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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1400)

[*Translation*]

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

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this solemn day of Yom HaShoah, we remember the six million Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust. It is a fitting and sobering occasion to acknowledge the B'nai Brith's annual audit on anti-Semitism, which reported that over 2,000 incidents involving anti-Semitism were committed in 2018, the highest number in decades.

[*Translation*]

Anti-Semitism was widespread and visible. There were violent attacks around the world, indiscriminately, seemingly anywhere, from synagogues to public markets to out in the streets.

[*English*]

The unspeakable attacks in synagogues in Pittsburgh and San Diego, where victims were targeted solely because they were Jewish, are absolutely reprehensible. We grieve for the victims and their families.

In Canada, we are not immune. We see the world's oldest hate take many forms in bullying, in harassment, in violence online and in our communities. It must stop.

I commend B'nai Brith for its work. We should all read the audit. We must learn from it. We must stand together in fighting anti-Semitism and all forms of hate and say, united, "Never again."

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am wearing a carnation to promote MS Awareness Month. Every day, 11 Canadians are diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

For me, fighting MS is personal. My dear friend Ted Marianix had it. He died four years ago. Ted was special. He used to scooter to get around, but he was constantly at my side on my political campaigns. Now I am on his campaign to help find a cure for MS.

People would be surprised at how many live with MS. One is Aaron Solowoniuk, the drummer for the band Billy Talent. Aaron says he suffered blurred vision, numbness, extreme fatigue and depression, but he considers himself lucky, because he has what he calls a flexible work environment. Many Canadians with MS have to miss work or lose their jobs.

Therefore, I am happy that the human resources committee is recommending that the government enact policies that would help those with MS and other episodic disabilities.

Today, let us remember the Canadians who live with MS. Together, we can find a cure.

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● (1405)

GOVERNANCE IN NUNAVUT

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, when Nunavut was created, Inuit opted for a public government, full of hope that they would have the support of the federal government to build a place where we could live and prosper.

Fast forward 20 years, and the Government of Nunavut remains chronically underfunded, starved from the resources it needs to cope with issues and create a sustainable economy.

In many ways, life for Inuit is worse. Severely overcrowded housing has led to an alarming increase in TB, youth suicide rates are the highest in Canada and Inuit continue to live in third world conditions.

Canada is bypassing the Government of Nunavut in favour of side deals with ITK, funding it to come up with strategies to deal with these crises. ITK is a third party in all of this. It does not deliver programs and services to Inuit in Nunavut; the Government of Nunavut does.

To recap, Inuit in Nunavut are living in third world conditions, Canada is funding a third party to deal with the situation, and the Government of Nunavut, struggling to deliver programs and services, is sidelined.

What is wrong with this picture?

* * *

SRI LANKAN CIVIL WAR

Hon. Mark Holland (Ajax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nearly a decade ago, in Mullivaikkal, Sri Lanka, a brutal civil war lasting nearly 30 years came to a horrific end.

A United Nations report found that 40,000 civilians may have been killed in the final months of that civil war, mostly as a result of indiscriminate shelling by the Sri Lankan military. Families and communities were ripped apart, and the legacy of that brutality still haunts victims and peace-loving people everywhere. The widespread allegations of atrocities and human rights violations, including war crimes and genocide, devastate us. Ten years later, we recognize and remember the horrors that occurred and renew our vow to find justice and reconciliation for the victims.

What happened in Mullivaikkal must never happen again—not in Sri Lanka, not anywhere. We must do all we can to make sure that is certain.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with first nations women's groups and first nations women across Canada to once again call on the government to end gender discrimination in the Indian Act.

For decades, the Government of Canada has been causing undue harm to first nations women by removing or denying their status simply because they are not first nations men. This past January, the United Nations Human Rights Committee said that Canada is still discriminating against first nations women and their descendants by denying first nations women the same entitlements under the Indian Act as first nations men. This discrimination causes women to be disconnected from their communities, breaks up families and causes greater disparity in the rights and benefits accorded to first nations women and men.

It is beyond the time for the government to act on the calls from first nations women and the organizations they represent. I call on the government to act immediately on Bill S-3 and do everything within its power to end the discrimination against first nations women in Canada.

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LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Boyd MacDonald of Crapaud, P.E.I., who was honoured recently by the Prince County Horsemen's Club with the Philip and Henry Doucette Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award.

Boyd started his own horse stable in 1971 and gained his licence to drive horses two years later. He had over 1,000 race wins, all with his own horses. That is a feat very few ever achieve, but the bumps and bruises of horse racing never slowed him down.

Boyd and his wife Claire, now 61 years married, also were successful farmers, establishing Boyd MacDonald Produce Ltd., which is still operating as a produce broker today. Starting his potato business by borrowing a neighbour's truck and hauling potatoes in the evening, he grew the business to two warehouses, employed over 20 people and grew 350 acres of those good Island spuds.

Congratulations to Boyd on a well-deserved award, and for his outstanding contribution to the community and life on the Island.

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BLYTH FESTIVAL

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Blyth Festival has been a mainstay for theatre-lovers in Huron—Bruce for 45 years, and in that time the festival has premiered 134 Canadian productions written, directed, designed and performed by Canadians for Canadians.

Blyth is literally home to some of the best original Canadian content in the country. Dozens of these productions have gone on to be produced all around the world. However, the Blyth Festival has never performed here in Ottawa—until now. The Blyth Festival is premiering *The Pigeon King* at the National Arts Centre, and it will be here until May 5.

People can get tickets and support local arts, or better yet, plan a trip to Blyth this summer and watch the best Canadian plays the country has to offer.

We thank our artists, production, volunteers and donors for their continued belief and commitment in Blyth.

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● (1410)

[*Translation*]

SENIORS

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I had the pleasure of meeting with a few seniors in my riding, Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, at Domaine des Forges and Manoir Thérèse-Casgrain. During our discussions, they shared their concerns for the future, but they also told me how pleased they were with everything we have done for seniors.

Many of them could not hide their enthusiasm about the new horizons for seniors program. With nearly 2,000 community-based projects funded by our government in 2019, this program is already producing results, bringing our seniors' communities to life. I would like to thank the Minister of Seniors for her work on this file.

Our seniors can be proud of their government, which knows how to look after Canadians in their golden years.

[*English*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on International Women's Day, I asked members of our community to nominate outstanding women to be honoured at my first annual Pink Tea, inspired by the Famous Five's Pink Tea parties. Pink Tea parties embodied hyperfemininity to disguise the fact that women were discussing politics and strategies to move gender equality forward in Canada.

This past weekend, I was fortunate to be surrounded by women who are continuing to do similar work right here in my community. From a 15-year-old CEO to a human trafficking survivor, now advocate to the first female mayor of Uxbridge and to the chair of Durham region, these women and their stories are inspiring not only me and our community, but Canadians across the country.

As they continue to advocate for changes they hope to see, I am empowered to continue this work in the House of Commons in order to make Pickering—Uxbridge and all of Canada a more inclusive place.

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ANAPHYLAXIS

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of May as our national food allergy and anaphylaxis awareness month.

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can be life-threatening. Food is one of the most common causes, but insect stings, medicine, fragrances or even exercise can also cause a reaction.

Anaphylaxis affects 2.8 million Canadians. That is one in 13 Canadians, half of whom are under the age of 35. Indeed, over half a million students are affected by anaphylaxis, about two students for every classroom.

The month of May will shine a light on the challenges of safely navigating life-threatening allergies. Let us all join together in support of our allergic friends, family, colleagues, classmates and neighbours by learning how to recognize the early signs of a reaction and how to administer an EpiPen.

It is as simple this: blue to the sky, orange to the thigh, and call 911.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the 1970s, women suffering from violence were too often forced to live in fear for their own safety and for the safety of their children. A brave and determined group of women did something about it. With no money and little support, Ardis Beaudry, Janet Currie, Thérèse Dallaire-Laplante, Nicole Thauvette, Lorraine Kenaschuk, Natalie McBride and Lynn Zimmer founded the first women's shelters in Canada. The stories of these women, who are being honoured in Ottawa this week, were captured in Margo Goodhand's wonderful book, *Runaway Wives and Rogue Feminists*.

Today there are over 550 women's shelters in Canada, a great testament to these incredible pioneers, who believed that society had a duty to intervene and led the way. We all owe these amazing women our gratitude.

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● (1415)

CANCER

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, although April was Daffodil Month for the Canadian Cancer Society, cancer is not limited to one month. We do not forget cancer or our loved ones, like my late husband, Arnold, or those who are living with it.

One in two Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer, which is why the 2019 budget commitment on cancer research and treatment is so important. We are investing in organizations like the Terry Fox Research Institute to establish a Marathon of Hope cancer centre network across Canada; Ovarian Cancer Canada to help with prevention, screening and treatment for ovarian cancer; and Genome Canada for large-scale research competitions and projects to help with transformative scientific breakthroughs.

