until 2 p.m. After question period, we will move on to Bill C-14 concerning medical assistance in dying.

[English]

I have had productive and optimistic discussions with my colleague House leaders. I am hopeful and optimistic that we will have an agreement on the handling of the debate at report stage and third reading of Bill C-14 next week.

Provided we are able to complete debate on Bill C-14 next Wednesday, the House will debate an NDP opposition motion on Thursday.

Finally, pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), I would like to designate Monday, May 16, for consideration in a committee of the whole of the main estimates for the Department of National Defence.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, from the debate that has taken place in the House, I am certain that all democratic members will agree to amend the government's Motion No. 5 concerning the creation of a special committee on election reform, in order to include, exceptionally, one Bloc Québécois member and the member of the Green Party as voting members.

I therefore seek the unanimous consent of the House to amend the government's Motion No. 5 as follows: "That the committee be composed of 12 members of which six shall be government members, three shall be from the Official Opposition, one shall be from the New Democratic Party, one shall be from the Bloc Québécois and the—

The Speaker: Apparently, the hon. member does not have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member was here during the previous speech by the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo in which she made the statement that the TPP had been around for months and years.

I am wondering if the hon. member has any thoughts on that one. In fact, the treaty only became public in October, late in an election campaign.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have not asked my hon. friend exactly quite what she meant. I think one can say with reasonableness, the general idea is the debates and

the negotiations around the TPP had been going on since it was first gazetted, since it was first negotiated.

Former secretary of state Clinton, now presumed to be presidential nominee for the Democrats, sometimes likes to own it and take credit for it, but the idea of it has been around for quite some time, even if the specific text and the final decisions around it only came about at the end of last fall.

● (1510)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been highlighted by the minister and others that this is an agreement which we have the time to look at and consult with Canadians. It does not have to be ratified for another couple of years.

I wonder if the member could comment as to why he believes there is a super rush.

Mr. Brad Trost: Mr. Speaker, I believe Canada should be one of the first, if not the first, because we need to take leadership. There is hesitation in the U.S. Congress, and Canada is one of the voices that has been listened to historically down there.

If this agreement is to go through, not only for the good of Canada but for the whole world, someone needs to be a leader. We are not seeing that in the United States of America right now. It would be good if it came from Canada as soon as possible.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House calls for the government to send a strong signal to Canadian businesses and Canada's closest allies that it supports international commerce. The economic well-being of Canada's middle class has to be assured through a full suite of programming, none of which can be effectively designed and delivered without due consideration of Canada's long-standing reality as an economy that has benefited through international trade.

We have made this clear in our platform, in the Speech from the Throne and the budget speech, and most explicitly in the mandate letter the Prime Minister sent to the Minister of International Trade. The mandate letter, for the first time ever, was made public. What clearer signal could we ask for than this instruction, which I quote in full:

As Minister of International Trade, your overarching goal will be to increase Canada's trade and attract job-creating investment to Canada, focusing on expanding trade with large fast-growing markets, including China and India, and deepening our trade links with traditional partners.

The mandate letter tasks the minister with developing a new trade investment strategy covering, among other matters, strengthening our investment attraction capacity, helping Canadian businesses take advantage of our free trade agreements, promoting trade and investment with emerging markets, and directly helping exporters and communities seeking international investment. It is important to conclude free trade agreements, but it is also important to ensure that our businesses are ready to take advantage of them.

Business of Supply

As many of my colleagues mentioned earlier, Canada is a trading nation. Our government recognizes that Canada is part of several important free trade agreements, such as NAFTA, but we are also negotiating several other bilateral and regional free trade agreements. These free trade agreements generally follow a format based on WTO principles and common structures. General objectives are found in the preamble and the initial provisions, while the substantive rules are then set out in distinct chapters.

The scope of Canada's free trade agreements is varied. For example, some agreements only cover the goods trade, such as that with Jordan. However, most are more comprehensive, covering all aspects of trade, such as the NAFTA. These agreements address trade in goods and rules of origin, which are the rules that determine whether a particular product can benefit from the tariff reduction. Other parts cover investment, government procurement, trade in services, regulatory matters, electronic commerce, dispute settlement, and a variety of other topics covering key aspects of trade.

Since the NAFTA came into force in 1994, Canada has also included environmental provisions in our free trade agreements. These rules include commitments to parties to maintain high levels of environmental protection; to enforce domestic environmental laws and not to relax or derogate from such laws to encourage trade or investment; to ensure access to domestic procedures and remedies for violations of environmental laws; and to promote public participation and transparency. Similarly, Canada includes labour provisions in trade agreements, which seek to ensure that all parties respect internationally recognized core labour rights and principles.

More than 70% of total Canadian merchandise trade is covered by these existing agreements. Negotiated agreements that are not yet in force could cover 85%.

CETA's rapid implementation is also a core priority for our government. Canada has also recently modernized our free trade agreements with Chile and Israel, and the timely implementation of these is also a priority for our Minister of International Trade. In addition, the government is exploring ways we can expand our commercial relations with China and India. Regarding the TPP, as members know, the government is engaged in a full and open consultation, including in Parliament.

• (1515)

Let me talk a bit more on the TPP.

I am on the international trade committee. Our committee decided on February 4 to study the TPP and hold a national public consultation, as we committed to during our election campaign. So far we have heard from various stakeholders, including from the auto industry, unions, business leaders, and many academics.

The committee travelled to Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg in April. It is conducting more hearings this week in Quebec City, Montreal, and Toronto. As we speak, the committee is in Windsor to hear the views of Canadians on the TPP, and more consultations need to be done. The committee will have more hearings in Ottawa and must travel to other regions, including Atlantic Canada, to ensure that all views of Canadians are heard from different regions and backgrounds.

We will not cut short our consultations. The previous government did not negotiate the TPP in a transparent way and failed at consulting with Canadians. We are fixing that. The previous government did not only fail at consulting Canadians on this major deal, but it failed at engaging constructively with our biggest trading partner on several trade issues.

When we assumed office, the damage the previous government had inflicted on Canada's standing in the world was glaring. It failed to promote Canada's interest abroad, especially with the United States. The prime example of this damage was the country of origin labelling, COOL. For many years our beef and pork farmers and exporters suffered from this unfair provision. In only eight weeks in office, the new Minister of International Trade was able to resolve that issue.

However, it does not end there. Examples of mismanaging our relations with our most important trading partners includes the former prime minister cancelling the three amigos summit and Keystone XL.

Let me come back to what our government is doing to ensure that our businesses can export and repair the damages from the previous government.

As I said at the beginning, ensuring that Canadian businesses can take advantage of these free trade agreements is key. The Minister of International Trade is developing a new export strategy, and there are many public signals to our business community and to our economic partners and allies that demonstrate our commitment to international commerce is strong in unequivocal terms.

Let me start with the messages to partners and allies. Within weeks of assuming office, the minister was reminding the 162 members of the World Trade Organization that we needed an ambitious agreement and to get it we needed to build a domestic political consensus and a global political consensus around the absolute importance of further trade liberalization.

The minister has also met with many counterparts from our closest allies, including U.S. Trade Representative Froman and EU Trade Commissioner Malmström. Like her, they recognize that the globalized economy creates stresses as well as opportunities. Like her, they embraced the chance to leverage global business to grow domestic jobs and growth. Like her, they know how important and how difficult it is to seek a domestic political consensus.

To get there, Canadians, like their competitors and collaborators abroad, have to see the benefits of international trade beyond the benefits they see as consumers of a wider variety of products. All orders of government are actively promoting these.

Business of Supply

• (1520)

Although we compete vigorously with many countries, the realities of the global value chains means that we are also finding more and more ways of growing together, not at the expense of our trading partners.

Let me briefly speak to what is already on the table, without prejudice to what may be developed. In the process of elaborating a new trade and investment strategy, first, Canada has a good toolkit. We have a framework of trade and investment agreements that constitute a sound basis for stable, predictable, international business.

The government has built vigorously upon that basis, notably through the progressive provisions on investor-state dispute settlement that it negotiated into CETA, provisions that we believe will allow this extremely important agreement to be ratified and implemented.

Second, opening doors is only part of the story. Our businesses often need help getting through those doors. For that, we have the government's trade commissioner service, present in over 160 points of service around the world. They are an unbeatable resource for reducing the knowledge risks around commerce, finding business leads and investors, advising on business cultures, warning about pitfalls, troubleshooting problems, running technology accelerators, etc.

Third, we have specific programs to help attract investment, to support business associations as they help their members internationally, and to financially assist early-stage international business development. On the latter, the Minister of International Trade launched the Canexport program in January. It will be an important part of the government's export approach.

It aims to help Canadian small and medium-sized companies to take advantage of opportunities abroad, such as those arising from new trade agreements, like CETA, as a result increasing their competitiveness while creating jobs and growth at home.

I am pleased to report that Canexport has received strong interest from our small and medium-sized enterprise community. Since its launch, Global Affairs Canada has approved contributions to support more than 200 SMEs-led export development projects worth over \$6.4 million.

Funding is available to those companies on a cost-sharing basis, and we are asking recipients, as part of the agreement, to demonstrate how the program has led directly to their sales.

One-quarter of the projects approved so far are targeting the CETA markets, showing the importance of and level of interest in this group of countries for Canada's small and medium-sized exporters.

Finally, this is a whole-of-government effort. Every department and agency, every provincial, territorial, and municipal government is operating in the same global economic reality. All seek to leverage the potential of international commerce, to build sustainable and inclusive growth for the middle class and those working hard to join it.

The strong support of the government for international commerce can be in no doubt.

• (1525)

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, most of the Liberal speakers today have come down firmly on both sides of the fence. Since they are all about consultation today, let me ask the hon. member this. In his opinion, what would be a reasonable timeline for the consultation to be finished and for the government to give a decisive answer? When does he think, with his expertise, being on the trade committee, that consultation will have been sufficient? When does he think the government will be able to have an answer? Will it take more time than for the electoral reform consultations, or less time?

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Madam Speaker, I have had the opportunity to travel with the committee and to hear from the witnesses who have come forward. When we ask the witnesses whether they were consulted before by the previous government, many have said no, that they are just now having an opportunity to discuss the TPP. Some are in favour and some have some serious concerns. We committed to Canadians during the election that we would consult openly on the TPP.

As the member may have heard in my remarks, we have been to Vancouver, Saskatoon, Calgary, and Winnipeg. Today the committee is in Windsor. Tomorrow we will be in Toronto. We have to travel to the Atlantic provinces. We will meet with all Canadians from all sectors and ensure their voices are heard.

The previous government pushed the TPP through really in a cloak of darkness and in secret. We have heard many stakeholders—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. Maybe the member will be able to continue after the next question.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is exactly correct when he criticizes the previous government for an utter lack of consultation. There was zero consultation with labour, with environmentalists, with first nations, with academics, and with many industrial players as well. They were not part of the inside track that had the ear of the previous government. I congratulate the government on pursuing consultations. That is wise.

My question, though, is about compensation. The previous government announced and acknowledged that the TPP would do significant damage to key industries in Canada. That was why it announced \$4.3 billion in compensation to Canada's agricultural sector if we signed the TPP, and \$1 billion to Canada's auto sector if we signed the TPP.

I have not heard anything from the current government about whether it would honour that \$5.3 billion in compensation to those industries if it does in fact choose to ratify TPP. Could my hon. colleague enlighten us and all Canadians about his government's intention in that regard?

Business of Supply

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Madam Speaker, we continue to travel the country and hear from so many witnesses, and many are in the sectors that the member cited, be it the auto sector or in the supply-managed sector. The minister has been quite clear that those who have been adversely affected will be addressed in terms of compensation.

However, first we have to do a deep dive into finding out exactly what is within the TPP. This is a huge trade agreement. It is 6,000 pages, but we are doing that due diligence at this time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague for his excellent speech, and for his excellent relations with managers of SMEs in Mississauga-East—Cooksville.

[*English*]

I wonder if my colleague could take a few moments just to describe the diversity of views on the TPP from corporate and business stakeholders in his riding, and also the importance of consultations through such entities and organizations like the Mississauga Board of Trade.

● (1530)

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Madam Speaker, through our consultations, we have heard from a wide variety of sectors, especially from the small and medium-sized enterprises. They really wanted to look at diversifying their opportunities. Through the TPP, CETA and some other trade agreements, they see this as a tremendous opportunity.

The Mississauga Board of Trade has been able to deliver some of that information to them. Now, through the ministry of international trade, to have those supports and to look at an export market is terrific for those many companies. We want our SMEs to be successful and we are there to support them through a number of programs to ensure they are successful and they are able to reap the fruits of international trade.

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, I would like to turn to the investor state provisions. We know that in CETA, one of the major final blockages of that deal was concern raised on both sides of the Atlantic about allowing an investor state provision that would allow corporations to sue governments that are legislating and regulating the public interests. We know, of course, that recent changes to the legal scrub of CETA greatly improved the ISDS provisions in CETA.

Could my honourable colleague assure us that the TPP's ISDS provisions will mirror the provisions of ISDS in CETA, so that Canadians can be assured that their democratically elected government could actually legislate without fear of being sued by corporations?

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Madam Speaker, around the ISDS, the dispute settlement provisions, the witnesses at committee were often asked for the comparable between the ISDS within the TPP and the ISDS within CETA. CETA was always trumped as a better model.

It is something that we would like to see and that we are pushing for. We see it as the gold standard. It is something that I am sure the Minister of International Trade has spoken with her counterparts about. The way to make it a better agreement would be to push toward the standard they have set under CETA.

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the nice things about doing consultations is that one can travel across the country, as well as in one's constituency, and learn about other places. I would like to thank the hon. member for his work on the committee, but I would also like to ask him about stakeholders in his riding and what he has heard for and against in his own constituency, or even knowledge of his own riding.

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for all the knowledge and experience that he has brought to the table, and all of his tremendous work.

Within my riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville, I have heard that many in business and industry, be it SMEs or larger companies, are chomping at the bit to take advantage of what they find in CETA, the Canada-European trade agreement. They see this as an agreement that is very beneficial to them, and they see it as a tremendous opportunity. To get into a market of 500 million people and \$20 trillion of trade is something that they want to get going on.

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his presentation. However, I do have cause for concern.

We continue to hear from the government about consultations, as opposed to action. For the people in my riding, at Honda, we saw action taken when our government was in place with the Canadian-European agreement, and the opportunity for 600 new jobs.

My question is, when is the Liberal government taking action to close the deal on the TPP, so we actually see the jobs?