We need to eradicate cancer once and for all.

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[*Translation*]

QUEBEC PIPELINES

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day, 50,000 Quebeckers work in the petrochemical industry. Whether they work in plastics, composites, research or refineries, these people create wealth in Quebec. The safest, greenest and most economical way to transport the oil is by pipeline. Quebeckers know all about pipelines.

Quebec's first pipeline was built in 1942. We now have 2,000 kilometres of pipeline. Nine pipelines run under the St. Lawrence. Four million litres of jet fuel are transported to the Dorval airport by pipeline. In 2012, a brand-new pipeline was built from Lévis to Montreal and it is 248 kilometres long and crosses 26 rivers, including the St. Lawrence.

It all works so well that no one talks about it. Yes, Quebec has pipelines and we are proud of them.

Statements by Members

[*English*]

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the beginning of Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. As a motorcyclist, I regularly ride my Triumph Bonneville down Portage Avenue and take part in Ride For Dad, an event in support of prostate cancer research. However, as an emergency room physician, I am also familiar with the tragedies that come with motorcycle collisions. Many of these collisions can be prevented, and we can all help.

This month we are reminded of how we can do our part in helping to keep the 700,000 Canadian motorcycle riders safe. I am proud that our government is committed to taking steps to ensure that all Canadian road users always ride safe, but we must all do our part. Let us remember to encourage riders to wear the proper protective gear and to encourage motorcycle riders and automobile drivers to always look twice and check blind spots before switching lanes.

I want to thank the organizations that advocate for road safety every day, such as the Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada. Through advocacy around Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, we are reminded this month, and every month, to ride safe.

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MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Canada's New Democrats, I am honoured to rise today to recognize May as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month. Canada has one of the highest rates of MS in the world. On average, 11 Canadians are diagnosed every day.

When a person receives an MS diagnosis, there is an immediate impact on all who love them. Indeed, my own family has known the devastating impact of multiple sclerosis.

Canada must do more to improve the quality of life for people living with MS and to ultimately find a cure. We must ensure that all patients receive affordable access to treatment, housing that meets their needs, comprehensive home care and age appropriate long-term care. We must also provide flexible employment conditions and improved income support for people living with MS.

Throughout this month, I urge all Parliamentarians to help raise awareness and act now to improve life for the over 77,000 Canadians living with multiple sclerosis. Together we will find a cure.

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SCARBOROUGH SOUTHWEST CANDIDATE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to rise to speak about a great Canadian and friend. After a couple of years of working for our intelligence service, Kimberly Fawcett joined the Canadian Armed Forces and gave 23 years of uniformed service to Canada. She was a combat engineer who did two tours in Afghanistan.

In 2008, during her second tour, she was the first female Canadian with a prosthetic to deploy to Afghanistan in the combat zone. Tragically, in 2006, she had lost her leg and her infant son in a horrific accident while she was executing her family care plan as part of a military family. This unspeakable loss did not stop Kim. She gave another decade of service to the Canadian Armed Forces and became an inspiring, award-winning paratriathlete.

Kim is now going to serve again. After three years of being ignored by the Liberal government, she is stepping forward to be the Conservative candidate in Scarborough Southwest. Go, Kim.

* * *

● (1420)

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today begins Asian Heritage Month in Canada. This provides an opportunity for everyone to learn about the history of Canada's Asian immigrants and their descendants and to celebrate their many contributions to our country. This includes the growing Asian community in my riding of King—Vaughan and in York Region.

One such celebration is the Taste of Asia Festival, organized by the City of Markham, the Federation of Chinese Canadians in Markham and the Association of Progressive Muslims of Canada and supported by many organizations and businesses. Over 180,000 people attended last year and enjoyed cultural performers, culinary artists and artisans.

One cannot speak of the festival without mentioning Dr. Ken Ng, a family physician, a community leader, chairman of the Federation of Chinese Canadians in Markham and the founder and chairman of the Taste of Asia Festival.

I invite people to come and tickle their taste buds and meet Dr. Ng and his wonderful wife, Emily, tonight at the Taste of Asia reception in Room 7-52 at 131 Queen Street from 5 p.m. to 7p.m.

Let us all kick off Asian Heritage Month together tonight.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, China's military budget rose 5% last year to $250 billion. However, for whatever reason, the Liberal leader continues to use Canadian taxpayers' money to fund China through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. We know that China uses the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to extend its influence in the region.

When will the Liberal leader stop using Canadian taxpayers' money to fund this strategy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as part of the bank, Canada joins many countries such as Great Britain, Germany, and Australia in promoting inclusive global economic growth. The Conservatives are misleading Canadians by suggesting that it would be good for Canada to withdraw funds that are earmarked for landslide mitigation in Sri Lanka, flood management in the Phillippines and irrigation modernization in Indonesia.

We will continue to be engaged in helping people throughout the world. That is what Canadians expect from any Canadian government.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are other development banks that Canada already participates in, but this one is specifically used by China to extend its influence in the region.

China's military budget rose 5% last year to $250 billion. Now its space program is worth $8.4 billion. While the Parliamentary Budget Officer has indicated that important infrastructure projects are not getting built in Canada, the leader of the Liberal Party has sent $256 million to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a bank that helps exert influence by China in the region.

Why is the Prime Minister funding infrastructure projects in other countries?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as part of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Canada joins countries such as Australia, France, Germany, India, Italy, South Korea and the U.K. in promoting inclusive global economic growth. The bank supports clean and green infrastructure investments throughout Asia.

The Conservatives want us to close our eyes and our doors to investments around the world, like in landslide mitigation in Sri Lanka, like in flood management in the Phillippines, like in irrigation modernization in Indonesia. That is not what Canadians expect. They expect us to be engaged positively in the world and—

● (1425)

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party continues to exert such weakness around the world. The Government of China is holding two Canadian nationals unlawfully. It has blocked Canadian exports, and the Prime Minister has done absolutely nothing to stand up for Canada. He could show the Government of China that there are consequences for pushing Canada around by pulling the funding from the Chinese-run Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Will he do so, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has and will continue to consistently stand up for Canadians at home and all around the world. That is why we were proud to announce this morning that we are standing up for canola farmers by moving forward with a maximum loan limit increase to $1 million for all farmers, and indeed, for canola farmers, an interest-free loan increase to $500,000.

On top of that, we stand up every day for the Canadians who are unjustly and arbitrarily detained in China. We know that engaging strongly and forcefully around the world is the way we are going to—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not exactly sending a strong message to China that the only response the Prime Minister is capable of finding is something the Conservatives asked for days ago. He could show the Government of China that there are consequences for detaining Canadian nationals—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: We should also be able to hear the question.

Order. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, why would Canadians expect the Prime Minister to stand up for the interests of China? Why would we expect the Government of China to take the Prime Minister seriously after showing such weakness on the world stage, after backing down to Donald Trump time and time again, after clowning around in India and angering our trade partner? Why will the Prime Minister not stand up for Canadian interests when it comes to the Government of China?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the facts. The Conservatives wanted us to capitulate to the Americans on NAFTA, and we got the right deal for Canadians. We were the ones able to close the deal on CETA, which the Conservatives had dead in the water. On the CPTPP, we fought and got a good deal for Canadians and we did that by holding strong.

The Conservatives have been asking us for days to do something on canola. We have been working on it for weeks, including with our partners out west, like Premier Scott Moe.

We are going to continue to deliver for Canadians. We are going to continue to fight for Canadians.

Oral Questions

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do not need a drama production; we need action for Canadian interests around the world.

It was the Prime Minister who signed a deal that was shoved down his throat and still kept steel tariffs in place. It was the Prime Minister who capitulated on dairy and pharmaceuticals. It was the Prime Minister who angered our trade partners when it came to CPP talks.

Now that Canadian nationals have been unlawfully jailed and Canadian exports are not moving, he has done nothing to stand up for this country. When will the Prime Minister finally do something—

The Speaker: The right. hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years the Conservative failed to get anything done to get reasonable growth for the economy. Indeed, Stephen Harper and the Conservatives had the lowest growth record of any prime minister since R. B. Bennett in the depths of the Great Depression. We turned that around.

We have created 900,000 new jobs across the country. We have the lowest unemployment in 40 years. On international engagement and trade, we are now the only G7 country that has a free trade deal with every other G7 country. Two-thirds of the global economy is accessible to Canada now because of the work that this government has done.

* * *

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, three months ago, 46% of Canadians were $200 away from insolvency. That figure rose to 48% last week.

While half the population struggles to make ends meet, the Liberals continue to subsidize oil companies and give multimillion-dollar handouts to Loblaws.

The Prime Minister is completely out of touch with reality. We need a government that is on our side, not on the side of the ultra rich.