Mr. Peter Fonseca: Madam Speaker, the Liberal government is taking action.

It was a Liberal government that took action when it came to NAFTA, to get us past the goal line. It is a Liberal government that took action when it came to COOL, to get that job done. It was a Liberal government that took action when it came to CETA, to get that moving and ratified. It is a Liberal government, with open consultation, that will get TPP done.

● (1535)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be dividing my time today with the hard-working MP for Foothills.

Business of Supply

I have to respond to the previous speaker's final soliloquy, when he was desperately trying to paint a rosy picture of the Liberal government's past support for trade. In fact, that entire soliloquy was incorrect. All of those deals that the member talked about were negotiated and confirmed by Conservative governments, whether it was the Mulroney government or the previous Conservative government that was in power until last October.

I would invite the member and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade to look into that. In fact, 98% of the trade access that Canadian exporters enjoy was secured by Conservative governments.

There is an irony that is worth pointing out to the House and the small collection of people who may be watching at home. The iconic Liberal leader, Laurier, was defeated on the issue of free trade, but two generations later, Conservatives became champions for free trade. If we look at the time from former prime minister Mulroney through to the previous Conservative government, well governed by the MP for Calgary Heritage, trade was a priority. Market access was a priority.

For a brief period of time, I had the privilege of serving as the parliamentary secretary for international trade, at a time when Canada probably had the most ambitious trade agenda in its history. There was the CETA agreement, reaching the final stages of negotiation; the final stage negotiation and conclusion of the free trade agreement with the Republic of South Korea; and the final few rounds of meetings that led to the agreement last summer with the trans-Pacific partnership. Conservatives also ensured that old agreements, like the stand-alone free trade agreement with Israel brought in by the Chrétien government, were improved and made broader with that important ally. There were even smaller countries like Honduras that we were signing trade agreements with, trying to allow more people in that country to have access to good job opportunities and turn away from the narco-trafficking and some of the challenges that country was facing.

It was a key priority for the previous government, and that has to be put on the record at the outset. Some members may like to think that NAFTA is a Chrétien achievement, and it is certainly not. The U.S. FTA, which then led to NAFTA, was entirely the work of former prime minister Mulroney. In fact, he had the vision of taking that question to the Canadian people, and it was the 1988 federal election that affirmed Canada as a nation of free traders.

We should be free traders, because in the global economy today, we cannot survive by just selling our goods to 35 million consumers. We have some of the most sophisticated and best consumers in Canada, and products, from agricultural products to wines, to spirits, to manufactured goods, to services, but we will not remain competitive if we just sell to ourselves. Former prime minister Mulroney saw that, and the last prime minister, now the member for Calgary Heritage, saw that. It was a critical element of the economic strategy of Conservative governments.

We are speaking today on the trans-Pacific partnership, and that was a key part of the agenda in the previous Parliament. Why? There are really two reasons why Canada needed to be a strong voice at the table in the 11-nation deal that the trans-Pacific partnership represents. The first reason is the tremendous economic opportunity

that 800-million consumers means for Canada's exporters. By 2050, the 11-member nations of the trans-Pacific partnership will represent 50% of the global economy.

I speak sometimes with folks from Unifor, even folks in my riding and some of the unions that are very opposed to trade, and I say this. With regard to automobiles, could anyone imagine if Canada was not at the table, but the United States and Mexico, our NAFTA trading partners, were at the table on TPP? That would be terrible for our auto sector.

• (1540)

In fact, there would be zero new capital investment by both North American or global manufacturers and assemblers in Canada, because we would be less competitive. Why build a plant in Canada when one could build or expand in the U.S. and Mexico and have access on tariff preference to the 800-million consumers of the TPP? Actually, the TPP is a no-brainer. If we were not at the table, it would be bad economic leadership for our country.

What is ironic, and I will remind most of the Liberal caucus, including the parliamentary secretary who was not part of the 41st Parliament, that the Minister of International Trade, my friend, the MP for University—Rosedale, in her maiden speech in January 2014, accused the previous government of lacking ambition on trade. Yet, even today in question period, we could not get a clear confirmation from the current government if it thinks that TPP is in our national interest. That is crazy.

In opposition, as a third-party member, the minister was saying Honduras, South Korea, TPP, CETA, but that the government was lacking ambition. Now the Liberals will not even show steadfast support for the largest trade agreement that Canada has been a part of negotiating over the last five years.

It is ironic, but it is also troubling, because this is our economic future. In fact, one in five jobs in Canada across our entire economy, coast to coast to coast, is attributable to trade.

Trade represents 60% of our GDP, and it is not just the vehicles made in Oshawa, which have always been exported. We have always exported over 80% of our vehicles, because our country is smaller. Efficiency means that those production facilities needed to make more products than just for our market. However, it is not just the vehicles, not just Bombardier aircraft in Montreal, not just beef, pork, grain, and oilseeds; it is also services.

In fact, over half of our economy is in services, whether we are looking at architectural design, accountancy, consulting, legal services, or educational consulting. Our economy and our information economy is incredible. When we combine that with IT and communications, the ICT sector, with companies like OpenText, BlackBerry, and our legacy with Nortel Networks, Canada has always been a leader.

Business of Supply

From timber and minerals in our early days, through to the top-of-the-heap consulting services from global executives today, Canada has never been an inward-looking country. We have always forged relationships and sold our goods and services abroad. Therefore, it troubles me greatly that the minister, who said we lacked ambition in the last Parliament, will not even affirm her position that TPP is a critical part of our economic success.

The second reason that TPP is so critical and strategic is the geopolitical counterbalance that the TPP nations will provide for China. The impact of the growing Chinese economy has allowed it to create a sort of gravity well in global trade. The 11-member countries of the TPP will be able to counterbalance that large impact by lowering tariffs and working together.

I was planning on speaking on other elements, but I wanted to make sure that many of the new members of the 42nd Parliament understood what brought us to agreements like this. It is that Canadians are free traders. We sell the best-in-the-world products around the world. We must forge forward on this deal, the TPP, because it is critical to our economic success to have preferential access to well over 50% of the global GDP economy.

When we look at CETA, once it is in effect, NAFTA, South Korea, ultimately the TPP with, as I said, billions of consumers, they all started with an ambitious Conservative government behind it. I am worried now that this same ambition that the trade minister once called for is lacking in the current government, and I certainly hope that changes in the coming weeks and months.

• (1545)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that this government supports Canadian businesses and recognizes the importance of international trade. Everyone in the House recognizes that some form of trade is essential to our economy. However, just as we recognize that it is essential for people to drink water, it does not follow that, because we all need water to live, we should drink it no matter what is in it.

The same goes for a trade deal. What is in it matters, and this is an agreement that is 6,000 pages long. I must challenge the premises of the opposition motion. First, the motion states in its first clause that “growing protectionism threatens the global economy”, and then the next sentence talks about developing rules that protect Canada’s economic interests. There are serious threats to our economy, but of all the possible threats, is protectionism really the most serious?

Hon. Erin O’Toole: Madam Speaker, it is one of the serious threats, absolutely. In fact, in the U.S. presidential race that all of us as political nerds in this place follow and watch intently, the troubling rise of protectionist language in both the Democratic and Republican races should trouble Canadians because we have lived and thrived on the border of the world’s most voracious economy. That is why we have had our tremendous success as a large supplier of vehicles, oil, gas, timber, and softwood lumber. If that economy closes up on us, where will Canadian exporters go?

Fortunately, the previous government negotiated the CETA deal and the ones with South Korea and other countries. The TPP with 10 other nations represents 800 million consumers. We need to diversify our interests and our markets. That is what the deal would do.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to address my question to my hon. colleague who was a member of cabinet when the deal was made and was negotiated.

Let me first remind the House that a few moments ago a Liberal MP said that the Liberal Party was always for international treaties, which is all wrong. Let me remind the House that the first big, huge treaty was a free trade agreement signed under the oath of the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, a Progressive Conservative leader I am very proud of. Let me remind members that in the next general election, in 1988, the Liberal Party under the oath of the Right Hon. John Turner fought hard against this deal.

How good will it be for the Canadian economy if the government signs that deal?

Hon. Erin O’Toole: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my friend the MP for Louis-Saint-Laurent for his interjections in the House, his question, and particularly the breadth of knowledge and experience he brings to this place. It is a very welcome addition.

I agree. I think we all remember the famous Liberal ad from 1988 where the Liberal Party showed Canadians that a free trade with the U.S. was going to erase the 49th parallel, erase that border, and John Turner said we were selling out Canada. No, because we know our producers, from the farms, to the forests, to Waterloo, to Oshawa, are among the best in the world. If we sell, that secures more jobs, and if we produce more jobs, more economic activity, we also see lower prices for Canadians at the same time. Trade is a win-win on jobs; it is a win for our economy. It is about time the new Liberal government started standing up for it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not remember that advertisement from 1988. I was 13 years old and was not paying attention to what was going on in here.

I respect the fact that the opposition members are suggesting that the NAFTA came from Brian Mulroney; however, that was a Progressive Conservative time, a much different time of the Conservative Party, I would argue. So to take credit for that is a little unjust.

I am wondering if the member opposite thinks that Brian Mulroney would sign an agreement that was 6,000 pages long without reviewing it first.

• (1550)

Hon. Erin O’Toole: Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Kingston and the Islands, one of my favourite places in the country. He is the son of a politician, and his father would remember that ad very well.

Business of Supply

I am proud to call prime minister Mulroney a friend, and I know that he took the vision and took the popularity hit to do what was right in the long-term issues of the economy. The last Conservative government did that. That is why it troubles me that, even though the trade minister knows TPP is important, she will not stand in the House and defend it, and other members are saying there has not been consultation when they sat on the trade committee on this very deal.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to speak in support of the trans-Pacific partnership.

Our former Conservative government was committed to continuing to defend our system of supply management in the trans-Pacific partnership, just as we did in all previous trade agreements.

We also wanted to ensure that the Canadian agriculture sector, businesses, and our economy gained from the benefits that are part of the trans-Pacific partnership, one of the largest free trade agreements in the world's history.

As we pursued this goal, the then prime minister, the member for Calgary Heritage, was always clear that we would only participate in an agreement that served Canada's best interests. The former Conservative government consulted extensively with stakeholders, provinces, and territories in areas of specific interest and jurisdiction in the TPP.

Our former trade minister, the member for Abbotsford, who gave a great speech this morning, consulted every one of his provincial and territorial partners, and together they understood the importance of the TPP, which is why they have supported it.

Since 2006, the previous Conservative government signed free trade agreements with 46 countries, compared to only five by the previous Liberal government. This included South Korea, Ukraine, and the European Union. The TPP countries represent a market of almost 800 million new customers, with a combined GDP of \$29 trillion, more than 35% of global GDP.

The TPP also includes some of the fastest growing markets in the world, as well as two of the largest economies, the United States and Japan. Canada has the potential to be one of the only major economies in the world with a free trade access to Europe, our NAFTA partners, and the Asia-Pacific region. That would represent more than 60% of the world's economy.

The TPP region would also be a source of some of the world's fastest growing economies over the next generation.

Canadian workers and businesses in every region of our country, working with fish, seafood, forestry and wood products, industrial goods, agriculture and agrifood, just to name a few, would benefit from increased access to high-value markets through the TPP agreement.

This agreement would protect and create jobs, economic opportunities, and financial security for workers and businesses in all regions of Canada. For example, recent studies by the Peterson Institute for International Economics and the Fraser Institute have said the TPP could boost Canadian exports to \$15.7 billion and could increase Canada's GDP by \$9.9 billion annually.

With one in five jobs in Canada and 60% of our nation's wealth directly linked to exports, Canada is and must remain a trading nation. Canada's small and medium-sized enterprises make up the vast majority of Canadian businesses and employ 7.5 million Canadians, or 70% of our private sector labour force. For the first time in any Canadian free trade agreement, the TPP includes a dedicated chapter with specific measures to assist our small and medium-size businesses to help them take full advantage of the opportunities in this free trade agreement. This illustrates the former Conservative government's commitment to significantly increase the number of Canadian small and medium-size businesses that have an opportunity to take advantage of these emerging export markets, setting them up to succeed.

Ratifying the TPP would send a clear message to Canadian businesses, and would allow exporters the opportunity to prepare and take advantage of this preferential market access, with lower tariffs and further integration into global supply chains.

We are the party that is standing up for small businesses. We are not the party that reneged on our promise to cut small business taxes. We are not the party that is actually increasing taxes on small businesses by \$2.2 billion.

This is our opportunity to sign this free trade agreement to ensure that there are opportunities for small businesses across Canada and to give them access to these new emerging markets.

My riding of Foothills is a largely agricultural riding in southern Alberta. In fact, Foothills is in the heart of Canada's cattle country. However, it also has a healthy mix of grain and dairy farms. Producers in southern Alberta are global suppliers of some of the highest quality agricultural products around the world. Through the TPP, Foothills farmers and ranchers would have access to 800 million new customers. This would give them outstanding opportunities in new and emerging markets.

Alberta's farmers and ranchers would have duty-free market access for most agricultural and agrifood products, such as canola oil, feed wheat and barley, beef, and pork, just to name a few. They would have an enhanced market. The TPP would eliminate tariffs on canola oil in Japan and Vietnam within five years, and on canola seed upon entry into force.

● (1555)

Feed wheat and barley would be duty-free and quota-free in Japan upon the entry into force of this agreement, while markups would be reduced by 45% within eight years.

Canadian farmers would gain access to a TPP-wide quota for food barley, which starts at 25,000 tonnes and grows to 65,000 tonnes within eight years.

Canadian farmers and ranchers would have new markets for Canadian beef and pork. For example, tariffs on beef exported to Japan would be reduced, from 38.5% on fresh/chilled and frozen beef and 50% on certain offal, down to 9% within 15 years.

In Vietnam, the tariffs are 31% on fresh/chilled and frozen beef, and these would be completely eliminated within two years.

Business of Supply

All of this means exciting new markets and opportunities for Canadian agriculture and agrifood producers and processors. We cannot underestimate the impact free trade has on our Canadian agricultural producers and processors.

I just want to take a walk down memory lane. For example, prior to reaching a free trade agreement with South Korea, Canadian beef exports to South Korea totalled about \$9 million a year. They accounted for less than 10% of South Korea's beef imports, which were about \$1.3 billion annually. The reason for that is that we could not compete with the United States and the European Union who had free trade agreements already with South Korea.

Since that free trade agreement has been signed and South Korea started bringing Canadian beef back into its country, as of 2014, beef exports from Canada into South Korea have increased to \$25.8 million, triple what they were prior to our signing a free trade agreement with South Korea.