When are the Liberals actually going to start working to save half the population from financial insecurity?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first thing we did after being elected was to lower taxes for the middle class and raise them on the wealthy. Next, we brought in the Canada child benefit, which benefits nine out of 10 families and has lifted 300,000 children out of poverty. The NDP voted against those two measures.

We succeeded in lifting 800,000 Canadians out of poverty in our first two years in office. We continue to meet our commitments by investing in infrastructure and our communities and by helping families, students and seniors directly. We are going to continue with our approach.

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is showing a disturbing willingness to undermine the independence of the Canadian judiciary, from trying to help corporate friends in a bribery case in his riding, to the allegations of leaking information about the Supreme Court nomination, to the fact that the Prime Minister is now vetting potential judges through a Liberal donor base that includes information right down to the size of their lawn signs.

Is that how small his vision is, wanting to know what they have done for the Liberal Party rather than what they will do for Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party has always believed in the independence of the judiciary and the importance of standing up for the independence of our institutions.

Indeed, all judicial appointments now follow our new, open, independent, transparent and merit-based process. This process replaced the old opaque system that was in place under the previous government.

Political activity or donations have no impact on a person's candidacy or selection for judicial appointment. Our government has appointed people who have donated or been involved with parties of all political stripes.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): His new open list, Mr. Speaker, is more like the grotty old rum-bottle politics on the Rideau for which the Liberals are infamous.

Speaking of broken promises, prior to the budget the Prime Minister made two promises, one to Kashechewan and one to Grassy Narrows. In that budget, he broke those promises. It took hundreds of children coming from the evacuation centres yesterday for the Prime Minister to even acknowledge the disastrous Kashechewan flood.

Therefore, cards on the table: What financial commitment will he make today to the people of Kashechewan to finally move them to higher ground?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree that 17 years of flooding in Kashechewan is absolutely unacceptable. That is why the minister met with the chief yesterday to continue the work that we have been doing since 2016.

Since 2016, we have been working in close partnership with Kashechewan on its request to relocate to higher ground. The community has identified the location to which it believes would be best to relocate. Work is right now under way to build a new road, to secure the land and to design the new community, but always and every moment in partnership with the people of Kashechewan.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people of Kashechewan had to once again be evacuated because of flooding. This could have been avoided. The Liberals promised to relocate them to higher ground, but two years later that still has not happened. Yesterday, children and leaders from the community were here to remind the Liberals about their promises and ask them to keep them.

When will the Prime Minister finally keep just one promise?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2016, we have been working in close partnership with the people of Kashechewan on their request to relocate their community. The minister met with the chief yesterday. The community has identified the site it believes would be best to relocate to. Work is under way to build a new road, secure the land and design the new community, always in partnership with the people of Kashechewan. For 17 years now, these people have had to evacuate every time there is a flood. The situation is unacceptable and we will work with them to fix it.

* * *

● (1435)

ETHICS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on August 5, 2016, we asked the Liberal Party and the Liberal leader about $110,000 in illegal donations they received. What did they do then? As usual, the Liberals refused to share any information.

Since the Liberal leader is so fond of claiming transparency, could he simply tell us whether his office or his employees have had any contact with the Chief Electoral Officer regarding these illegal donations, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those inappropriate donations were made to two political parties 10 years ago.

Under my leadership, we have raised the bar on transparency. We were the first party to voluntarily disclose its MPs' expenses, we opened up the Board of Internal Economy and we made all fundraisers with the prime minister, ministers, party leaders and leadership candidates open to the public.

We always fully obey the fundraising rules, and everyone who donates to the two political parties must do so, as well.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is another prime example of how little the Liberals have changed since the sponsorship scandal. It is in their DNA and in their culture.

The leader of the Liberal Party was found guilty, not once, not twice, not three times, but four times of ethics and conflict of interest violations. On top of that, now he is being investigated on the matter involving the former attorney general and justice minister.

What is the leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister still trying to hide from Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House respect officers of Parliament and the work they do every step of the way to ensure that the rules are followed and Canadians know the truth, irrespective of partisanship and attacks across party lines.

Yes, we will always respect and work with officers of Parliament. They do important work, and we on this side of the House will always work with them.

* * *

[*English*]

CAMPAIGN FINANCING

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we cannot take the words of the leader of the Liberal Party at face value because, simply put, it has already been shown that he had very little respect for the Office of the Attorney General. Now we are talking about the Elections Canada commissioner. Here is the issue.

There were two opportunities for the Liberal leader to tell us who was on the list. Once was August 5, 2016, and one was most recently when the media asked him to provide the list and he refused to do so.

What is the leader of the Liberal Party doing? What is the leader of the Liberal Party hiding?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is bringing up an issue regarding improper donations made to two political parties over 10 years ago.

Under my leadership, we raised the bar on openness and transparency. We were the first party to proactively disclose MP expenses. We opened up the Board of Internal Economy. We ensured that information regarding fundraisers with the Prime Minister, with ministers and with party leaders or candidates for leadership be publicly available.

We continue to do our fundraisers publicly and invite the media. The Leader of the Opposition does them in secret and keeps the media out.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about is the fact that SNC-Lavalin, a dear friend of the leader of the Liberal Party, received a compliance agreement from Elections Canada for a scheme in which it legally donated $110,000 to the Liberal Party of Canada. We have asked why he did not disclose the names.

I would like to ask another question. Why, on May 9, 2016, did Mathieu Bouchard meet with SNC-Lavalin? Was it about the compliance agreement with Elections Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are bringing up an issue from 10 years ago, before we made changes to the rules that we bring in a new level of openness and transparency to political fundraising, which we have embraced, however, the leader of the opposition has not.

We continue to hold our fundraisers in public, at public locations and we invite the media to be part of them. The Leader of the Opposition continues to hold his fundraisers in secret, refuses to let the media in and is continuing to have the kind of secrecy that we saw too much of during the Harper years.

● (1440)

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pay, ask and you shall receive. There seem to be plenty of made-to-measure contracts to go around for Liberal insiders, but slim pickings for outsiders. La Presse and The Globe and Mail got their hands on the key to solving this mystery: a privileged communication between a law firm and a deputy minister that magically turned into a lucrative $711-per-hour contract.

Can the Liberal leader confirm the existence of this August 14, 2017, communication, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, departmental officials followed the appropriate rules in making the decision. Once again, I find it a bit rich that the Conservatives would go after me on ethical and fundraising issues when they continue to hold secret private fundraisers with their leader. We invite the media to be part of our events. We do not hold our events in millionaires' private homes. We hold them in public places. We will continue to be open and transparent about our fundraising. We expect the Leader of the Opposition to do likewise.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, SNC-Lavalin is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the Liberals looking out for their well-connected friends. They also awarded a sole-sourced contract to a law firm, where the two lead lawyers pocketing tax dollars on the $75,000 contract had both been previously employed by the Liberal Party.

On Monday, the justice minister tried to blame his department, but he has now admitted it was the Liberals themselves who signed off on this shady deal.

Why does the Liberal leader find it so easy to grease the skids for his Liberal friends, but so hard to conduct himself in an ethical fashion?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all legal service contracts go through diligent and accountable processes. Contracts went through the Department of Justice for projects that were unrelated to one another. Both contracts followed all appropriate rules and policies of the department.

We will continue to ensure that the decision process respects all rules.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LABOUR

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thousands of people have come together today to mark International Workers' Day.

As elected officials, it is our duty to improve their future, but the government has failed to deliver. Take, for example, the Phoenix fiasco, the ongoing wage gap between men and women, the special legislation for Canada Post, the uncertainty in the steel, aluminum and forestry industries, and the pensions that were stolen from Sears pensioners and others. The NDP stands with workers.

When will the Prime Minister stop trampling workers' right and take action on their behalf?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, we are the ones who will always stand up to defend workers. We introduced historic pay equity legislation, which will finally close the gender wage gap in an open and proactive manner.

We have continued to stand up for the interests of forestry workers. We are always there to support steel and aluminum workers. We signed international trade agreements that help our workers and that will create prosperity

We will continue to create jobs in Canada, like the 900,000 jobs that we created over the past three years—

[*English*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

* * *

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, May Day is a day to celebrate working people, yet today we hear one more example of how the government is prioritizing its billionaire friends instead. Not only did the government give money to Loblaws to buy fridges, but the government gave it privileged access in exchange for generous donations from lobbyists.

The reality is that as the billionaire class thrives, workers in Canada are paying the price. A recent OECD report showed that the middle class in our country is shrinking. Instead of doing favours for their billionaire friends, where is the Liberal government's defence of working people?

● (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been unequivocal in our support for labour, and we are happy to celebrate that this May Day.

There is no question that since forming government, we passed Bill C-4 to eliminate the unfair Bill C-525 and Bill C-377 that Harper passed. We amended the Canada Labour Code to give federally regulated employees the right to flexible work arrangements and implement different leaves. We strengthened occupational health and safety standards. We passed Bill C-65 to protect federally regulated employees from workplace harassment and violence.

We will continually stand up for labour and stand up for workers across Canada.

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is time to stand up for canola producers. After more than two months of inaction, it took three requests for an emergency meeting of the committee, nine requests for an emergency debate in the House, calls by producers and provincial premiers and intervention by the Leader of the Opposition for the Liberal leader to understand the pressing need for action in this file. He has heard the opposition's call for increased support, but there is no ambassador and no complaint before the WTO. Instead of sending a mission to China, he is sending his minister to Japan. He is still confused.

Why has the Liberal leader not shown some backbone in defending canola producers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have been asking for help for canola producers for just a few days. We have been working on it for weeks. We stand in solidarity with agricultural families and we are working on resolving this matter.

We have announced changes to the advance payments program. We are increasing the maximum loan limit for all farmers to $1 million. We are increasing the interest-free portion for canola producers to $500,000.

We will continue to look for new markets. We have announced trade missions to Japan and South Korea. Thanks to our trade agreements, businesses now have preferred access to more than 1.5 billion new customers. We will continue—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Prince Albert.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's two-months-too-late announcement by the Liberals shows just how out of touch they are with farmers and rural Canada. We welcome any and all support for farmers, but a few tweaks to a government program is not good enough. The canola crisis is a direct result of the Liberal leader's bungling of Canada's relationship with its second-largest trading partner. Farmers need the issue resolved and market access restored.

The current Liberal leader created the problem. Where is the solution?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it troubles me to hear the Conservatives belittling what the Canola Council and the canola farmers have been asking for for weeks. We were happy to deliver a $500,000 interest-free loan for canola farmers, just like they have been asking for.

We are going to continue to stand up for our farmers, the same way we stand up for our farmers by giving them new access to new markets. With our signing of the CPTPP, of a renewed NAFTA and of CETA, our producers have access to two-thirds of the global economy, and we are now the only G7 country with a free trade deal with every other G7 country.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Having asked the question, I would invite the hon. member for Prince Albert not to be speaking after he no longer has the floor. We do like to hear him when he has the floor, but then it is someone else's turn.

Now it is the turn of the hon. member for Niagara West.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been two months since the Chinese government banned imports of Canadian canola. Earlier this week, the Liberal leader was confusing China and Japan. This morning, the Liberals announced their plan to resolve the deepening crisis and dispute with China, and get this, by sending a trade mission to Japan. I cannot make this stuff up.

When will the Liberal leader finally get serious and launch a trade complaint against China?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been engaged on this issue with China since the very beginning, first with our concerns around two Canadians who were arbitrarily detained by Chinese authorities, and now with our concern that the Chinese are using flimsy phytosanitary excuses in regard to canola when, as we all know, Canadian canola is the best and the cleanest in the world.

We are going to continue to stand up for our farmers. We are going to continue to stand up for Canadians. We are going to continue to work with all our partners internationally to make sure that we resolve this situation.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of hand-waving and lofty language from the Liberal leader today, but as two hon. former Liberals in that corner know, this Prime Minister is not always as advertised. His hand-picked Liberal ambassador to China resigned three months ago. Canadian citizens are paying the price for his inaction. Our exporters are paying the price for his inaction and incompetence. When will he nominate a new ambassador to China to turn around this crisis?

● (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives are all over the place on what they think they want on the world stage. On the one hand, we have to withdraw money from Asian infrastructure banks that are doing good work across the continent. On the other hand, the Conservatives want us to be reaching out and be friendlier with China. On the other hand, they want us to draw in international supports. On the other hand, they want us to push back harder. They do not know what they are doing.

On this side of the House, we are focused on standing up for Canadians, standing up for farmers and resolving this international difference.

Oral Questions

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the west coast suffered through a decade of Conservative mismanagement of Pacific wild salmon, including cuts to DFO and gutting habitat protection. Now we have a Liberal government that has spent billions of dollars on a leaky pipeline and will increase tanker traffic in our sensitive marine environment, putting salmon and whales at risk. Vancouver Island coastal communities have had enough. They want a full recovery plan. Will the Prime Minister listen to them, and to coastal leaders like Chief Bob Chamberlin, and protect wild salmon?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, protection of wild stocks in B.C. is a priority for our government. With the province, we created the B.C. salmon restoration and innovation fund, contributing $100 million. We also endowed $5 million to the Pacific salmon endowment fund. Fifteen of 16 southern B.C. chinook runs are endangered, threatened or of special concern. We understand the concerns of fishing and tourism industries, but these closures will be crucial in helping the recovery of these stocks. We know that putting the interests of salmon first is putting the interests of British Columbians first.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Transport reassured Jason Kenney by saying that building the pipeline was his government's number one priority. Then, on Monday, he reassured flood victims by saying that inaction is costly, that the science is clear and that we must act now. That is rich.

Does the Prime Minister realize that the only way the economy and the environment can go hand in hand is if we focus on a green economy and not on subsidies for the oil companies?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the NDP does not understand that the economy and the environment go hand in hand. I congratulate them on acknowledging that at least once. The NDP does not understand that the way to advance and protect the environment and create jobs for communities and families is to be responsible on both fronts.

Indeed, we will ensure that our exports are transported safely and sent to countries other than the United States, but we will also put a price on pollution. We will invest in green energy. We will also do our duty to protect—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

* * *

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a busy time for farmers and their families across our country as they start spring seeding. We know farmers are looking for more certainty and security as we work to maintain full access to China and create new opportunities for them to grow their business. Can the Prime Minister tell us what our government will do for canola producers to help them through this challenging time?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Calgary Centre for his hard work and his advocacy for all Albertans. Working closely with the grain sector, exporters and provinces will secure an unrestricted market access for Canada's world-class canola.

We are ensuring farmers have the security they need leading into this year's season. Today we announced we will support farmers with changes to the advance payments program. We are increasing the maximum loan limit for all farmers to $1 million from $400,000, and for canola farmers, we are increasing the interest-free portion to $500,000 from $100,000.

We are working around the clock, and Canada's farmers should know that we have their backs.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the Trans Mountain expansion was proposed, the private sector has built 35,000 kilometres of new oil pipelines in the United States.

Meanwhile, the Liberals spent a quarter of a billion Canadian tax dollars to build pipelines in Asia. When the Liberals spent $4.5 billion on the Trans Mountain pipeline, they said they would build the expansion immediately. However, not a single inch of new pipeline is in service in Canada under the Liberals.

The Liberal leader needs to tell Canadians when the Trans Mountain expansion will be built.

● (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we can see, the Conservatives do not really understand that for 10 years they could not get it done for a very simple reason: They refused to listen to environmental concerns from communities and they refused to partner with indigenous peoples. That has hurt our oil industry. It has hurt energy projects across this country.

That is why, when we got elected, we committed to working in partnership with indigenous peoples and working to protect our environment at the same time. That is exactly what we are doing, as we move forward with energy projects in the right way. That is what Canadians expect.

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives support Canadian investments abroad, provided they make sense.

The Liberal government has decided to invest $256 million of taxpayer money over the next five years in an infrastructure investment bank in China.

Need I remind the government that China has decided to boycott and embargo canola and is blatantly violating the rights of Canadians in China? Members may recall the Liberal leader's unfortunate remarks expressing a level of admiration for China's basic dictatorship.

Will he acknowledge that it makes no sense to send $256 million of taxpayer money over there?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are playing politics once again. It is misleading of them to suggest that if we stopped the funding that is going towards landslide mitigation in Sri Lanka, flood management in the Philippines and irrigation modernization in Indonesia, it would not be good for Canada or for our role in the world.

We are going to keep making sound investments by focusing on infrastructure here at home and around the world, investments that help people and promote peace, security and prosperity around the globe.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when leaders in China dismissed the Prime Minister as “little potato”, he thought they meant it as a compliment—

The Speaker: I want to remind the hon. member for Carleton that we cannot do indirectly what we cannot do directly. I would like him to avoid terms that might be considered insulting under the rules.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. Shall we continue or not? Order.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister reciprocated by giving a quarter of a billion Canadian tax dollars to the China-controlled Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a bank designed to build pipelines, roads and bridges in China, the same country that is punishing our farmers and imprisoning our citizens.

Will the Prime Minister show even a modicum of respect for Canadian taxpayers and cancel that wasteful expenditure of our tax dollars?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite is saying is simply not true.

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is actually designed to support clean and green infrastructure investments throughout Asia, including in some of the world's most underdeveloped countries, including things like landslide mitigation in Sri Lanka, flood management in the Philippines and irrigation modernization in Indonesia.