There would be the same sort of results with the TPP. Let us take a look at the potential. Japan is the jewel of the trans-Pacific partnership when it comes to Canadian agriculture products. As of right now, Canadian beef exports into Japan are about \$100 million a year. It is anticipated that, once the TPP is ratified, that number would triple to \$300 million a year for Canadian beef being exported into the Japanese market.

Our ranchers and farmers know how important this agreement is. For example, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association president, Dave Solverson, called the agreement a game-changer for Canada's beef industry and Canadian agriculture as a whole, saying, "This is fantastic news for Canada's beef producers".

Patti Miller, president of the Canola Council of Canada said:

Leadership shown by the Government of Canada to make sure that Canada benefits from this landmark agreement will help the canola industry to continue growing and supporting communities. We...hope all parties will recognize the importance of implementing this agreement as quickly as possible so that the benefits can be realized.

The former Conservative government also adamantly protected Canada's supply management system. We announced a series of new programs and initiatives for supply-managed producers and processors to support them throughout the implementation of the TPP and the Canada-EU trade agreements.

Through programs such as the income guarantee program, the quota value guarantee program, the processor modernization program, and the market development initiative, Canada has defended the three pillars of supply management and ensured that they would remain protected.

Wally Smith, president of the Dairy Farmers of Canada said:

...we recognize that our government fought hard against other countries' demands, and [has] lessened the burden by announcing mitigation measures and what seems to be a fair compensation package, to minimize the impact on Canadian dairy farmers and make up for cutting growth in the domestic market.... We have come a long way from the threat of eliminating supply management.

However, the new Liberal government has been very mum on the compensation package in the trans-Pacific partnership agreement, raising fears among the industry that this compensation package may no longer be on the table.

Why is the government not doing whatever it can to facilitate further growth by supporting the trans-Pacific partnership? There was nothing in the Liberal budget about agriculture, and in fact there was no funding for the compensation package negotiated and supported by the supply management industry.

Ranchers and farmers throughout my riding have said that the markets they have domestically have stagnated. If they are going to grow, they need access to new markets. Their message is very clear. On a level playing field, they can compete with anyone in the world. We have the best products anywhere in the world.

What they are asking for is a chance to compete, and for the government to ratify the trans-Pacific partnership.

• (1600)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Foothills as well as the hon. member for Durham, who spoke before and just left, for their work on this file.

One of the problems with the other side of the House is that while they did consult on the TPP, they only consulted with people who actually agreed with them. When they cite studies, they tend to cite the Peterson Institute and the C.D. Howe Institute, which generally tend to favour, whereas our other friends at the other end of the House tend to cite Tufts and Jim Stanford. Therefore, we are consulting to figure out what is happening.

I would like to raise with the hon. member something that came from his predecessor's speech, the hon. member for Durham, who is back. We realize that it is part of the TPP. Data flows and services—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member that he cannot say if another member is or is not in the House.

Mr. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, data flows are an important part of the service industry, which our honoured friend has cited as an important part of the TPP. However, do our friends not have privacy concerns when this data flows out into other countries, which may or may not have privacy regimes that are as strong as ours in Canada?

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, what we need to focus on is the Liberals continued consultation, their continued raising of these concerns that do not exist.

I have consulted with farmers and ranchers in my riding, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Canadian dairy farmers association, Alberta beef, Alberta dairy, and these groups are in support.

The Liberals say they are going around the country consulting with groups that are not in favour, but they need to show some leadership here. If they are trying to get consensus on something, they will be consulting from now until the end of time. It will not happen.

Business of Supply

They need to say that there was an extensive consultation with the previous government as they negotiated this agreement and now they have consulted again. They have to show leadership and say they will never get consensus, but this is good for Canada and they should approve it.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, just prior to the election the previous prime minister announced that if Canada ratified TPP, he would offer \$4.3 billion of compensation to Canada's agricultural sector. Also, the Conservative cabinet announced that if TPP were signed, it would make a further \$1 billion available in compensation to the auto sector.

Taking those things together, it is quite obvious that his own Conservative Party recognized that over \$5.3 billion of economic harm would be done to those two industries in Canada, unless the government was just giving money away, but I presume the reason it was giving compensation to the industries was to compensate them for the inevitable harm that would come to those industries as a result of TPP.

Perhaps the hon. member could enlighten us and tell us why the former Conservative prime minister wanted to spend \$5.3 billion of taxpayer money on those two sectors once we signed TPP.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I think my hon. colleague is being a little bit dramatic. This was not funding that said we knew this would have an impact. This was a safety net if anything were to happen, as a transition period as we go from the rules and regulations and the tariffs that are in place now to having those free trade agreements in place.

As I said in my speech, the information we have from very reputable think tanks and economists is that this could mean \$15.9 billion to Canada's economy.

Certainly there will be some situations in there with which we have to take some care, and that includes supply management. Representatives from the supply management industry came to us after this agreement was negotiated and said it was much better than anything they could have anticipated. They were very concerned about what sacrifices they would have to make as an industry.

Not only did we have that compensation package in place, but we now have a Liberal government that has removed that compensation package and has raised a great deal of fear within the supply management industry.

• (1605)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to split my time with the fabulous, hard-working member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

When we talk trade in the House it always strikes me that we have two solitudes. One wants to approach trade from a position of jingoism and simplification and attack anybody who may want to question a particular trade deal as being “not interested” in trade, versus another approach to trade that values the concepts of consultation, of taking care in signing these large major agreements, and in making sure that there is a net benefit to Canada.

I would like to start my remarks today by assessing what the real state of affairs is around the impact of TPP today. There are a lot of exaggerated claims about what these trade agreements would do or

would not do and there are some numbers, of course, that get generated.

The previous Conservative government liked to produce an economic impact assessment, keep it to itself, base it on completely wild assumptions like full employment and 100% capital reinvestment of all of the tariff savings back into the economy and all sorts of things that every reputable economist would tell us is just simply nonsense, and then just repeat those numbers.

Let us look at what the most recent numbers are, by sources that study these agreements, on the impact of TPP on Canada.

First of all I would like to point out that there is often confusion, particularly on the Conservative side of the House, when they talk about the size of the market of TPP. They often portray it as if signing this agreement would give us access to a market of so many billions of dollars and so many hundreds of millions of people, when in fact Canada already has access to those markets. The TPP would not give us new access. We already have access to these markets and we are already trading with them.

Similarly, what is not pointed out enough is that of the 12 countries participating in the TPP, five of them already have free trade agreements, including Canada. We already trade with the United States on a free trade basis and with Mexico, Chile, and Peru. Those five countries make up over 80% of the GDP of this region already. What often is not said as well about the TPP is that 97% of Canadian exports entering TPP countries enter those markets tariff free today.

When we start assessing the impact of TPP, we have to put it in perspective but let us see what some reputable groups outside the House have to say.

The C.D. Howe Institute, no left-wing group here, has assessed the impact of TPP 10 years out as having a 0.6% boost to Canada's GDP. The World Bank has estimated that 10 years after TPP is signed it would have a 0.8% boost to Canada's GDP. The most recent study done by Tufts University's centre for global studies estimates it would be 0.28% boost to Canada's GDP 10 years out. If we average these three numbers, the consensus boost to the Canadian economy as a result of signing the TPP would be 0.56%.

In a \$1.8 trillion economy, we will call it \$2 trillion, that is \$10 billion of GDP 10 years out. That is not nothing. That is important. However, clearly, on any rational assessment of the true state of affairs now and what the impact of TPP would be on GDP, it would not have the blockbuster impact touted by its most fervent boosters.

As a matter of fact, economists looking at the TPP also point out that the benefits of TPP would not flow uniformly among the 12 countries. They find that there would be negligible to negative impact on the United States and Canada as a result of this deal, when we look at a number of macroeconomic factors. Maybe that is why the two leading contenders for the U.S. president, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, are on record as opposing the TPP in the United States.

Business of Supply

•(1610)

They are joined by other people, and again, no left-wingers here. Jim Balsillie, one of Canada's premier entrepreneurs has called TPP an innovation killer for Canada. Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, as well, has said the TPP represents the worst trade deal negotiated in the globe today.

Let us talk about jobs. I was fortunate enough to be trade critic for the New Democratic Party for three years and I had the privilege of meeting and talking to many economists about their positions on trade. What I was told repeatedly is that the consensus in economics is that trade deals do not necessarily create jobs. There are many reasons, perhaps, to enter trade agreements, but job creation is not considered one of them by classical economics.

Generally, the consensus is that a trade deal may have a plus or minus 1% impact on jobs, depending on who the parties are and the terms of the deal. What trade deals do, however, is create job dislocation. In other words, some sectors benefit from the trade agreement and employment growth may go up and other sectors suffer damages by the trade agreement and lose employment. Therefore, we have to measure not only the quantitative aspect of job creation or loss but the types of jobs, because good jobs may be lost in one sector and lower-paying jobs may be increased in another sector.

What is the assessment of TPP? It is that TPP is estimated to cost the Canadian economy 58,000 jobs. As I have been pointing out in the debate all day today, that is well known and acknowledged by the Conservatives, whose motion lies before the House, because they themselves told the Canadian public that if they signed the TPP, Canadian taxpayers would have to pay \$5.3 billion, and that is not contingent upon losses like they said in other agreements. They would pay \$5.3 billion to the agriculture and auto sectors in Canada to compensate them for the damage that even they acknowledged would happen to those two sectors. There is proof of that here.

I now want to talk about the auto sector. If we look at the actual provisions of the TPP, in the auto industry, as has been pointed out by my colleague from Windsor West today, this agreement was poorly negotiated in terms of protecting the Canadian auto sector, because the phase-out of tariffs among Canada and Malaysia and the United States differ.

The United States got a 25-year phase-out period for its auto tariffs. Malaysia got 12 years. Canada got five. Not only that, but the damage to the rules of origin provisions are even worse. Currently, for a car manufactured in North America to qualify for tariff removal between NAFTA countries, 65% of that car and the parts in it have to be made within that jurisdiction. What does the TPP say? It says 35%. That means a car made 65% in Malaysia or China can come into Canada tariff free. If anybody in the House thinks that cars coming into Canada tariff free are not going to damage auto production in Canada, then I want them to stand in the House and say so today, and we will see what happens in five years if this agreement is signed.

I will talk, as well, about agriculture. We all know that Australia and New Zealand were attacking Canada's supply-managed sector relentlessly throughout these negotiations. I will give credit, actually,

to the Conservative government for holding firm on the supply-managed sector. However, again, the fact that \$4.3 billion would have to be allocated to Canada's agricultural sector, including the supply-managed sector, tells us all we need to know about the impact of the TPP on the agriculture sector.

I want to talk about human rights, because that has not been mentioned enough in the House. Two of the countries that are partners in the TPP are Brunei and Vietnam. Brunei, last year, passed a form of sharia law that makes homosexuality and adultery crimes punishable by stoning to death. Vietnam today uses child labour, prison labour, and in some people's view, virtual slave labour, in addition to being a country that has no respect for democratic traditions whatsoever. Those are not the kinds of countries New Democrats say should be rewarded with economic preferences.

Conservatives have said in the House that they want sanctions on Iran. As recently as last week, they were criticizing the Liberal government for warming relations with Iran. They say we should have sanctions, which is the opposite of preferential economic benefits. They want to punish Iran economically. Why? It is because the Conservatives do not like the politics of Iran. Why do they not say the same thing about the politics of Brunei? Let the Conservatives stand in the House and tell the GLBTQ community in this country that they should be sending economic privileges to a country where people will be put to death for their sexual preference.

•(1615)

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am a strong advocate for free trade and a solid international economic presence.

Given that approximately one in five jobs in Canada is export dependent, and that the NDP strongly supports the preservation and sustainability of Canadian jobs, I would like to ask the hon. member if he believes that Canada is a trading nation, and if so, whether he also agrees that we have a duty incumbent upon us to expand economic opportunities both domestically as well as internationally.

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, of course the New Democrats believe in trade. Every single Canadian of every political persuasion believes in trade. It was only part of the chicanery, the demagoguery, over-simplification and, frankly, ideological simplification of the previous Conservative government when it wanted to turn the complex discussion of trade into one where either members supported the agreement the Conservatives signed or they were against trade. Canadians know that is nonsense, and that is why they booted them out of office.

For instance, the hon. member is a member of the Liberal Party, but the Liberals opposed the free trade agreement with the United States. They then said that they opposed NAFTA and said that if they won the election, they would rip up NAFTA, but they did not do that.

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I would ask the member, does their opposition to those agreements mean that they were opposed to trade? Well, of course not. It meant that when there are complex agreements that are thousands of pages long, that have profound implications for our economy, we have to study them carefully and determine if they are of a net comprehensive value to Canada. Reasonable people can come to the conclusion that they do not, and the New Democrats believe that is the case with the TPP.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my friend. I did enjoy time with him on the trade committee. I complimented him on having the NDP sign on to their first trade agreement in its history, the one with South Korea, and I know that was his influence.

There is something the member neglects to tell the House and Canadians when talking about trade. He quoted some modest GDP improvement numbers and said 0.5% GDP growth is not a blockbuster, and that sort of thing, and so I will pose the question I raised in my remarks.

What would happen if Canada did not sign on and our NAFTA partners were there? That would kill the auto sector. There would not be another dollar invested by North American or global manufacturers, because suddenly, our two NAFTA partners would have access to 800 million consumers, and Canadian operations would not. The member never talks about how our GDP would go down if suddenly Canada did not have preferred trade access with these countries.

It is about getting a good deal, which I think the last government did. I would like the member to talk about whether it is an economic strategy to engage in navel-gazing and avoid trade with the rest of the world.

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, first of all, my hon. colleague is incorrect. The NDP supported two trade agreements in the last Parliament, one with Jordan and one with South Korea.

I will grant that the member has a fair point. There is an argument to be made that if our NAFTA partners do sign the TPP and get preferential access to, say, the Japanese market, Canada, for purely defensive reasons, would be wise to join the TPP for that reason. It is one reason in the argument in favour of the TPP.

To counter that, I will repeat that if this agreement was good for the Canadian auto sector, why did the former prime minister in the last Parliament promise the auto sector \$1 billion in compensation?

Also, as I said before, the different tariff phase-out periods, having the U.S. with 25 years and Canada with five years, may result in Canadian car manufacturers shifting their production to the U.S. to take advantage of those slower phase-out tariffs. It could be that the TPP does damage as well.