Canada has a role to play on the world stage, including with our world-class infrastructure know-how. As we build here in Canada and around the world, we will continue to do that. That the Conservatives continue to mislead Canadians is really unfortunate.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, green infrastructure? Since the Prime Minister announced his quarter-billion-dollar gift to the China-controlled Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, China has quietly resumed construction on dozens of previously shelved coal-fired plants, according to satellite images. It is going to increase the production of coal-fired electricity by 50,000 megawatts since he announced his quarter-billion-dollar gift.

Now that we know this has nothing to do with development or helping the poor, but instead with helping the wealthy and the well connected in China, will he do the right thing and cancel this quarter-billion-dollar gift?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are trying to invent and torque an issue to scare Canadians when in fact Canadians are part of a bank through which we join countries like Australia, France, Germany, India, Italy, South Korea and the U.K. in promoting inclusive global economic growth. Their desire to score cheap partisan points while we desire to build a better future for everyone around the world could not be in more marked contrast. We know Canadians are going to have a clear and positive choice that they get to make come this October.

* * *

● (1500)

TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the end of STC and Greyhound service, many people living in Saskatchewan are unable to safely travel within the province.

The Minister of Transport recently said, “Intercity bus services are important for the people of British Columbia and for Canadians across the country, particularly for those in Indigenous, rural and remote communities where other transportation options do not exist.” That description sounds an awful lot like Saskatchewan.

If the minister truly believes this, then why is he only providing money for intercity public transportation for British Columbia and not for Saskatchewan?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the federal government is willing to step up and support communities affected by the Greyhound bus service closure. We were happy to work with B.C. We would encourage the member opposite to encourage the Saskatchewan government to partner with us, as a federal government, as we look to better support and serve indigenous communities and remote communities right cross the country, including in Saskatchewan.

Oral Questions

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one year ago, the city of Grand Forks was inundated by flood waters. More than once, the Minister of Public Safety has stood in this House and assured Grand Forks that the federal government would "always, in every case, be there", but on April 18, the federal government told Grand Forks that its application for a natural disaster mitigation program grant had been turned down.

The people of Grand Forks cannot live through another devastating flood without adequate protection, so I ask the Prime Minister why the government is refusing to help.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have helped all Canadians affected by flooding this year and in past years, including indigenous communities like Kashechewan. First responders are working hard right across the country alongside neighbours and friends, working hard to keep people safe. We are doing everything we can to support the response effort throughout the affected areas of Canada. Canadians can rest assured the Canadian Armed Forces are ready to support and serve alongside our federal, provincial and municipal partners, who are working diligently in service of the citizens in need.

We have $2 billion in the disaster assistance program. We look forward to working with all communities in helping them out.

The Speaker: I would encourage the hon. member for Edmonton West to speak when it is his turn to speak and not at other times.

He suggests he was trying to help. There are other ways to do that.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals sold a ticket for a Liberal fundraiser to the CEO of an American marijuana company. They had to refund him, since this type of fundraising is illegal.

The American company posted photos on Twitter of Mr. Jenkins, the president and CEO of Frelii, and the Liberal leader taken at the April 5 event. In one of these photos the two men can be seen having a conversation.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what they talked about?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we brought in reforms of the rules for—

[*English*]

The Speaker: Order, please. It is nice that members seem to be in a good mood and celebrating something, but we need to hear the answer and we need to hear each other. Let us try to stay calm for the rest of question period.

The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, when the party became aware of this issue, it immediately returned the contributions.

The more important question is why the Conservative opposition leader continues to hold secret fundraisers. Our fundraisers are held in public. We invite the media to participate in them. Meanwhile, the Conservatives continue to hold secret fundraisers in big private homes without—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Thornhill.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, have you heard the one about the American marijuana magnate who strolled into a top-dollar Liberal fundraiser to schmooze the Liberal leader to hook up with the innovation minister and pitch a deal? The punchline: His ticket was illegal, and the Liberal or lobbyist broke two laws by selling those two tickets.

The Minister of Democratic Institutions claims getting caught for this latest cash-for-grab jaw-dropper proves the Liberal fundraising law works. However, is the law not supposed to prevent the Liberals' habitually bad practices?

● (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the Liberal Party became aware of the issue, it quickly returned the contributions, in accordance with Elections Canada rules. The question for the member opposite, who is so concerned with ethics, is this: why is his leader continuing to hold secret, private fundraisers that do not invite the media, are in big, fancy private homes and are not open to Canadians?

While we are at it, I will take no lessons from the party that in every single one of the past four elections was guilty of breaking Elections Canada laws.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is pretty rich to hear about ethics and accountability from these Liberals and that Liberal leader. Since taking office, the Liberal leader quickly established a pattern of scandal. Everyone knows about the Liberal leader's attempted interference in a criminal trial. Now it has come out that he is getting illegal donations from an American marijuana tycoon.

Can the Liberal leader confirm if the RCMP has contacted him, his ministers or his staff regarding these or their many other scandals?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we became aware of the ineligible donation, we immediately refunded that donation. That is what Canadians expect with our Elections Canada laws.

It was quite disturbing yesterday to hear a Conservative MP attacking the neutrality of Elections Canada and our institutions, which all Canadians need to support. Instead of attacking Elections Canada, Conservatives should simply stop breaking election laws, laws that they broke during every single one of the past four elections.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as everyone is aware, flooding has greatly affected many communities from Ontario, Quebec and in my own province of New Brunswick, including my riding of Miramichi—Grand Lake, where last year's crest was the highest on record. We have surpassed that mark.

[*Translation*]

Our government responded quickly to the province's request for support by deploying our armed forces and other resources.

Since most Canadians are aware of the devastating effects of climate change, could the Prime Minister tell us how our government plans to protect our communities in the long term?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake for his question and the hard work he does for his constituents.

Our thoughts are with all those affected by the flooding. We thank the first responders, the members of the armed forces, and especially the volunteers who have been working hard to save their neighbours' homes.

With climate change, we are going to be seeing more and more extreme weather events. We are helping communities in the aftermath of those events. Budget 2019 allocates $2 billion to help communities better manage the risks associated with natural hazards such as flooding.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every single week since the SNC-Lavalin scandal broke, the opposition has asked the Liberal leader whether or not the RCMP has contacted him or any of his ministers or staff with regard to the SNC-Lavalin scandal. Today when we asked the question, he skirted the answer. He did not answer.

I am going to ask him very directly. Has the RCMP contacted either the Liberal leader, any of his ministers, his senior staff or party leadership with regard to the SNC-Lavalin scandal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no.

The Speaker: Order. Order. The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope will come to order.

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after Jamal Khashoggi was brutally murdered, the Prime Minister announced on October 25 that Canada would review the permit to export arms to Saudi Arabia. That was six months ago, but nothing more has been said since. The radio silence is almost as deafening as Canada's silence on the 37 beheadings that took place in that country on April 23.

Some countries responded without hesitation. Less than a month after Khashoggi was slain, Germany, Finland and Denmark halted arms exports to Saudi Arabia.

What is taking so long? Will the Prime Minister finally walk the talk and ban arms sales to Saudi Arabia?

● (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always stand up in defence of human rights around the world.

We did indeed condemn the Saudi executions. When I met with Mohammad bin Salman in Argentina, I told him it was utterly unacceptable and expressed my grave concern. As Canadians, we are all concerned about human rights in Saudi Arabia. We will keep working on this issue because that is what Canadians and people around the world expect from Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kim Rudd (Northumberland—Peterborough South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been more than a year since the party opposite promised a climate plan, and it still has not been delivered. Frankly, Canadians and the environment cannot wait.

Instead, Conservatives are busy misleading Canadians by refusing to provide them with information on money that is rightfully theirs. Rather than spending their time misleading Canadians about our plan, the Conservatives should spend their time coming up with a plan to fight climate change.

Could the Prime Minister please update the House on the actions our government is taking to fight climate change and grow the economy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South for her hard work and for her question.

We are fighting climate change while making life more affordable for Canadians. Pricing pollution is the most affordable and effective way to cut pollution. For Canadian families, our plan will mean a cleaner environment and more money in their pockets. That was confirmed by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Points of Order

While the members opposite hide this fact from their constituents as they struggle with their backroom operatives and big oil executives to come up with their plan, we are working for a better future for our kids and grandkids.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister likes to keep track of the number of days, I have one for him. It has been 31 days since the Prime Minister threatened to sue me for telling the truth about his interference in a criminal prosecution.

I have repeated all my allegations outside the House and have been waiting for our day in court, where he can finally testify for himself under oath. Can the Prime Minister tell me when I can expect the court proceedings to commence, or, like everything else with him, was it all just a big act?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand that the Leader of the Opposition wants to continue to focus on me, but I am not going to focus on them. I am going to stay focused on Canadians. I am going to tell them the truth about what we are doing, which includes lowering taxes for the middle class and raising them on the wealthiest 1%, investing in infrastructure right across the country and continuing to demonstrate that every—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Order. There is far too much noise. I have heard very many times today from many members. One in particular would be the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, whom we all love to hear from when he has the floor. I would encourage all members to wait until they have the floor before they speak.

I think they could talk to their whip or perhaps their House leader about that, but the Right Hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives continue to focus on politics and on me, I am going to stay focused on Canadians and what we are doing every day to grow the economy, to protect jobs, to lift Canadians out of poverty. That is what Canadians voted for in 2015. That is what we are going to continue to do.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Recently, the government generously funded ITK to tackle critical issues facing the Inuit in Canada, like housing and health care. The problem is the majority of Canada's Inuit live in Nunavut. The Government of Nunavut has been cut out of the strategic planning and cut off from the funding. The Government of Nunavut is responsible for the delivery of programs and services, not ITK. Therefore, this makes no sense whatsoever.

Why has the Prime Minister failed to deal directly with the Government of Nunavut to ensure it has the resources to tackle these issues?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always very pleased to talk to Premier Savikataaq and to work with his government. However, at the same time, I will make no apologies for a distinctions-based approach to reconciliation that treats indigenous communities and nations as full partners. Indeed, as we move forward on true Crown-indigenous partnerships, the work we are doing directly with the ITK complements the important work done by the territorial government.

We believe in creating more partnerships, not fewer. We will continue to fight for a better outcome for indigenous people right across the country.

* * *

● (1515)

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order to seek clarity on a ruling you made in question period.

My colleague the member for Carleton rose and he repeated what the Minister of Foreign Affairs had communicated a while ago. According to what she said, the Chinese government had what she called a term of endearment and fondness for the Prime Minister, calling him “little potato”. We at the time believed it was not a term of endearment or fondness. Therefore, in our role as opposition, we have been asking the government about this and asking the Prime Minister.

You rose, Mr. Speaker, to say that we could not do indirectly what we could not do directly. I am assuming you mean insulting the Prime Minister by calling him “little potato”.

I would like some clarity. We were not actually calling him “little potato”. We were, however, repeating what—

The Speaker: Order, please. We have heard the phrase enough now. Members may not know that I do not speak Mandarin or Cantonese. I cannot say what this phrase might mean in the Chinese culture, but here we speak English and French. It certainly did not seem to be used as a compliment in the context. It seemed to me to be an insult, and I do not think insults should be used toward any member in the House. Those are the rules.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it you will find the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion: That the House call on the government to publicly justify its decision to deny Carles Puigdemont's entry into Quebec.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the House give its unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled "Adjustment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer", adopted at Quito, on November 9, 2018, and "Protocol Amending the Air Transport Agreement between Canada and the Swiss Confederation of 20 February 1975", done at Ottawa on January 29, 2019.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to nine petitions.

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● (1520)

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the reports of Canadian delegations of the Canada-China Legislative Association respecting their participation in the Co-Chairs' Annual Visit to China held in Beijing, from October 21 to 25, 2018, and the Parliamentary Mission to China held in Shanghai, Suzhou, Shenzhen and Hong Kong, from January 7 to 11.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, a report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association with respect to its participation at the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in Murmansk, Russia, from March 27 to 28.

I do not think there is any other international organization more important for Canada than this committee of seven Arctic nations, dealing with issues related to the Northwest Passage, the fleet of atomic icebreakers, Arctic Ocean plastics and fisheries, search and rescue in the north and climate change.

I commend the report to ministers and their departments, as it touches on their work, so we can work toward progress in these areas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, three reports from the delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie.

The first report is respecting its participation in the meeting of the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee of the APF, held in Grand-Bassam, Ivory Coast, April 20 and 21, 2018.

The second report is respecting its participation in the meeting of the Cooperation and Development Committee of the APF, held in Rome, Italy, from May 2 to 4, 2018.

Lastly, the third report is respecting its participation in the meeting of the Parliamentary Network on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria of the APF, held in Lomé, Togo, October 3 and 4, 2018.

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled "A Canada-Pacific Alliance Free Trade Agreement: Possible Implications for Canadians".

We have a very hard-working committee. We are working hard to get more trade agreements, not only for businesses across Canada but also for Canadians so they can prosper more and have a better economy.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Neil Ellis (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, entitled "Moving Towards Ending Homelessness Among Veterans".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

[*Translation*]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 91st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I would like to move concurrence in the 91st report later this day.

[*English*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, entitled "Surviving Abuse and Building Resilience—A Study of Canada's Systems of Shelters and Transition Houses Serving Women and Children Affected by Violence".

The committee received testimony from 50 witnesses, seven of whom appeared as individuals, with the remainder representing 36 organizations. In addition, the committee was briefed by officials from CMHC, northern development, the office of the coordinator of the Status of Women and Statistics Canada.

The testimony was received during 10 meetings, which were held from October 15 to December 18. The committee also received 53 briefs from organizations and individuals.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

● (1525)

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Conservative Party's supplementary report for the study on systems of shelters and transition houses serving women and children affected by violence.

The Conservatives are focused on providing a compassionate and determined effort to address the horrific tragedy of gender-based violence with appropriate government policy. While shelters do, in fact, play a very key role in helping women flee abusive relationships and start the process toward wholeness and healing, shelters do not offer a permanent solution, and this should be noted. It is therefore unfair to these women for the current government to pretend there is no need for further assistance in the form of stable housing following time at a shelter.

While the Liberals would like to keep women dependent on the government, the Conservatives believe that women are powerful, intelligent and free to make their own choices and succeed in the world. We believe women should be granted the opportunity to live autonomous lives, while they enjoy the stability of a permanent home.

For this reason, we outlined the importance of giving women this opportunity to move along the entire housing spectrum, including home ownership, which the government is trying to keep out of their grasp.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY WATERS TREATY ACT

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-444, An Act to amend the International Boundary Waters Treaty Act (water quality).

He said: Madam Speaker, this bill would require the Minister of Foreign Affairs to undertake negotiations to amend the current International Boundary Waters Treaty between Canada and the United States.

This treaty dates back to 1909, so it is essential that it be amended to include new environmental standards, especially for water quality. For instance, it could include the establishment of buffer zones where the construction of infrastructure likely to affect the environment would be prohibited without the approval of the other country.

[*English*]

This bill relates to 82 boundary waters, rivers and lakes and involves 75 Canadian members of Parliament and 91 American senators and congressmen.

[*Translation*]

One concrete example is the landfill located in Coventry, Vermont. This landfill is just a few metres away from Lake Memphremagog, and Vermont recently approved an application to expand the dump significantly. It is important to note that 175,000 Canadians in Sherbrooke and Magog rely on this lake for drinking water.

The International Joint Commission, which already exists and reports to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, will oversee the enforcement of the proposed standards. These standards will be established on the basis of consultations with experts in both countries and in collaboration with the relevant provinces and states. We have to make sure that no other initiative like the Coventry landfill expansion disturbs boundary water relations between Canada and the United States.

[*English*]

We have to make sure that we protect the quality of boundary waters between Canada and the United States for our future generations.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 91st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent 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)

* * *

● (1530)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to table a petition that has over 60 signatures from people in the Clarkson community. The petition concerns the storage of rail tankers containing industrial materials, including petroleum products, in the middle of a densely populated neighbourhood adjacent to a major commuter hub, the Clarkson GO Station. According to residents, the tankers are shunted on a regular basis, causing serious safety concerns and noise issues for adjacent homes. The petition calls on the federal government to ensure that changes are made to move the rail yard from their residential neighbourhood to a nearby rail yard in an industrial area.

I thank Dora Bailey for her continuous efforts in advocating on behalf of her community.

JOURNALISM

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am proud to present petition e-1950, started by John Feldsted, in the riding of Kildonan—St. Paul, which has 1,251 names on it.

When Jerry Dias, the president of Unifor, came out with a statement that he was going to make sure that the members of the Unifor union who are in the media and journalistic sector would be making certain statements against the Conservative Party, he started this petition. He is calling on the Government of Canada to make sure that steps are taken to protect the journalistic integrity of our media and to make sure that the free press is respected.

TAXATION

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise with an electronic petition as well. It is petition e-443, initiated by a constituent of mine, Mr. Darren Francis, from Victoria. I applaud my constituent for his efforts. His petition calls on the government to change the tax legislation, and it has garnered several hundred signatures.

I encourage all residents of Victoria to put forward their ideas for building a country where no one is left behind, and I look forward to rising in the House again to honour my constituents' tireless advocacy and deep-rooted community spirit.

FIREARMS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians from the ridings of Bow River, Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, Calgary Midnapore, Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, Saanich—Gulf Islands, Nanaimo—Ladysmith and the best riding in Canada, although I may be a bit biased, the riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to respect the rights of law-abiding firearms owners and reject the Prime Minister's plan to waste more taxpayers' money studying a ban on guns that are already banned.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to present multiple petitions, from thousands of Canadians, calling on this House to adopt Bill S-214 and ban cosmetic testing on animals here in Canada. Animals think and feel. They deserve our respect and compassion.