•(1620)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Vancouver Kingsway for his comments. There is a lot of history there and knowledge as well.

I would like to ask the member, as the health critic, what some of the concerns are that he may have with respect to the TPP on health implications, particularly with respect to pharmacare.

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, there are two considerations.

First, the new intellectual property rules, everybody acknowledges, will delay the introduction of generics to market, which will no doubt have an impact on rising health care costs in Canada. Second, and this goes to my question earlier about the ISDS procedure, but ISDS under the TPP may result in companies being able to sue Canada for bringing in national programs, including perhaps a national pharmacare program.

The Minister of International Trade says that CETA represents the gold standard in ISDS, which means the TPP represents the bronze standard. I do not think Canada should settle for bronze when it comes to a trade agreement.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to stand in the House in the debate on the opposition day motion brought forward by the Conservative Party on the trans-Pacific partnership and whether Canada should be engaging in it, whether we need to sign the agreement early, and so on and so forth.

We know when the Conservatives were in government they did hold highly secretive consultations which, for the most part, were hidden from the eyes of Canadians. These consultations, while they included many people from the corporate world, did exclude labour groups, environmental groups, and other members of civil society, the very same people upon whom the TPP is going to have a profound impact.

We know that the member for Abbotsford, who was the former international trade minister, was the one who started the negotiations in this regard and really was pushing it, trying to get the deal signed right during the middle of the election. Therefore, it is not a surprise that we are dealing with this motion today.

It is, however, unfortunate because at this very moment, the Standing Committee on International Trade is holding public consultation hearings across the country to hear what Canadians are saying. This motion is putting the cart before the horse. The committee is in Windsor today, listening to how the deal would negatively impact jobs in southwestern Ontario. Earlier this week, the committee was in Montreal, where it met with 19 witnesses, 19 of whom were opposed to the TPP.

Part (b) of the motion says:

the Trans-Pacific Partnership is the best opportunity to strengthen the multilateral trading system and develop rules that protect Canada's economic interests;

That last part about protecting Canada's economic interests is what I take issue with, because I think we, on this side of the House, have a differing opinion on that. The real fact of the matter is that this deal is estimated to cost about 60,000 Canadian jobs and it will give more rights to corporations through investor-state clauses.

Business of Supply

I know this will shock some of my Conservative colleagues in the House but we in the NDP are in favour of trade deals, just not the ones that Conservatives and Liberals sign. We are in favour of fair trade, not free trade, and not in deals that are created just as corporate rights deals.

As my friend the member for Vancouver Kingsway mentioned, 97% of Canadian exports that go to TPP countries are already tariff-free anyway. It gives rise to the question as to why the Conservatives are insisting upon this motion today.

I want to talk a bit about human rights, because much has been made about some of the countries that these deals have been signed with. This deal is going to link us with countries that have known poor labour rights records, like Brunei, Vietnam, and Malaysia.

Signing deals like this with countries with those kinds of records gives them a legitimacy that they should not have. It has been done in the past. The Conservatives did it before.

For example, Honduras has a terrible human rights record and not a very large economy, but the Conservatives signed the free trade deal anyway. When it comes to organized labour, Colombia has a shocking record of using militias and paid groups to brutally suppress any form of demonstration that goes against the corporate mantra the country operates under. We have seen examples of it. There have been examples of Canadian companies being complicit in South America in fomenting that kind of organization against labour.

I do not think we should just legitimize these countries in the name of giving corporations more power.

Some of the issues that have been brought to me by my constituents make it very clear that I cannot, as the member of Parliament for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, speak favourably about a trade deal that would be so destructive to working people.

I want to speak a bit about the investor-state dispute resolution settlement.

The investor-state dispute settlement allows corporations to sue governments in secretive tribunals and tie the hands of governments that try to improve health care or environmental laws.

Governments trying to protect the environment or the health of Canadians are simply doing the job they were sent there to do by their constituents. These have been brought down by global trade rules and they have allowed corporations to sue, based on the complaints that they will lose profit.

●(1625)

I remember one particular example. The green energy plan of Ontario was designed to create local jobs by moving to a greener future. The Government of Ontario tried to source local solar panels and to create an economy while at the same time moving to alternative energy. That is a noble pursuit that any government in Canada should be doing. However, it was smacked down by the World Trade Organization because the Government of Ontario was found to be discriminating against foreign suppliers. Is that really the kind of deal we want, where local Canadian technology companies are being smacked down, when local citizens, through their elected

representatives, want to support local industry? Is that really the kind of deal we want? I do not think so.

My province of British Columbia was sued in 1998 over its water protection legislation that Sun Belt Water Incorporated felt harmed its profits.

The TPP would also lock in intellectual property policies like patent term extensions which were recently set by the Conservatives. This would ensure that Canada continues to have one of the highest per capita drug costs in the OECD. That is something that flies in the face of our trying to get a national pharmacare plan up and running.

Raw logs is an explosive issue in my riding. Under the current provincial laws, export of raw logs requires an exemption licence from the B.C. government, although the B.C. government has not been very good at doing that. One example shows that in 1997 we were exporting 200,000 cubic metres of raw logs. Nowadays it is 5.5 million cubic metres. With the TPP, we have already heard that Japan wants to ease the restrictions on raw log exports so that it gets the raw product, gets to make it into something, and perhaps sells the finished product back to us. If Canada and Japan ever disagreed on the interpretation of the rules, it would again go to a secret trial with no input from the elected representatives.

The Broadbent Institute said:

Beyond the narrow calculus of likely winners and losers from changes to the trade rules, the TPP reinforces policy rules which prevent Canada from pursuing more active economic development strategies to diversify our economy.

The TPP will likely limit our ability to require higher value added processing of our resource exports to Asia, such as restrictions on the export of logs rather than lumber, or on unprocessed fish rather than fish products.

If we really want to get past our image as the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, we need to critically examine deals like this and ask whether they are really serving the national interest. Are we really encouraging that value-added industry?

Supply management is another big issue. My colleague from Vancouver Kingsway already went over the large compensation package that was offered to farmers, and it begs the question, if this is really so good for supply management, why is it that dairy farmers are being offered such a big package. Really, I think it will be the beginning of the end for our supply management system, a system that promotes a great way of living for farmers. I know many farmers in my riding have talked to me about how they depend on it for their local families.

Business of Supply

One of our greatest tests in this day and age is how we react to climate change and protect our environment. We need to really be active in measures like that. As I mentioned earlier, we need to support local technology and alternative energy, specifically developing homegrown industries that develop solar panels, wind turbines, tidal power, and so on. We need to have the ability to invest in local jobs that make those products and not be under fear of persecution under a trade deal like the TPP just because we are deciding to support local industry.

In closing, I will just say that the wording of this motion is putting the cart before the horse, especially in light of the fact that the trade committee is doing important work, listening to witnesses and hearing a lot of negative reactions.

I am proud to stand with the New Democratic caucus in that we believe in fair trade and not just free trade. I hope all hon. colleagues will stand with me on that note.

• (1630)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really enjoyed the member's discussion about the idea of human rights. For instance, the OECD and other organizations have identified a lack of demand as being the central problem facing our economy. In simple terms, lack of demand means that ordinary citizens like my constituents in Winnipeg Centre and elsewhere across the country do not have money to spend. They are saddled with record personal debt. Their wages are stagnant. They need steady jobs and they need decent wages.

The OECD has said that what is required most is to put money into the hands of people who need it the most to create jobs through infrastructure. There are far greater threats to our global economy and the Canadian economy that cannot be solved by simply rushing to sign a trade deal with an artificial deadline. What does the hon. member think about that artificial deadline?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague across the aisle on putting this artificial deadline in place. The legislatures of all 12 countries now have two years in which to consider this. To suddenly say that June 29 is when the government must declare support for this is simply an arbitrary number. It does not matter if it is going to be the three amigos summit.

However, I agree with him on the local infrastructure. I am worried that when local governments are putting out tenders for procurement, trade deals like this will interrupt their ability to support local companies.

I agree that international trade is not the most pressing issue of our time. We need to look at examples like his community and communities across Canada to identify the great amount of income inequality that exists in Canada and take some firm actions to address it.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for sharing his thoughts on trade with the House today. To follow up on my questions for his colleague from Vancouver Kingsway earlier, over the last two generations, the New Democratic Party has missed the boat on trade and has allowed itself to be stuck in its ideology that does not support its members.

I refer him to the auto pact in 1965, which the NDP opposed, but actually benefited and built the Canadian auto industry we enjoy today, including Windsor and Oshawa. Had we taken the position the New Democrats then, we would not have had the jobs and production when tariffs were reduced because the supply chain had gone from being based in just one country to being North American. Now that supply chain, particularly for parts, is global. If Canada is not part of the global trade relationships, we will have fewer jobs in the global auto and auto parts industry. I would like his comment on what could be Canada missing the boat.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, our job in the NDP is to bring a voice to Parliament which so often goes unheard by government. My job here is to speak on behalf of my constituents and a larger group of people, whether they are environment or labour groups. People have raised legitimate concerns about this trade agreement and we are presenting those voices to Parliament because so often they are shut out from negotiations. Therefore, I unapologetically stand here on their behalf to give voice to their concerns because it needs to be heard in this chamber.

With respect to the auto pact, yes, as my friend from Vancouver Kingsway said, there is a danger with the auto industry that we could miss the boat. However, it still means we need to give a critical look to this deal to decide ultimately, holistically if it is in the best interests of our country going forward.

• (1635)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my friend from Bow River. I would also like to thank my colleague from Abbotsford for leading our official opposition on this very important file.

I rise today to speak to the opposition motion regarding the trans-Pacific partnership, or the TPP. I would like to begin with a little quote from January 2014, when a member said that she supported a "more ambitious, wider reaching...which fully and ambitiously integrates Canada into the global economy." Who said that? The Minister of International Trade in her maiden speech in the House of Commons when she was a member of the third party.

That sounds a lot like the trans-Pacific partnership to me. It is a multinational trade agreement, which we all know represents 35% or more of the global economy, and this agreement will open up markets across the Asia-Pacific region to Canadians, including markets in Australia, Brunei, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam.

Business of Supply

As a member of the Conservative caucus, I strongly support the TPP and this motion. It has the potential to unlock massive and growing markets for Canadian exports across all industrial sectors. I, too, hope my colleagues will support this motion to ensure the ratification of the TPP and the protection of Canadian jobs.

The TPP represents a market of almost 800 million new consumers with a combined GDP of \$29 trillion and represents 35% of the global GDP. However, without ratification of this agreement, Canada stands to lose billions of dollars worth of trade opportunities. The importance of this agreement and the ratification cannot be overstated.

In 2014, Canada's exports to TPP countries accounted for 81% of the total value of Canadian exports, worth about \$759 billion. This agreement would set the rules for trade in the Asia-Pacific region for generations.

The government has an opportunity to get in on the ground floor of this agreement and help shape it moving forward, to ensure Canadian businesses and workers are on a level playing field with their competitors in the Asia-Pacific region. As a mid-sized economy, Canada and Canadians prosper when there are multilateral rules to protect its economic interest.

In the most recent budget, the Liberals are planning to run multi-billion dollar deficits, as we all know, but through the trade opportunities in the TPP, we can grow our economy without spending billions of taxpayer dollars that we do not have. That is why we are calling on the Liberal government to make a decision on the TPP agreement by June 29 for the North American leaders summit in Ottawa.

Endorsing the TPP will send a clear signal to Canadian businesses, allowing exporters to have the opportunity to prepare and take advantage of this market access, with lower tariffs and further integration of global supply chains.

Canada cannot afford to be protectionist. We are a trading nation, and many jobs rely on that trade. We cannot afford to turn our backs on the opportunities available through the TPP. We need to only look back over the last few years during the global economic slowdown to see how damaging a protectionist mentality could be to the economy.

Some of the world's biggest economies, the biggest traders became sworn enemies of trade. Buy American was our biggest trading partner's plan, then France first, even China started to implement their own domestic-only plan.

What is clear is that growing our access to major economies and emerging markets clearly demonstrates long-term gains for Canada and the rest of the world. Instead of appearing in shows in Hollywood, the Minister of International Trade needs to demonstrate leadership on this file. While many believe it is important to showcase herself to Americans, Canadians are worried about their jobs and need a government that will work to create opportunities to protect their livelihood.

I was pleased to see in budget 2016 that the government had committed to swift ratification of CETA, "so citizens can quickly reap the benefits of this high quality agreement".

The European market is vast with more than 500 million potential new customers, and I would hope that the government would also commit to helping our citizens benefit to more than 800 million more new customers that could be accessible by ratification of the TPP.

• (1640)

We have an opportunity to contribute in a significant way to the increase of business channels and embrace the realities of being a player on the world stage. It is time for the Liberal government to be open with Canadians as well as our allies and tell them whether we support the biggest trade agreement in over 20 years.

I would like to quote from budget 2016. It states:

The trans-Pacific partnership (TPP) would offer opportunities to grow Canadian trade with Asia-Pacific countries, enhance North American production and improve job quality in Canada.

If the government agrees with our side about the many merits and benefits of this deal, why does it continue to stall ratification?

A recent study by the Fraser Institute told us that the TPP could boost Canadian exports by \$15 billion and could increase Canada's GDP by over \$9 billion.

While many sectors and industries would benefit from the TPP, I would like to speak about some of the benefits for the agricultural sector.

The agriculture and the agri-food sector employ close to 2.3 million people and account for 6.6% of Canada's GDP. We are also the fifth-largest exporter of agriculture and agricultural food products globally. From 2012 to 2014, those exports to the TPP countries were worth \$31.2 billion annually. Exports included canola, wheat, live swine, baked goods, beef, and processed potatoes, and that is just naming a few. These are products are grown right across Canada.

In my riding, agriculture is significant. It is an economic driver that supports many communities. This agreement offers many of those constituents a chance to grow their businesses and prosper. Whether it is beef, pork, wheat, barley, canola oil, processed food, vegetables, wine and spirits, and again just naming a few, producers and exporters all stand to benefit from the TPP.

I have spoken to many of my constituents about this deal. It was a big issue during the recent election campaign. They have expressed the benefits it would have for them and their families. Agricultural and agri-food exporters across the country would see the benefit, to having access to 800 million more potential customers.

The TPP would also ensure that Canadian businesses and exporters would have a competitive advantage over competitors from nations outside the TPP.

Business of Supply

All of the above statements have shown the many benefits for Canadians from coast to coast to coast if the government ratifies the TPP. From Global Affairs Canada, in Ontario alone:

The TPP will eliminate tariffs on almost all of Ontario's key exports and provide access to new opportunities in the Asia-Pacific. The TPP also creates strong and enforceable rules that will help Canadians do business in TPP countries—with provisions that will reduce regulatory barriers, increase transparency and reinforce intellectual property rights.

Our previous Conservative government made Canada a global leader in trade liberalization and in the fight against protectionism. Ratifying the TPP at this time gives the Liberals the chance to prove they are really serious about trade. Ratifying the TPP will make Canada the only G-7 nation with free trade access to the United States, the Americas, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. That is a huge advantage. It is an important deal. I really hope the Liberals will support our motion.

With the TPP, Canada would have free trade agreements with 51 nations, giving Canadian businesses access to 60% of the global economy, with a significant number of benefits for Canadians. I am really hoping the Liberal government hears our message and supports this motion. If not, I hope the Liberals are ready to explain to Canadians why a government that is allegedly all about supporting the middle class refuses to take action to give Canadians a more competitive chance to compete on the world stage.

Not signing this agreement means we will watch from the sidelines while some of our allies take massive advantage over our products. The cost to the economy will be significant. Domestic layoffs could reveal that protectionist ideology is very short-sighted and extremely damaging.

As I said earlier, with one in five jobs in Canada and 60% of our nation's GDP being directly linked to trade, Canadians cannot afford to be left out of this deal.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please.

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Carlton Trail-Eagle Creek, Air Transportation; the hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood, Natural Resources.

• (1645)

[*English*]

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock for his comments and his sincere and articulate defence of the TPP. We are getting equally sincere and articulate critiques of the TPP from members at the far side of the House. I would ask him this. What would he say to an hon. member who makes reference to a study out there that states that we will lose 60,000 jobs or 20,000 jobs in the manufacturing industry in southwestern Ontario not far from his home riding? How do we answer that?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, the TPP gives us access to 800 million potential more customers. In my riding, agriculture is enormous. The spinoff jobs that result from the benefits of

agriculture are huge. I have spoken with beef and dairy farmers, and anyone in supply management. They are wholeheartedly for this trade agreement. The reasons are very clear. We have sectors of this economy that benefit from trade, and that is growing. I do not think we should have protectionist ideology at a time when emerging markets are growing. We need to be a part of that. What would the alternative be if we are on the outside of this agreement? We would be locked out of trading with our biggest trading partners, which are some of the world's largest and growing economies. That would put us at a huge disadvantage. That would be more disruptive to jobs and the economy in my riding and throughout Canada.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and neighbour for his speech in defence of trade. I will follow up on the question he was asked by the parliamentary secretary for international trade, who sometimes takes a position in favour of the TPP and sometimes quotes studies against. This is in a similar fashion to the minister, who will not defend a trade deal like this as being in Canada's national interest. If Canada is not at the table, we will have no interest in those markets and what will be 50% of the global economy by 2050.

My question to my colleague is this. The Conservative government made trade, and the jobs created from it, a clear economic priority, whereas the new Liberal government, as with most issues, prefers committee studies and avoiding decisions. Does the member think that being part of this 11-member deal is in Canada's economic long-term interest?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, that it is a great question. As I mentioned, 800 million new customers is a combined GDP of \$29 trillion. It represents 35% of the global GDP. Without ratification of this agreement, we could lose billions of dollars worth of trade opportunities. The importance of this agreement cannot be overstated. If we look at how the world is growing, we have potential access to emerging markets with a growing middle class who want some of the best products in the world. We have those products, especially when it comes to agriculture. Therefore, we should be taking advantage of that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us just look at the facts. In 2005, we had a trade surplus of \$46.1 billion per year. By 2015, that was down to \$10.9 billion per year. The previous government and its "let us just get a deal" approach did not get us anywhere. Even after the recession, we continued to go down. On the other hand, we have the NDP who are saying that we should reject the deal without even looking at it. The Liberals' position is to look at it, analyze it, and negotiate it from a position that can be to our advantage. My question to the member opposite is this. Why would you be so persistent on accepting this deal without first having a look at it?

Business of Supply

•(1650)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. I want to remind the member that he is to address his question through the Chair as opposed to saying “you”.

The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, a very brief answer.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, we did have consultations with the public. It was published in the *Canada Gazette* when there was news of the negotiations coming through. I should mention that protectionist measures, as we saw during the global economic slowdown, resulted in the “buy American” or “buy France first” slogans, which resulted in massive job layoffs. However, by increasing trade, we are increasing access to the global marketplace. By the end of our term in government, we had the best job creation record in the G7, and that is despite—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Bow River.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a real honour to rise today to speak to this important motion as the member of Parliament for Bow River.

I would like to acknowledge many of the members in the House today who have shared many different opinions and a lot of knowledge. I appreciate learning. This is a good opportunity to hear all of the different opinions and share knowledge, often much more knowledge than I might have, so I appreciate that.

I will talk about trade. Canada has a long history when it comes to trade. We could say it started with John Cabot in the 15th century, an Italian explorer who was in the employ of King Henry VII of England. As we know, Cabot mistakenly believed he had reached Asia when he got to the coast of Newfoundland. He was intent on trading spices, silk, and other high-end merchandise at that time. Cabot is considered the father of trans-Atlantic trade between England and North America because he discovered the abundant cod. Later, there were the cod fishermen from England and Europe.

Then there was fur. We know how important and crucial the fur trade was in the development of Canadian culture, identity, and institutions. Look at the Hudson's Bay Company, for example, which was established as a fur-trading outfit with a royal charter from King Charles II of England in 1670. It still exists today. Its main competition was The North West Company, though the two later merged in 1821.

Then there was our trade relationship with the United States, which virtually stalled in the years leading up to the War of 1812. I do not think it caused the War of 1812, but it did not help. By 1854, the treaty of reciprocity had been signed by both countries. Then there was still a group of British colonies in the United States. We could argue that was Canada's first free trade agreement. It reduced tariffs, duties, and fees for goods traded between the two countries. That treaty, in its form, did not really last, and although many similar treaties were negotiated, they never had the effect of the original reciprocity treaty.

That was true until the free trade agreement that was negotiated by former prime minister Brian Mulroney. It became the election issue in the 1988 federal election. The FTA then became NAFTA,

and NAFTA has made Canada wealthier, stronger, and better off economically. NAFTA was a necessary agreement. Without it, I do not think we would have one of the world's largest economies today.

More recently, the previous Conservative government negotiated several trade agreements, including the Canada-EU trade agreement, which has the potential to give Canadian businesses and consumers access to a market of 500 million people. That same government negotiated the trans-Pacific partnership deal, which is the subject matter of the motion before us today.

As NAFTA and the Canada-EU free trade deal are crucial for the constituents in Bow River, the TPP is one of the most important trade agreements that Canada will ever ratify. We cannot ignore this agreement and stick our heads in the sand. The future economic prosperity of Canada is in jeopardy if we do not get ourselves organized and get this deal ratified. If we can get the TPP ratified, we would become the world's only major economy with free trade access to Europe, the NAFTA region, and the Asia-Pacific region. That is over 60% of the world's economy.

When the government hears that fact, all I can ask is, if not now, when will the consultations happen and when will it be back in the House? Can the government please explain to the House why we are not seeing a timeline for completion? That is what we are looking for, the timeline. Let us get it done and use that timeline.

I would like to look at some of the sectors that are going to benefit greatly from the TPP, and I want to start with a quote from *Maclean's* magazine on October 5, 2015, which stated, “on average, we can expect TPP trade liberalization to deliver higher productivity, higher GDP, and higher incomes to Canadians”. This is the crux of the matter here.

Overall, the TPP is a good deal for our people. It is a good deal for the Canadian companies that employ Canadians, and it is good for our economy as a whole. One of the biggest sectors in my riding is agriculture. There are very large farms in Bow River. In fact, Alberta's crop commissions were here last month to lobby the government to get the TPP ratified immediately.

Do members know why the TPP is so important to these organizations? It is because, as stated in the press release they produced on April 19, “The TPP agreement would increase demand for Canada's agricultural exports and ensure Canada can remain competitive in key markets, as two of our major competitors, Australia and the United States, would otherwise see preferential access to key Canadian markets within the TPP zone.”

•(1655)

Essentially, if we do not get this deal ratified, agricultural exporters in my constituency will be hurt because of it. Placing this sector at a disadvantage in some of their export destinations is just unacceptable.

Business of Supply

I would be remiss if I did not mention one of the largest employers in my riding, which is JBS Food Canada. JBS Food is the largest meat packing plant in Canada. The group that represents it and other industry stakeholders nationally here in Canada, the Canadian Meat Council, had this to say about the TPP, “Canadian meat packers and processors strongly support ratification of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.”

They also had the following to offer to the discourse:

The current and future viability of the Canadian livestock and meat sector is profoundly dependent on international trade. In the absence of competitive access to critical export markets, including those in the TPP region, the sustainability of the Canadian meat industry would be quickly and seriously imperilled.

Producers, processors, workers, [innovators], investment, exports, rural communities, and domestic food security in every region of Canada would gain measurable benefits from implementation of the TPP. All would suffer severe, rapid, and enduring negative consequences should the TPP be implemented without Canadian participation.

This is a very high-stakes agreement for food processors like JBS in Brooks, and they absolutely need to see this deal ratified.

Another group that is excited about this deal are the ones who supply the beef, the Canadian cattlemen. There are many of these cattlemen across my constituency. We have some of the best ranches in the country in Bow River, and our cattlemen are a dedicated bunch. Have I mentioned how much I love Alberta beef?

As a result of TPP, the Canadian cattlemen estimate that Canada's cattle producers could as much as triple their export capacity to Japan, which would mean \$300 million worth of exports. That is a huge number and would greatly benefit businesses in my constituency.

One sector that has perhaps not been featured as heavily in the discussions surrounding the TPP is Canada's service sector. I am not sure if my colleagues in the House are aware, but Canada's service sector is a gigantic part of our economy. With numbers that are current as of 2013, it accounts for 70% of the GDP of Canada. There is 78% of Canadians, or 4 in 5 people, who work in the service industry. That is incredible.

The TPP deal covers this industry, and for us that could be a major advantage. The Conference Board of Canada, for example, believes that Canada's service is very high value and the appetite for such service is only going to grow stronger, even in areas like the TPP zone.

According to Global Affairs Canada, as of 2011, Canada was the 18th-largest exporter of services in the world. Would it not be incredible if we could elevate ourselves to the top five, or even aim for number one?

I believe the benefits to our service industry are clear, and ratification of the TPP would be very welcome among those Canadian companies that provide such services.

With all this in mind, we urge this Liberal government to make a decision on the ratification of the trans-Pacific partnership, which they have already signed. If it would do this before the North American Leaders' Summit on June 29, it would send a great message to our business community. The clarity that such a measure would bring to Canadians would be welcomed.

● (1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my question to the member is related to something that members of the Liberal caucus have put forward, that the Conservatives are trying to create this false sense of urgency that is just not there.

I am sure the member is aware, and if he is not, he could indicate that very clearly now, that this is an agreement that does not have to be ratified until February 2018. A number of countries are doing their consultations with their populations.

Do the Conservatives feel that Canadians do not deserve to be consulted and worked with, and that the stakeholders and many different groups out there do not deserve to be listened to? Why is there this false sense of urgency?

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, I do not think there is a false sense of urgency. I am just asking for a specific timeline.

The Liberals have stated many times, even today, that we need consultation. That is great, but what we need is that timeline. We are in sectors where investment will occur when they know those timelines. The sooner those timelines are published and those dates actually happen, that investment will occur.

Our business sector needs to know. If large quantities are going to be invested in our business sector, those timelines are important and the date is important. That is not false.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciated hearing my Conservative colleague's speech, especially his comments about coming to this place to learn to respectfully hear each other out.

I am curious about the member's personal views on when local, provincial, or federal governments legislate in the public interest. What are his thoughts on inserting clauses into trade agreements that would allow private foreign companies to sue those governments that legislate in the public interest? Does he put more stock in the company's ability to sue, or does he put faith in elected governments representing their constituents?

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, in the legal world, if people were not allowed to sue, we would have a problem. Lawyers make money with lawsuits, and the law industry is an incredibly busy and important part of our world.

Whenever levels of governments make decisions, there is a recourse in the court system. Having been involved in different levels of government, when one makes decisions, one can find oneself in court for one reason or another. That is the reason the courts are there, so people have another place to go to appeal whatever decisions governments make. We may not like that as a government when we make decisions, but that is the world we live in with democracy and people having the right to do that.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I too would like to thank and commend my colleague for his openness, particularly since he reminded us of certain historical realities, including dealings with the first nations in the fur trade and the other countries that wanted to reap the benefits of Canada's great riches.

[English]

My question is about this deal. How will it affect the member's own constituents in his own riding?

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, I live in a constituency that not only has a large cattle ranching industry with beef to trade, but it is also a large irrigation district, the fourth largest in Canada, and produces many significant levels of high-value crops. Trade is critically important. We trade with many parts of the world. We produce some of the best quality production coming out of agriculture in the world. We are one of those areas that can feed the world many times over.

Therefore, with our cattle industry and our agriculture with the niche crops and the many things it produces, trade is critical for those industries to survive. It is critical for other parts of the world to have access to the commodities we can produce.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

I will apologize ahead of time, because I may need to interrupt your speech at some point.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to make it very clear from the outset that the Liberal Party has a great tradition of recognizing the value of trade in the world. We have recognized that Canada has been blessed in many ways, whether it is our natural resources or the people who make up our great country. One of the things that is absolutely critical, in terms of the future potential growth and development of our nation, is trade. We have recognized that as a party. When we have had the good fortune to be in government, members will find that Liberal governments have been very progressive and proactive at looking at ways in which we can expand trade, not just limited to trade agreements, but looking at other ways to be able to increase world trade where, ultimately, Canadians have benefited by the millions.

I would really like to recognize that the Prime Minister, in appointing our current Minister of International Trade, has done a phenomenal job in terms of protecting Canada's interests, and I would suggest even going beyond our borders.

If we take a look at the CETA agreement, last summer there were individuals in Europe who were raising concerns with respect to the fate of CETA. Whether it was France or Germany, they were expressing concerns that this was something that might not pass.

Immediately after being appointed by the Prime Minister, our current Minister of International Trade took the initiative head-on, made the necessary trips, had the discussions, and Canada, as it should, played a critical role in demonstrating leadership and was

able to make some changes that alleviated many of the concerns that countries such as Germany and France had. Through our minister and through this government, we did play a role in ensuring that particular agreement is back on the right track and moving forward. We do that because this is something we recognize is of great value to our country.

The current process we have under the TPP should come as no surprise to anyone inside this chamber. After all, it was during the election campaign that our party committed to consulting with Canadians on the trans-Pacific partnership. That was an election campaign platform that was presented to Canadians.

We are very much aware what the NDP's position was, and that was without even seeing the agreement. It had no sense of the terms of the agreement, and it said "no" to the agreement.

We, on the other hand, understood the importance of being able to share the agreement and do the consultations, and whether it was the parliamentary secretary or the minister responsible, we have very clearly indicated the types of efforts that have been put forward to date, and there are more to come. Four hundred meetings or consultations have taken place in virtually all sectors, with labour unions, business, and different types of stakeholders.

A legislative committee is out there holding meetings in our communities, and we do assign value to our standing committees. The minister herself has had other public meetings in this regard, whether in Toronto, Montreal, or Winnipeg. There have been meetings in virtually all regions of our country.

We are doing that because, after all, that was a commitment made by us in the last federal election. No one here should be surprised that we are doing exactly what we said we would do.

● (1705)

Talking about the importance of trade, and the TPP in particular, I highlighted the fact during a question—and I believe our minister made reference to it when she addressed this motion—that this particular agreement needs to be ratified by February 2018. That begs the question as to why the Conservative Party today is trying to create a false sense of urgency. That is really what it is, a false sense of urgency.

Canadians need not be as concerned as the Conservatives are trying to portray. We have plenty of time to do the types of things that other countries that are signatories on this agreement are doing. There are 12 countries in total and not one of them has actually ratified it. A number of them are going through elections. Others are having different forms of debate and discussions with their citizenry. As was clearly demonstrated with the CETA, this particular agreement is in fact being put across the table to Canadians. We want and will continue to pursue input. There is a great deal of benefit and there is none of this great urgency that the Conservatives are trying to portray.

Private Members' Business

• (1710)

If I can just speak very briefly on my own province of Manitoba and use a specific example, I for years have followed Manitoba's pork industry. It is a very important industry to the entire province. Not everyone works in the pork industry, but everyone has benefited in our province from the pork industry. It employs thousands and thousands of Manitobans. The pork that is being produced cannot all be consumed in the province of Manitoba. We are very much dependent on exporting our product. I would argue that we produce the best pork in the world. There are agreements that no doubt would enhance it. When we looked at the Korea trade agreement, I spoke to this particular issue because I believed that the pork industry would have benefited from that.

There are healthy industries in all regions of our country. However, let us not kid ourselves, there are areas of concern. I have heard the Minister of Agriculture on numerous occasions talk about the importance of supply management and how our government is going to be there to support supply management.

We have many of my caucus colleagues, in particular from the province of Ontario, who are very much concerned about the auto industry. I can reflect in terms of the auto pact back in the 1960s, which was a Liberal government achievement, which I understand both the Conservatives and the New Democrats opposed back then. I think of that auto pact agreement and because we got it right, we created literally hundreds of thousands of jobs and in essence built the automobile industry that we have here today. However, we must not kid ourselves. There are very real and genuine concerns that we need to listen to. I know that by just listening to not only my Ontario caucus members but other caucus members related to different types of issues.

Let us do what it is that we committed to do. That was to get that better, more comprehensive understanding of this issue and the impact it would have on Canada. We have the time to do it. As I say, there is no urgency.

Canada has demonstrated leadership on the world trade file in the past, and most recently in terms of dealing with the CETA. Again, I commend the efforts of our current minister who has done a fabulous job.

It goes beyond those trade agreements, including the efforts of our Prime Minister going down to the U.S. with other ministers and the efforts of other ministers approaching the U.S., which is our greatest market. It is more than free trade agreements. It is getting the job done, and that is something that this government has been achieving in six months. Wait, there is going to be a lot more good stuff around the corner.

• (1715)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, May 17, 2016, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find it the will of the House to call it 5:30 p.m. so we can get into private members' business.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

It being 5:30 p.m., we will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

FIGHT AGAINST FOOD WASTE ACT

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP) moved that Bill C-231, An Act to establish National Food Waste Awareness Day and to provide for the development of a national strategy to reduce food waste in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce in the House Bill C-231, which comes from a motion that I moved during the 41st Parliament, Motion No. 499. I put that motion on the Order Paper, but it was not debated. This time, I decided to introduce a bill because this is a timely topic and urgent action is required.

A rich country like ours should not be wasting so much food. Food waste has economic, social, and environmental impacts. According to recent studies, people in Canada wasted over 31 billion dollars' worth of food in 2015 alone.

The true cost of food waste would actually be \$107 billion a year if we factored in the production and transportation costs at every step of the supply chain, for example, labour, energy, inventory, and infrastructure.

Of that waste, 47% is attributed to consumers, while the rest breaks down as follows: 10% from farmers, 4% from transportation and distribution, 10% from retail, 20% from processing, and 9% from restaurants.

From farm to plate, everyone would win from the government developing a strategy to reduce food waste. For example, consumers, who are responsible for 47% of the waste, lose an average of \$771 a year. That is on average 15% of their groceries that are literally being thrown out.

According to Statistics Canada, Canadian consumers waste 183 kg of food every year. According to Value Chain Management Centre, companies with the least amount of waste are those with the highest margin and highest profits. In other words, less waste equals more profit.

Private Members' Business

In his testimony at the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Mr. Gooch, from Value Chain Management Centre said that there is a growing body of evidence that shows it is worthwhile for governments to invest more in reducing waste. He gave the United Kingdom as an example, which saw a return on its investments and initiatives to reduce food waste.

In short, combatting food waste benefits everyone. Food waste is responsible for huge volumes of greenhouse gas emissions, and this gas is 20 times more powerful than methane. Wasting one tonne of food is the equivalent of emitting 5.6 tonnes of CO₂. Furthermore, food waste puts a huge amount of pressure on composting centres and, even worse, on landfills.

Overall, this type of pollution from around the world represents the world's third-largest polluter, after China and the United States. It amounts to 3.3 gigatonnes. This is just the tip of the iceberg, since this problem can affect the environment in many different ways. For example, water and land resources are literally being wasted as a result of the avoidable loss of food.

Every year, 6,750 billion litres of water are wasted. This is the equivalent of a daily consumption of 200 litres of water by nine billion people a year.

According to 2007 global data, if food waste were a country, it would cover 1.4 billion hectares of land, an area larger than India and Canada combined, or 30% of the world's agricultural land.

It is important to note that eliminating food waste plays a role in combatting climate change. If the government and all parliamentarians in the House truly want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, I hope they will strongly support this bill.

In social terms, it is absolutely ridiculous that we waste so much food, while thousands of Canadians do not have adequate access to food.

• (1720)

Food waste and food insecurity are two different problems, but solving the first one could help us make things better around food insecurity.

In Canada, over four million people do not get enough to eat every day. Nearly 900,000 people, one-third of them children, use food banks every month.

In a country like ours, we should be ashamed of that. Since 2008, food bank use has grown, but it should have shrunk. In total, 1.6 million households cannot feed themselves properly every year.

We have to fight poverty in Canada and eliminate it. We have to create good jobs. We have to ensure access to employment insurance. We need good pensions.

In an effort to fight food waste, many organizations recover food across the country, including in my riding. However, recovering food does not eliminate food waste and food insecurity at the source. In the past few years, several initiatives to fight food waste have emerged.

In Quebec, organizations such as Moisson Mauricie and Moisson Montréal have launched pilot projects to reduce food waste and fight

food insecurity. They work with supermarkets to recover unsold food, which is placed in bins and refrigerated or frozen at the store. The organizations visit each participating supermarket twice a week.

In collaboration with Quebec's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, volunteers from that organization ensure that the products meet grocery store requirements in terms of quality control, traceability and respecting the cold chain. In fact, all employees and volunteers must get the proper training for this program and help ensure standards are met.

The Association des détaillants en alimentation du Québec, which contributes to these initiatives, notes that, "to date, 534 tonnes of food from 83 supermarkets have been redistributed to more than 66 food banks". In recent years, community fridges have popped up in many cities in Quebec, such as Montreal, Saguenay, Sherbrooke. This initiative aims to fight food waste by having a fridge for restaurants and the public to drop off fruit, vegetables and grain products.

Volunteers trained by Quebec's department of agriculture, fisheries and food check the fridges' contents every day. The Corporation de développement économique communautaire de Sherbrooke, which instigated one of these projects, explains it was motivated by a desire to both reduce food waste and combat food insecurity.

There are initiatives like these in every province all across the country. In fact, these types of initiatives are found all around the world. Unfortunately, the Canadian government is lagging behind other governments in the world. In 2014, Martin Gooch was already saying that Canada was trailing compared to other countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia, and to a number of initiatives in the United States and in Europe, for example.

Since then, France has passed legislation to significantly reduce food waste in that country. On March 17, in Italy, a legislative measure to reduce food waste was passed by the vast majority of members. Even the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has launched initiatives to fight against food waste around the world.

The Canadian government has to get on board and be a leader in this file. That is why I wanted to introduce a bill calling on the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to work with his provincial and territorial counterparts to develop a national strategy to fight against the scourge of food waste. The minister will have six months to convene a conference with the provincial and territorial representatives. He will have a total of one year to develop a pan-Canadian strategy.

• (1725)

In my bill, I recommend that the strategy include a plan to educate the different stakeholders about the devastating impact of waste and best practices to be adopted; rigorous targets for waste reduction for the government; the tools needed to allow consumers to reduce food waste; and various ways of reducing the environmental impact of the production of unused food resources. Raising public awareness should be very important because people change their habits over time.

For this reason, I believe that it is truly relevant and important to create a national food waste awareness day. After consulting a number of stakeholders, we chose October 16, which is the same date chosen by France. Some people had reservations about the possible negative effect of selecting the same day as World Food Day. I am open to changing the date when permitted by the legislative process.

The time is right for holding a debate and establishing a national strategy to reduce food waste.

When the bill was introduced, many groups and stakeholders said that they were pleased to see a debate on food waste, here, in the House of Commons. Among them, Centraide Mauricie and Moisson Mauricie and Centre-du-Québec believe that it is important to support this bill.

Mr. Boutet, chair of the board of directors for Centraide Mauricie, is very much in favour of this bill. In fact, he publicly supported it because food recovery is essential to his organization. He does not understand why we waste so much food, when some people do not have any. According to him, the results of food waste are disastrous because food insecurity is associated with significant health and learning problems and school dropouts.

I repeat: food recovery does not eliminate food insecurity at its source, but it is currently helping hundreds of thousands of people.

I would also like to invite all members to read the study authored by Éric Ménard from Université de Sherbrooke. Mr. Ménard is a lecturer, blogger, and food waste expert. Recently, in January 2013, he published a research report on food waste. The study was conducted here in Canada, more specifically in Sherbrooke. It shows the disastrous consequences of food waste in Canada. It helps us to better understand how big of a problem this is both here in Canada and internationally. Mr. Ménard strongly supports our bill. It is high time that we had a strategy in this regard.

I would now like to come back to the study that was conducted by the Value Chain Management Centre, which shows how important it is to put an end to food waste now.

In 2014, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food heard from Martin Gooch, the chief executive officer of this organization, around the same time that I moved my motion on waste. This organization shows how important it is to combat food waste and also offers solutions to eliminate food waste at no cost. This study also highlights the scope of the issue and offers solutions that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food could adopt or use as inspiration.

Private Members' Business

I would like to highlight the work that many countries around the world are doing. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is focused on the need to take action against food waste. The international community is watching, so now is the time to act and to show some leadership. We have the perfect opportunity to work with other nations. We must absolutely keep this momentum going. Now is the time for the Canadian government to show some leadership. This is important to our future.

In closing, the House can see that food waste is a scourge in Canada, and the situation is not improving. Food waste is important to all of us, and there are some simple solutions. This bill does not include a lot of restrictions. We are simply calling on the government to establish a national food waste awareness day and to conduct a study. I am opening the door to my colleagues, and I hope to have their support.

I am now prepared to take questions from my colleagues.

• (1730)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I applaud my colleague for bringing the bill forward. I think that, as we have seen from the different movements throughout Europe, and France in particular, about being more cautious about the way we treat wasted food, that the bill is extremely timely. I am glad we can bring this issue to centre stage, because I think it is an issue we need to be talking about in this room.

I am curious as to what degree the sponsor of the bill consulted with the different stakeholders: those who would be affected, those who would distribute the wasted food, those who would be responsible for collecting it, as well as any of the administrative aspects that go along with this. I wonder if she had an opportunity to consult those stakeholders and if she has any information she could give us regarding that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[*English*]

In the last Parliament, in 2014, I tabled a motion on food waste, and that was because of consultation, because of witnesses coming before committee talking about food waste, and because of seeing what was happening in my community and across Canada.

Certain cities and businesses have adopted strategies. We have seen supermarkets donate food. There was a great project in Montreal and one in la Mauricie as well, working with the supermarkets, taking the food, testing it along the way, transforming it, adding value to it, and feeding people. There are a lot of things that can be done. I decided this time to have a bill, because I thought it was really important.

A lot of the food waste is done at home. Years ago, I would open my fridge and there would be furry fruit and all kinds of stuff. I did not know how to take care of my food. Therefore, I think there is a lot of work that can be done just to educate people on how to take care of their food at home to reduce food waste.

Private Members' Business

The other aspect was asking the minister to work with his provincial colleagues to talk about food waste. We have seen what has been done in France and other countries. I did not want to be so prescriptive, but I thought we could look at food labelling and expiration dates. There are a lot of things we can do.

It is not prescriptive, but I think it is really important to have this debate on the floor of the House of Commons. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues, and I am open to amending certain parts of the bill. It is important that we act and see what we can do to help facilitate food, to share it and feed people who are hungry. We can also look at the whole environmental impact of it, because we do have a lot to do to fight climate change.

• (1735)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé for bringing forward this very important bill.

As the member well knows, the NDP has done a lot of work in the area of food security. I think specifically of Malcolm Allen, the former member of Parliament for Welland, and Alex Atamanenko, the former member of Parliament for British Columbia Southern Interior, who together developed a pan-Canadian food strategy.

I would like to hear the member's thoughts on how her particular bill fits in with that overall strategy and the important conversation that our country needs to have on food security more generally.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Mr. Speaker, the food strategy that I had the pleasure of working on with Malcolm Allen and Alex Atamanenko was a great experience. We were able to produce a document about food from the farm to the plate. It had a lot of great aspects, and we are very happy to see that the new government is going to elaborate on a food strategy.

It is very important that we have a long-term vision for agriculture here in Canada and not just piecemeal projects or programs that start and end every few years. We need predictability.

Here in Canada, as the member knows, we have a lot of people who are food insecure. Sadly, a lot of people, and a lot of children, use food banks. Food banks were created to solve a problem and feed people for a short period of time, we all hoped. However, still today, we have food banks here in Canada, and about 900,000 people use them, and a lot of them are children.

The adoption of this bill, and hopefully getting it to committee, would start a great discussion about how we could better handle our food at home and work with initiatives that are done locally in our communities, cities, and provinces. We have to work hard to deal with this, because it is an economic issue, an environmental issue, and a social issue. I hope that, with this bill getting to committee, we can have a great discussion and have witnesses come.

Canada could really take a leadership role in dealing with food waste, because we have so much work to do compared to other countries.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I

thank the member for Berthier—Maskinongé for raising the important issue of food waste.

These ideas are valid, but we think we need more time to look closely at the issue and develop a national food policy with a specific action plan. Food waste is a complex issue that spans the whole system from farmers' fields to families' dining tables.

That is why we believe we should talk about a national strategy for our government, which our government pledged to develop. An increasing number of Canadians are becoming concerned about food loss and waste because it is a societal phenomenon that will affect our children and grandchildren.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that one-third of the food available worldwide is lost or wasted every year. That amounts to \$750 billion. In May 2015, G20 agriculture ministers recognized that food waste is an international issue.

Then, in April of this year, the G7 agriculture ministers, including the Hon. Lawrence MacAulay, agreed that they should take action to reduce food waste and strengthen food security.

Fruits and vegetables are the food products most likely to be wasted and account for nearly half of all food wasted worldwide. Food is wasted at every stage of the agri-food system. We estimate that these losses account for approximately 30% to 40% of the food produced throughout the value chain.

As for Canadian households, food waste represents about \$14.5 billion, the larger share of the value of overall food losses in the country in 2014.

In 2009, over 1.5 billion tonnes of food were lost or wasted around the world, which is enough food to feed one billion people every day for an entire year. We can and we must do better when it comes to managing food waste. That is why Canadians need a strong and equitable food policy that meets their needs.

As we know, food waste is a problem that has a serious impact on the food security of Canadian families and on the environment.

Our government is committed to working with Canadians to develop a national food policy. It will develop this policy in order to promote healthy living and the quality of Canadian food, as well as to provide families across the country with better, healthier food grown and raised by Canadian farmers and producers.

We will invite the different levels of government, the agri-food industry, and sector stakeholders, including dietitians, environmental groups, organizations that promote food security, and all Canadians to participate in this policy development process.

The issue of food waste will certainly be addressed as part of the discussions. This is a government-wide issue that goes beyond the responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture, which increases the complexity of the file. Food waste also touches on the mandate of many government agencies and industry organizations, given that this is an important issue for agriculture, security, and the environment.

We agree with the member for Berthier—Maskinongé that food waste is a serious problem. We are presently addressing the problem from various angles.

Our government has invested \$38.5 million to modernize Canada's food security system.

• (1740)

We will also invest \$70 million in research in order to invigorate the agricultural sector and develop new and innovative techniques to reduce food losses in the primary production phase and to analyze and quantify the food lost or wasted, among other things.

We are concerned about the food security of Canadian families, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada researchers across the country are trying to reduce agricultural losses in order to address this issue. Reducing food losses, increasing the amount of food, the shelf life of food, and the decay of horticultural products are at the top of our list of priorities.

We even have researchers in British Columbia overseeing a post-harvest research program, whose results could be of interest to the international community that wishes to work on reducing food waste.

As we saw, our research centres are involved in many activities to reduce losses and to work down the food chain. In addition to the techniques to reduce food waste, there are techniques to recycle organic waste from food. A company in British Columbia has developed a technique using insects to convert food waste from grocery stores into products that farmers can use to feed their animals and fertilize their crops. The project received financial assistance through the growing forward 2 program, following an agreement between the federal government and British Columbia.

This issue is important to our government. Environment and Climate Change Canada is also a key player when it comes to addressing food waste. It has formed a partnership with the North American Free Trade Agreement Commission for Environmental Cooperation. The partnership supports efforts to reduce food waste in landfills by looking for ways to reduce food waste in industry, businesses, and institutions.

Our government will continue to act in this file. We will talk about food waste as part of our discussions preceding the development of a national food policy with sector representatives.

As a farmer, I am particularly sensitive to the issue of food security. When I decided to go into politics, I made it my mission to help every Canadian family have access to good-quality, healthy food. I am making it my personal duty to fight tooth and nail for this cause and improve the quality of life of our families.

Private Members' Business

After meeting with many organizations that are working to eliminate food insecurity, such as Food Secure Canada, the Dietitians of Canada, La Corne d'abondance, and Complexe le Partage, I saw that food waste is a major factor that must be included in a national food policy.

We will not support this bill because we believe that the best solution is to first consult Canadians and the industry. We believe that food waste will be part of those discussions, and the information obtained from the consultations will be used to develop a national food policy that reflects Canadians' wishes and values.

Once again, I would like to thank the member for raising this issue so that the industry and all Canadians can make real changes and reduce waste at every stage of the food processing chain, from farm to table.

• (1745)

[English]

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to stand in the House this evening to speak to Bill C-231.

I want to thank my friend from the NDP for bringing this bill forward to the House. It is an important bill. It provides an opportunity for us to have a discussion about food security in Canada today.

The title of the bill is probably as complex as the bill could be: an act to establish national food waste awareness day and to provide for the development of a national strategy to reduce food waste in Canada. That describes exactly what is delineated within the bill.

The first part of the bill does something which I think we could all get our heads around and absolutely support, and that is to create a national day to bring awareness to food. It would be called the national food awareness day. By and large, we in this House could all agree that would be an important thing for us to do.

I grew up on a farm. I am a proud farm kid. I am really proud of the work and the vocation my parents were involved in, creating healthy food for people not only in Canada but around the world. The vast majority of what is produced in many parts of the Prairies actually gets exported around the world. We as Canadians can be very proud of the fact that we are supplying food for hungry people around the world.

When I was a young farm kid, I spent a fair bit of time helping my parents on the farm. One thing that I became aware of very early in my life is that any bit of waste is unacceptable. The reason was it is not good to waste food, but as a farmer knows and any farm kid knows, every bit of the produce or every bit of the grain that one's family produces is the income that the family lives off. By and large, farmers are probably some of the most careful people when it comes to ensuring that food waste does not in fact happen, especially at the farm.

Private Members' Business

I should note that it would be important for us to have a national food awareness day for another reason. As our communities and our country become more urban-centric, as people move off the farms, as fewer people are required on the farms to produce the food, people get further and further away from where food is produced.

As a farm kid living in a community of farmers, I knew very clearly from a very young age that not only do farmers not waste food, but farmers also make sure that they grow the healthiest food. They care for the animals they raise. They are probably some of the greatest stewards of our environment, of our animal health and welfare, and of the land generally. They know that this is going to have an impact on their bottom line.

There is also another point. Farmers are very proud of what they do. They are very proud to be able to produce the best quality and the safest food in the world. Canadian farmers produce the best quality and the safest food anywhere in the world. We as Canadians can be proud of this.

If we were to consider having a national food awareness day, I think one of the things we would want to do is celebrate the success of Canadian agriculture and the people who make sure that we have some of the safest and best quality food in the world.

We would also want to celebrate some of the advancements that have happened over time, the technologies and the modern farming practices that make sure that in Canada today we produce more food than we ever have. We also do it at less cost, using less land, with less water, and less of an impact on the environment than we ever have. That is all because of the modern practices that we use. These include the introduction of new tilling practices when farmers plant their crops on the Prairies. It includes the introduction of GMO crops, and some of the plant breeding that has happened to increase the productivity of our crops, and also to reduce the amount of water that is necessary for these crops to grow and thrive.

We have also seen a number of other advancements that have really seen the ability to grow more commodity on less land mass, which means that we continue to feed not only Canadians but people around the world.

• (1750)

There is a lot to celebrate, especially when it comes to primary agriculture in Canada. A national food awareness day is where we would want to start. It is about really understanding where food comes from. It is about reminding our urban friends that farm families across Canada do an admirable job of growing crops and fostering a brand that we can be proud of the world over, which is that we produce the safest and the best-quality food in the world.

I did talk to my friend before I started speaking. It will not surprise my friend that the second part of the bill is the part that I am a bit more concerned about, and that is the part that talks about having a national strategy. That is when we introduce government into the equation and encourage government to solve a problem. A number of things that were included in the strategy were articulated by my friend in the bill, one of which would include a national awareness campaign.

A national awareness campaign is probably quite an important thing to do, in terms of reminding people that we all have a

responsibility to reduce food waste. Any food waste means that food is not being used to nourish people, and there are many people who could use food that might otherwise go to waste.

We have to consider who we would want involved in this. The government is not necessarily the best group to lead any conversation on this issue. I reflect upon some of the greatest successes when it comes to reducing food waste in Canada. The charitable sector has been working on this for years.

In my own life, my parents and my grandparents here in Canada concerned themselves with food waste. There was a time when a lot of Canadians had gardens. The initial way that everyone made sure there was no food waste was to share it with neighbours, if they had more than they could eat in their gardens. If they had too much of something, they would trade it with their neighbours for something else.

Things evolve over time, and people have moved off farms and do not have gardens anymore. Things change. Other groups step in, such as churches, the Salvation Army, food banks, to ensure that nobody goes hungry within their communities. These organizations have been in existence since Canada has been here. Canadians care about one another. We care about our neighbours. We continue to install different systems because we truly care about our neighbours and we want to make sure that nobody goes hungry. We have instituted a number of these things.

Over the last number of years, as some of these programs have become antiquated or are not addressing the need that might be out there, other groups have stepped up and introduced new disruptive technologies that have changed the way that food waste is reduced.

We have things like Food Cowboy, which is a technology company that has created an app. It basically provides companies with the ability to donate surplus food to nearby charities, and organic waste composters and farmers and biogas generators, to ensure that the food does not fall into landfills but goes to another purpose. I was not familiar with this company, but I was inspired when I did some research on it. Food Cowboys now serves over 400 charities and has about 200 donors. It has significantly reduced the amount of food waste from restaurants and other food establishments, as well as retail stores and others.

There are also companies like Froody in Finland that basically does the same. It attracts best before dates and makes sure that food that might otherwise fall into landfills is highlighted so that people could get discounts on those foods.

There are a number of things that have happened.

The folks who do a lot of the processing in Canada are already doing a great job in terms of ensuring that food is not wasted, because for them it is also about the bottom line. They have a strategy to ensure that they donate to food banks as much as they can. As a matter of fact, those surveyed said that 92% of their organizations donate to food banks on a regular basis.

Private Members' Business

• (1755)

The private sector is doing a good job and the public sector is there to assist those who are doing it. I think there is an opportunity for us to cheer on those who are doing a good job. The charitable sector, the private sector are doing an incredible job. We do not want to stand in the way of that. We want to incentivize them to do those things. The last thing we want to do is add additional red tape for what is increasingly the Canadian way to ensure that nobody goes hungry here in Canada.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand here with my colleague, the member for Berthier—Maskinongé, in support of a bill to develop a national strategy to reduce food waste.

The numbers here are compelling. Canadians waste approximately 27 billion dollars' worth of food every year, food that is landfilled or composted. The true cost of that food waste might be more like \$107 billion a year, if we include the labour costs, transportation, and capital investments in infrastructure and inventory.

Globally, and this is the terrible link, 1.3 billion tonnes of food are wasted every year, yet 870 million go hungry every day. Just this morning a number of parliamentarians heard at breakfast from Laval University professor Jean Caron. He said one billion more people could be fed in this world if we went ahead and reduced food waste in the food chain by more than 50%, which he and a number of other activists say is absolutely doable.

Right back in Canada, almost 2.5 million Canadians experience food insecurity, and over 800,000 visit food banks every month. In a country as wealthy as ours, this is shameful. Since 2008, the number of people turning to food banks has increased by over 25%. Close to 900,000 households in Canada are food insecure, and a few years ago the UN's special rapporteur harshly criticized the right to food in Canada under the Conservative government.

Connecting food waste with people in need is what people in Nanaimo—Ladysmith have done, and I am so proud of the success stories that are coming out of our riding.

Loaves and Fishes is a community food bank in Nanaimo. After many years of just working to try to get people fed who were in need, they had this brilliant innovation. They put the donations they were able to receive into refrigerator trucks and they now drive all around the riding. They might get a phone call from a shipping company that says they got stuck in a ferry line and now they cannot deliver their load of cheese or whatever under the conditions that were guaranteed before, but it is still good if they want to come and get it. They will go and get a whole pallet of food. They have processes around food safety that they have negotiated with the provincial and federal governments on a one-off basis, and they are able to assure their volunteers and their food bank clients that this food is good.

We have people in poverty in Nanaimo who are eating rack of lamb, and it is fantastic that this is a choice they can make and that their food bank offerings are not only the traditional canned goods. We have something like 600 local volunteers at Loaves and Fishes who are helping this non-profit sort and distribute food throughout the riding, and last year alone, the food recovery program of Loaves

and Fishes saved 2.5 million dollars' worth of fresh food. It is fantastic.

That food goes to 30 different non-profits, who in turn distribute it to their own clients, and to schools as well for their lunch programs. It is helping over 8,000 people a month. This is due to the partnership with the grocery stores, with volunteers, and with shipping companies. It is very much a collaborative exercise and I wish that it was more common. We would love to find ways to get out of the way of the innovation of local organizations such as Loaves and Fishes and have this be a model that happens all over the country.

This is exactly what the MP for Berthier—Maskinongé is asking the government to strategize on, just these sorts of donations of unsold food. It does not cost donors anything. In fact, it can relieve the grocery stores of a great deal of cost around disposal, but better co-operation between food banks and retailers is needed. That would reduce food waste and would reduce food insecurity in our region.

Bill C-231 encourages this and it provides the tools to make it happen. The process that it proposes could well reassure non-profits that they will be supported if they do this important work safely.

Worldwide, food waste is a major problem, and that has been recognized by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Union of Wholesale Markets.

• (1800)

Most famously, to date, France has led the charge on this. Just a year ago, it was the first country to legislate against food waste. Part of that was amending the legal framework to remove the liability for donors. There is now a push to make that law European Union-wide.

In 1996, the United States adopted a similar kind of legislation where voluntary food donations were covered by legislation. That makes everybody volunteering in the field feel just a bit more secure and protected.

The need here is so great. In my province, British Columbia, more than 100,000 people were assisted by food banks last year, 32% of whom were children. The Ladysmith food bank and the Nanaimo Loaves & Fishes food bank said 3,600 individuals accessed their food banks last year. Of those, 31% were children.

In a more focused area of needs, the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses say that 75% of Canadian shelters rely upon food donations. This is both to meet the needs of women in shelters and also to support them and their children when they transition out of domestic violence shelters.

Private Members' Business

Another great story, in the same vein, is about a local non-profit called Nanaimo Foodshare. Through its community and school programs, it is teaching people about buying food in season, shopping locally, cooking from scratch, food management, how to compost, how to cut the amount of food wasted. It also has a paid gleaning coordinator who is funded through a provincial grant. That person connects people who have unharvested vegetables and fruit trees groaning with apples, organizes carpooling of volunteers to harvest that food, and then, again, redistributing them throughout the community.

In one season alone, Nanaimo Foodshare saved over 4,300 kilograms of fresh produce.

Again, people who are using food banks need to access fresh produce. It is good for local farmers; it is better for nutrition. We need to include all these innovative ideas into a national strategy to reduce food waste in Canada.

The tenets of Bill C-231 are to build that strategy against food waste, to assist consumers to reduce food waste, to facilitate the donation of food by the private sector, and to study the environmental impact of food waste. Those environmental impacts are significant. It is not just the land that is taken up by landfilling, but it is also the methane that is generated, which is a tremendous greenhouse gas amplifier and is something that really exacerbates climate change. It is an unnecessary use of land. It is bad for climate change. If we can keep food out of the landfill and redistribute it to people in need, that is better for everybody. Perfectly good food should not be landfilled when people go hungry.

We want the Canadian government to be a leader in this area and to implement tools so all stakeholders in the supply chain, from farmers to consumers, can reduce their food waste.

This can be done by removing barriers to donations from the private sector of goods that are imperfect, but goods that are welcomed by community groups and food banks. They are doing the front-line work of fighting insecurity and this national work can be done by supporting Bill C-231.

In my final moments, I want to celebrate, as my colleague before me just has, the work of some of our local farmers.

I am inspired every time I am at home by the Boulton family on Gabriola Island. Eric Boulton is, I believe, 85 years old. He is still driving a tractor. When our provincial government put rules in place that really impeded the ability of local farmers to slaughter meat and sell it in their own communities, the family hung on. It thought it was going to improve food safety, but in fact it really interfered with local food production. This tenacious farmer just hung on and got his slaughterhouse re-certified by the provincial government. He now sells beef to local restaurants. Our biggest grocery store, Village Food Market, and the McCollum family are very strong supporters of local produce. We can buy locally raised beef right there.

• (1805)

The Boulton family is a great donor of its organic turkeys and other meats that it grows and slaughters at home on its huge farm. It donates that directly to charities, to partners like the People For a Healthy Community. Its annual Christmas dinner is a festive, beautiful time. It has all local produce, the best turkeys one will ever

have. It is a great example of celebration at the community level, a great example of farmers' support.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I never like to interrupt hon. members. We were out of time, plus it is late in the day and it is the time when we start to get a little hungry. There were wonderful descriptions about some wonderful food.

I will let the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth know there are only about six minutes remaining in the time provided for private members' business, but we will get started and she will have her remaining time when the House next debates this question.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying that I am really pleased that the member for Berthier—Maskinongé has brought the issue of food waste before us. It is truly wonderful that we are having a conversation about food policy today, because it is very important to me.

I will say that I have some concerns about the wording in the bill. I was very happy to hear that the member is open to making some amendments, because I believe that some amendments will be required. However, it is a good start. I worry that the bill leads us in the wrong direction. I say that because I think that food policy is very important and food waste is something we need to address, but I do not like making a link between food waste and food insecurity. They are two different issues and form part of a larger food policy.

I do not like it when I hear ideas like edible food going to landfills should, instead, be given to people in need. The truth is that food insecurity is about poverty and dealing with poverty issues, and food waste is an issue that is economic, environmental, and needs to be addressed, but we should not be making a link between one and the other.

I am personally very interested in food policy. I have been involved in food policy issues in my own community. I have worked with local farmers markets, I have organized an annual stone soup event, where people contribute vegetables to a communal soup that they eat together. Any extra vegetables that are collected are brought to a local food bank. I am interested in this issue very much and I have personal experience. I have also worked with Second Harvest in Toronto—Danforth, picking up food and bringing it to women who are new to Canada and in need.

I recently had the opportunity to see a Canadian documentary called *Just Eat It*, which is a food waste story. It tells the story of a Vancouver couple, I believe, or a couple in British Columbia, who made a pact that they would live off of food waste for a six-month period. They were actually able to collect enough food during that period of time to eat. They also found that they became tremendously unhealthy from the kind of food that they were collecting. Well, “tremendously unhealthy” might be too much, but they were gaining weight and were not feeling quite as healthy as before.

I always like to celebrate Canadian arts and culture, and it is good to highlight that this is a Canadian documentary. It was made in 2014 and it won numerous awards, including the people's choice award at the Calgary International Film Festival, and best Canadian documentary at the Edmonton International Film Festival. It also won some awards at the Vancouver International Film Festival. It is always nice to tie some issues together like that.

I would like to take a moment to talk about the bill. It was interesting to hear my colleague raise the question about the title, “national food waste awareness day”, and suggested “national food awareness day” without referring to waste. That is something we can discuss. My bigger concern is that the preamble talks about food banks and makes a link between food waste and food banks. I agree that food waste is an economic problem. I agree that we need to deal with it.

It is interesting, actually, that the preamble does not mention the part about methane gas, which is a source of climate change, but food waste can lead to it. My friend mentioned that in her presentation and that was great.

I am concerned about the choice of October 16 as national food waste awareness day. October 16 is already World Food Day, which my colleague mentioned. It is a global day to end hunger and it has been celebrated since 1981. It is a date that celebrates the creation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the FAO, which was created on October 16, 1945, in Quebec City, at the Château Frontenac.

The day is marked with hunger walks, dinners, food drives. In Canada, there is World Food Day Canada, which hosts speakers, has exhibits, and really aims at solving issues about world hunger and poverty issues relating to food. To me, having national food waste awareness day on the same day as World Food Day is a concern.

• (1810)

I would say that it is an issue that is important for us to deal with. Food banks are important. I will have a chance to speak a bit more on this issue, so just in case it happens at a later date I would point out that there is Hunger on the Hill on May 18. My office will be participating in it and I will be participating in it to raise awareness about hunger issues and food insecurity. I would encourage other people to also participate in that event.

What concerns me the most, one of the reasons that I ran, is growing income inequality. I was concerned about food insecurity. We do need to gain more awareness of that. I really like that we are starting to talk about those issues in the House and having a good

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discussion about it. I just do not want to see that link made to food waste. That is a discussion we can have a bit later.

• (1815)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Toronto—Danforth will have four minutes remaining for her comments when next the House has the opportunity to consider the question.

The time provided for private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek is not present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given. Accordingly, the notice is being withdrawn.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on February 19, I asked this question to the government: why do the Liberals insist on inflicting crippling taxes that will send more people to the unemployment line?

That has been the case. For my province of Saskatchewan, the first quarter has been the worst quarter it has had in the last 10 years. We have sent far too many people to the EI lines. Then, as we talked about the carbon tax in the House in the first 100 days of the current government, the Liberals have flown to Paris, they have talked in Brussels, and they tried to have a group hug in Vancouver.

Thankfully, my premier, Brad Wall of Saskatchewan, withstood the pressure of joining the carbon tax in this country, and he made a great statement. It was great in the fact that when he went to Vancouver he was the only one who would not join the carbon tax parade, and when he left we found that New Brunswick and the territories had also joined Saskatchewan in its quest of slowing down this process by the new government.

We can collect carbon tax money and in this case it will pay EI. That does not accomplish anything.

In my province of Saskatchewan, people are hard-working. They want to support their families. Right now, as members know, in our province and in the oil and gas sector in Alberta, along with Newfoundland and Labrador, we have had a downturn in the economy. I will admit that there may be a time that a carbon tax should be implemented some day in this country. However, I would say now is not the time.

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We have seen, as I mentioned, record unemployment in Saskatchewan. When I talk to Saskatchewan and Saskatoon—Grasswood constituents, they tell me that they simply want to work. I know EI was promised in some portions, in fact region 42 of Saskatchewan. That maybe helped Saskatoon and northern Saskatchewan but it did not help the oil and gas sector workers in south Saskatchewan and in particular Edmonton.

We all know right now the industry is suffering. Layoffs are plentiful. It has happened in Alberta. We have seen tens of thousands of people laid off in that province in the last year. It has unfortunately come to my province of Saskatchewan.

I will just give members a little anecdote. On May 20, I am going to be in Lloydminster emceeding the RBC Cup. Lloydminster, on the Saskatchewan and Alberta border, once had a population of 32,000. When I visited that community a month ago, the population was down to just over 25,000 people. That is a loss of 7,000 people. It has decimated that community. I saw it first hand. The oil trucks are sitting in every parking lot in that community. Unfortunately, that is not what we want in this country. I saw houses that are empty. I saw trucks that were left abandoned at airports. When we lose 7,000 people in a community of 32,000 over the last year, we know we have an issue.

What would a carbon tax do for Lloydminster? I have already said it has lost 7,000 people in the last year.

Saskatchewan businesses are not looking for a handout. We found that out with the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce when representatives visited the Hill early this year. They were simply asking to let businesses do business and let government get out of the way. They have enough roadblocks in their industry right now. Saskatchewan does want to be competitive and that does not include a carbon tax.

When are the Liberals going to reverse their job-killing tax hikes? That has been the big question in the House, as they need to know that they have to stop the carbon tax for now.

● (1820)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by noting that I was in Saskatchewan last week for meetings with the Government of Saskatchewan and with provincial officials.

I grew up and went to university in Saskatchewan, and for a time, I worked for the provincial government there.

With regard to carbon emissions, Canadians know that reducing emissions will make our economy more competitive, not less. Our government knows that growing the economy and protecting the environment go hand in hand.

Combatting climate change is a moral imperative to ensure that we leave to our children and grandchildren a planet that can sustain a prosperous and peaceful existence.

Climate change also represents an enormous economic opportunity, one that many other countries are already taking advantage of.

The growth rate of the global clean tech sector over the past several years has been in excess of 10% per year. However, Canada's share of the clean tech market has fallen considerably due to the decade of inaction and obfuscation under the previous federal government. To create jobs in industries of the future, our government will make investments into green innovation, clean technology, and sustainable infrastructure.

In addition to growing a vibrant clean tech sector, experts agree that carbon pricing is the most efficient and least expensive way of achieving emissions reductions. Already some 80% of Canadians will soon live in jurisdictions with a price on carbon. Energy companies in western Canada have acknowledged this, and many already use a price on carbon in their investment decisions. For example, Suncor CEO Steve Williams recently said, "We think a broad-based carbon price is the right answer."

Carbon pricing policies help to minimize the costs of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. They provide a continuous incentive for technological innovation and transition to a low-carbon economy. They achieve significant emissions reductions. They provide consumers and industry with certainty and flexibility. This is particularly important in western Canada, where energy-producing firms are looking to government to provide them with a clear framework.

Our government is providing national leadership by working with the provinces and territories to take action on climate change, including putting a price on carbon. We strongly believe in the power of market-based solutions, such as carbon pricing, to deliver meaningful results in reducing our emissions while growing our economy.

The momentum behind carbon pricing is now being echoed by thoughtful leaders around the country, including many prominent Conservatives. The leader of the Ontario Conservative Party recently stated, "Climate change is a fact. It is a threat. It is man-made.... We have to do something about it, and that something includes putting a price on carbon."

Mark Cameron, a former policy adviser to prime minister Harper, also underlined the power of carbon pricing in a free market, saying, "As most free-market economists recognize, the most effective way to reduce emissions is to price them".

I would also note that the newly elected Progressive Conservative government in Manitoba understands this, saying in its election platform that it supports carbon pricing that fosters emissions reductions, keeps investment capital here, and stimulates new innovation in clean energy, businesses, and jobs.

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Implementing an effective climate change strategy, including carbon pricing, will assist in reducing GHG emissions and will also put Canada and Canadian companies at the forefront of the global clean growth economy.

I would invite the hon. member opposite to join with job creators and with thoughtful Conservatives in Canada in endorsing carbon pricing as a useful and important mechanism in addressing the critical issue of climate change.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go to resuming debate, I would remind the hon. parliamentary secretary that our debate rules for adjournment proceedings are the same as in other debates in the House and we refrain from using the proper names of other hon. members, in this case the right hon. member for Calgary Heritage. Even if it is in a quote, we would avoid doing that. It is just a casual reminder.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, a carbon tax is a crippling tax. I come from a region that is devastated. We need hope in this country. There may be sunny ways on that side of the House, but I can say that from where I stand, and in Saskatoon—Grasswood, and Saskatchewan in general, when I go to Lloydminster, I look across to Alberta, and especially now in Fort McMurray where we are not up to snuff with production right now. Carbon pricing and a carbon tax has to be delayed in this country. I stand firmly by that thought. There may be a time, but now is not the time. We do not need a carbon tax right now and put it into EI. That is simply what has happened in my province. It is what has happened in Alberta, what has happened in Newfoundland, and what has happened in New Brunswick.

When will the Liberals, and their plan to help Canadians get to their jobs, reconsider the job-killing tax hikes that they have brought in in the first 100 days of being in office?

● (1825)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I will say a couple of things for the hon. member. First, there actually has not been any carbon tax imposed by the federal government in the first 100 days. Second, I would be happy to sit down and have a conversation with him about different mechanisms by which carbon pricing can be implemented.

I come from a province that has had a carbon tax. It was implemented by the government there several years ago. It is a revenue neutral carbon tax. The tax that is raised through carbon pricing is returned through income tax cuts. Therefore, there is no additional tax burden on consumers.

It is clear that the failed approach of the previous government, which did its best to ignore climate change, did not work for the Canadian economy, and it did not work for the environment.

This government has a plan to address climate change, including carbon pricing, and to generate economic growth and opportunity concurrent with that through the investments and acceleration of clean tech development in Canada. It is a plan of which Canadians are supportive. It is a plan that speaks to the prospects of our future generation. It is something that we, as a government, are very proud to do.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:27 p.m.)

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