I thank those thousands of Canadians across the country. More Canadians sponsored petitions like this than any petition in the last 50 years. This is something this House needs to do before we rise in June.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise to present over 1,300 signatures that have been collected on a petition by the staff of The Body Shop at the Devonshire Mall. They have done some hard work.

This petition highlights the fact that animal testing is unnecessary to prove the safety of cosmetics. It also speaks about following the EU, which has had a ban on animal testing for cosmetics since 2013, and its industry continues to grow. It also highlights the fact that we have signed a trade deal, and they reference CETA, and states that we need to harmonize our regulations with the European Union. The petition also talks about other countries that have made a switch to alternative testing, such as India, Turkey, Israel, Guatemala, Norway, Iceland, Serbia, New Zealand and Switzerland. They call for support for Bill S-214 to ban the sale and/or manufacture of animal tested cosmetics and their ingredients in Canada.

PENSIONS

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is a petition that was given to me by teachers in Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Charlie Lake and Taylor. It talks about Bill C-27 stating that before the 2015 election, Canadians were clearly promised in writing that defined benefit plans, which have already been paid for by employees and pensioners, should not be retroactively changed into target benefit plans. It also refers to Bill C-27, tabled by the Minister of Finance, which would precisely permit the change.

The petitioners call on the government to withdraw Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985.

Routine Proceedings

● (1535)

PHARMACARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to table yet another petition signed by residents of Winnipeg North over the last 18 months on the very important issue of pharmacare. They are asking the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada, and in fact all members of Parliament, to recognize the importance of pharmacare and to work with the different stakeholders, in particular our provinces, to establish a system that would ultimately provide coverage for prescription drugs.

It is with pleasure that I table, yet again, another petition.

MIGRATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, constituents of mine who actually participated in trying to provide aid on the Greek island of Samos started this petition because of their deep concern about the conditions of squalor for 5,000 people on an island that had about 700 people there before. It is a desperate situation, and they are calling on the government to intercede, to engage directly with the government of Greece, however we can as a nation, and offer concrete aid and assistance for the humanitarian crisis as it unfolds in Samos.

EYE HEALTH

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table two petitions today.

The first is from Canadians who are calling on the government to implement a national framework for action to promote eye health and vision care. They talk about the number of Canadians with vision loss being expected to double in the next 20 years and say that there is an emerging crisis in eye health and vision care, particularly among Canada's most vulnerable populations. Children, seniors and indigenous people are at particular risk.

Therefore, the petitioners are asking the government to acknowledge that eye health and vision care are growing public health issues, and they are calling on the government, through the development of a national framework for action, to promote eye health and vision care, which will benefit all Canadians through the reduction of vision impairment resulting from preventable conditions and the modification of known risks.

PENSIONS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, the second petition is from petitioners who are calling on the government to withdraw Bill C-27. They state that before the 2015 federal election Canadians were clearly promised, in writing, that defined benefit plans that have already been paid for by employees and pensioners should not be retroactively changed to target benefit plans.

The petitioners also state that Bill C-27, tabled by the Minister of Finance, would precisely permit this change, thereby jeopardizing the retirement income security of Canadians. Therefore, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to withdraw Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985.

REFUGEES

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have several petitions here.

The first is calling on the government to assist internally displaced persons in governmental refugee programming.

EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I also have a petition to review the equalization formula, given the punitive policies against the energy sector the government has undertaken.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have one very interesting e-petition, signed by nearly 13,000 Canadians, with regard to the Prime Minister's groping allegations, which occurred in Creston, British Columbia. These people are calling on the Prime Minister to be held to the same standard he has set for his caucus.

[*Translation*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, not a week goes by without dozens of people from Trois-Rivières asking me to present this petition on their behalf.

The petitioners call on the Minister of Transport...to take the interests of the people of Trois-Rivières into account and invest in undertaking construction of the high-frequency train project in 2018.

I know full well that this is 2019, but this gives you an idea of the perseverance of the people of Trois-Rivières when it comes to this project.

[*English*]

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am tabling this petition in support of Bill S-240, which would combat the scourge of forced organ harvesting. I understand that the bill is in the other place, and I hope it will be passed quickly.

PENSIONS

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to add more petitioners to the thousands of Canadians who are demanding that the government withdraw Bill C-27.

I would like to pay tribute to JoAnne and Dale Lauber and all the activists involved from the BC Retired Teachers' Federation who have been approaching members of Parliament and collecting signatures. These teachers have given all their lives to the community and continue to give to better our country.

All these petitioners, the thousands who have signed thus far, are saying that given that the government actually promised that it would not gut defined benefit plans, Bill C-27 should be withdrawn, because it would jeopardize the retirement income security of Canadians who have negotiated defined benefit plans as a form of deferred wages.

● (1540)

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition in support of Bill S-240, which is now back in the Senate. The petitioners hope it passes very quickly.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I also table a petition in support of Pakistani Christian asylum seekers who find themselves in Thailand. There is concern about the need for protection and humane treatment of these asylum seekers, who often face very difficult conditions when they are in Thailand, having fled the challenges and persecution Christians face when they are in Pakistan.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following question will be answered today: Question No. 2312.

[*Text*]

Question No. 2312—**Mr. David Tilson**:

With regard to part (*c*) of the government's response to Q-2104, which was tabled on January 28, 2019, and states that "The client submits a completed application by mail to the Permanent Resident Card Processing Centre in Sydney, Nova Scotia. The application is verified for completeness. If it is not complete, the application is returned to the client.": (*a*) what are the average wait times for the return of applications which are not complete; and (*b*) is there any priority given to applications that have been deemed incomplete, once they are returned back to the Permanent Resident Card Processing Centre for a second time, or are the applications subject to the same waiting and processing times as a brand new application?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, IRCC, is concerned, in response to (a), as of March 5, 2019, the average processing time for IRCC to verify an application for completeness was 29 days from the day IRCC receives the original application. If it is not complete, the application is returned to the client. The return time has decreased significantly in the past year, from an average of 87 days between October and December 2018 to the current processing time of 29 days. These numbers do not include mailing time and are in calendar days.

As of March 5, 2019, the processing time to renew a permanent resident card was 32 days from the day the application is received to the day a final decision is made. The processing time does not include card printing time, which has a three-day service standard, and mailing time.

Note that the processing times are subject to change depending on available resources and volume of applications received.

In response to (b), applications previously returned as incomplete and resubmitted are subject to the normal processing times. They are not given priority processing.

[*English*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 2310, 2311 and 2313 to 2322 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 2310—**Mr. Murray Rankin**:

With regard to housing investments and housing assets held by the government: (*a*) how much federal funding has been spent in the riding of Victoria on housing over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (*b*) how much federal funding is scheduled to be spent on housing in the riding of Victoria over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (*c*) how much federal funding has been invested in cooperative housing in riding of Victoria over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (*d*) how much federal funding is scheduled to be invested in cooperative housing in the riding of Victoria over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (*e*) how many physical housing units were owned by the government in riding of Victoria over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (*f*) how many physical housing units owned by the government are scheduled to be constructed in the riding of Victoria over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; and (*g*) what government buildings and lands have been identified in the riding of Victoria as surplus and available for affordable housing developments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2311—**Mr. Murray Rankin**:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Victoria, between April 2016 and January 2019: (*a*) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (*b*) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Victoria that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (*c*) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Victoria by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (i.e. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2313—**Mr. Larry Maguire**:

With regard to all work permit applications processed by the High Commission of Canada located in Pretoria, South Africa, broken down by year since January 1, 2015: how many were (i) approved, (ii) denied?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2314—**Mr. Luc Thériault**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Montcalm, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions, and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 2315—**Mr. Luc Thériault**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions, and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2316—**Mr. Robert Aubin**:

With regard to project recommendations submitted by regional development agencies to the Office of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development since November 2015: (*a*) how many project recommendations were submitted to the Office of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, broken down by (i) year, (ii) project name, (iii) financial value, (iv) province, (v) constituency; (*b*) of the project recommendations listed in (*a*), which recommendations were approved by the Office of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) federal constituency; and (*c*) of the recommendations listed in (*a*), which recommendations were not approved by the Office of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) federal constituency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2317—**Mr. Robert Aubin**:

With regard to funding for the continued in-depth assessment of VIA Rail's high-frequency rail proposal for the Toronto-Quebec City corridor, including funding allocated in Budget 2016: what are the total expenditures, broken down by (i) year, (ii) ministerial portfolio, (iii) supplier, (iv) public opinion research?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2318—**M. Robert Aubin**:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Trois-Rivières, between April 2016 and January 2019: (*a*) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (*b*) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Trois-Rivières that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (*c*) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Trois-Rivières by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2319—**Mr. Brad Trost**:

With regard to reports by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and the Auditor General of Canada, and their recommendations to correct deficiencies in the Firearms Interest Police (FIP) database: (*a*) what is the status of the implementation of the recommendations of the Privacy Commissioner and Auditor General; (*b*) how are persons notified that they have been flagged in the FIP database; (*c*) how can persons flagged in the FIP Database access their records; (*d*) how can persons flagged in the FIP Database appeal to correct their records; and (*e*) what evidence is there that the FIP database has been an effective gun control measure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2320—**Mr. Brad Trost**:

With regard to paragraph 10.29 of the Auditor General's 2002 Report to Parliament, which outlines unreported costs that would be incurred by the government: what is the total amount for each of these unreported costs since 1995?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2321—**Mr. Brad Trost**:

With regard to firearms policy: has the government analyzed the benefits of gun ownership, and, if so, what are the details of such an analysis, including whether the government has analyzed the topics cited in the Library of Parliament, Parliamentary Research Branch paper entitled "The Benefits of Gun Ownership", prepared by Lyne Casavant, Political and Social Affairs Division, and Antony G. Jackson, Economic Division, dated April 2, 2004, namely (i) self-defensive use of firearms (i.e. firearms use to defend persons from human and animal attacks (wilderness survival); firearms use to defend homes and property from theft and robbery; victims of attempted homicide and assaults are less likely to be injured if they defend themselves with a gun than if they offer no resistance or use any other weapon to protect themselves; and robberies and thefts are less likely to be successfully completed if the victim is seen to be in possession of a firearm), (ii) deterrence to criminals and crime, (iii) economic benefits of firearms ownership (i.e. sustenance hunting; sport hunting (big game, small game, migratory birds); wildlife management and conservation; sport shooting — recreational, olympic and international competitions; gun clubs and shooting ranges; gun shows; predator control; hunting licence sales; firearms and ammunition sales; tourism — Canadian and foreign hunters; guiding and outfitting; gun collecting; gunsmithing; firearms and ammunition manufacturing; firearms importing and exporting; firearms museums; sporting goods sales, manufacturing and related goods; recreational vehicle manufacturing, sales and service; movie and television productions; historical re-enactments; and employment for Canadians in all of the above), (iv) family relationships and character development (i.e. turning around juvenile delinquents — reducing youth crime; sport open to all cultures and the handicapped; and to bring people and families together), (v) environmental benefits (i.e. wildlife habitat protection and conservation), (vi) firearms and aboriginal hunting rights (i.e. Aboriginal communities, business and employment; guiding and outfitting), (vii) firearms in war, defence of country and sovereignty (i.e. military manufacturing, imports and exports; Cadets, Arctic Rangers, Reserves, Coast Guard; military training, Army, Navy, Air Force; and fighting terrorism), (viii) gun owners available to assist police in emergencies, (ix) firearms and Canada's history, heritage and culture (i.e. historical re-enactments; museums; and antique firearms and ammunition collecting), (x) protecting Charter rights, freedoms and democracy (i.e. ultimate defence against government tyranny; protection of property rights; and right to life and security of the person)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2322—**Mr. Brad Trost**:

With regard to the continuous-eligibility screening of firearms licence holders and the Firearms Interest Police (FIP) database, for the year 2017: (*a*) how many FIP events were matched to a person with a firearms license; (*b*) how many FIP events were matched to a person without a firearms license; (*c*) what was the average time it took to initiate an investigation of a FIP event; (*d*) what was the average time it took to complete the investigation of a FIP event; (*e*) how many FIP events that resulted in firearms being removed from possession of the licensed gun owner; (*f*) how many FIP events that resulted in firearms being removed from possession of a person without a firearms license; (*g*) what was the average time it took from reporting of the FIP event to the firearms being removed from the possession of the licensed gun owner; and (*h*) what was the average time it took from reporting of the FIP event to the firearms being removed from the possession of the person without a firearms license?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC) moved:

That, given the Prime Minister has weakened Canada's international reputation during his disastrous trip to India and his capitulation to Donald Trump during NAFTA negotiations;

and given he continues to do so with his handling of the canola trade crisis with China;

the House call on the government to cancel its investment in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and immediately:

(a) appoint an ambassador to China;

(b) increase the cap and interest-free portion of the Advanced Payment Program; and

(c) launch a complaint at the World Trade Organization.

He said: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives are very proud to bring this debate to the floor today because, as Canadians have seen in the last three years, and as our allies, trading partners, long-time friends, and emerging partners around the world have seen, the rhetoric of the Prime Minister may be that Canada is back, but the reality has been anything but. When John Manley, a former Liberal prime minister, says that Canada has never been so alone in the world, we know that Liberal foreign policy has brought us to our nadir in world influence.

This crisis with China, and particularly the crisis with our canola producers, has resulted in a billion dollars in losses already. While many of my caucus colleagues will speak to that, I want to speak to the wider foreign policy failures of the current Liberal government, which are particularly due to the Prime Minister.

This motion will recommend the following: that we send an ambassador to China right away, that we bring world trade movement on the canola issue, and that the Prime Minister take action. It has been three months since Canada has had an ambassador to China, and our citizens and exporters are at risk.

The Canadians who are watching this debate and have seen the crisis with China that began late last year know that Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig are in prison with lights on 24-7, being questioned and abused. We know that Mr. Schellenberg and another Canadian yesterday had death sentences brought down on them. We know that thousands of Canadians have questions about travel to China, their visa status and their work status. There are hundreds of thousands of Canadians in China, Hong Kong included, but there has been literally no action by the Prime Minister.

It is not just China. This is what Canadians need to know. The failure of the Prime Minister, on a foreign policy level, is truly astounding. Let us go through some of the countries.

There is China, of course. There is Saudi Arabia, where a mistranslated tweet in Arabic has led to fewer physicians in our teaching hospitals and millions of dollars lost by all major universities in Canada. That came from a tweet, the kind of Twitter diplomacy that even long-time diplomats criticize heavily.

I cannot go any further without mentioning the India state visit. Not only did that set our relationship back and result in tariffs being imposed on lentils by the Indian government, but our relationship with an emerging Commonwealth partner is at its lowest point. The Prime Minister's gaffe-prone trip, where he invited a former criminal who had tried to assassinate an Indian official, has been the subject matter of global international ridicule, but more importantly it has hurt an important and emerging relationship with a key power like India.

In the Philippines, a faux pas by the Prime Minister led to Bell Helicopter in Montreal losing a helicopter order just because he had fumbled another relationship.

With respect to Japan, we know that last week the Prime Minister embarrassed Prime Minister Abe by referring to Japan twice as China. This was not only embarrassing but really catastrophic, because we are already repairing a relationship with Japan after the Prime Minister stood up world leaders in Vietnam at the trans-Pacific partnership leaders' meeting for a meeting with a Facebook executive.

I wish I were joking, but when we have Japan, Australia and New Zealand, some of our closest allies, the latter two being in the Five Eyes, producing international headlines ridiculing the Prime Minister of Canada because of his conduct, we know how bad it is getting. It is not just happening with challenging countries whose values we do not share, such as China and Saudi Arabia; some of our closest allies are asking what has happened to Canada.

The list continues. We have the United Kingdom and Belgium, where the Prime Minister stood up the royal family. There is Italy, where the Prime Minister compared ISIS fighters returning to Canada to Italian immigrants returning to Montreal after the war.

I wish I were kidding, but the bumbling son of a former Prime Minister, for whom a lot of people cut some slack for these gaffes, is hurting our international reputation. He is hurting citizens and exporters. Taken together, it is probably the biggest failure of the current government.

● (1545)

Then, of course, there is the United States. Anyone would have known the new administration would be a challenge in renegotiating NAFTA, an agreement that Conservatives brought, where the U.S. and Canada had a trade agreement before Mexico was added. The virtue signalling of the Prime Minister by bringing in non-trade issues that were related to his own brand made it complicated to make deals on auto, softwood and agricultural products. In the end, Mexico secured a deal and Canada was told to take it or leave it.

I should say that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

Literally, there is almost no relationship on the world stage that has not been diminished as a result of the Prime Minister and the Liberal government. It has been noticed. A headline in the National Post was “Earth to Trudeau—Fidel Castro was a brutal dictator, not a benevolent, grizzled uncle”. Who wrote that? It was Michael Den Tandt, who was later offered a job by the Liberal government, much like James Cudmore after writing negative things about the Norman case. Mr. Den Tandt is planning to run in Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, where he will be resoundingly defeated by Afghan war veteran Alex Ruff, who is the Conservative candidate there.

Let us see what a former ambassador to China from Canada said about the Prime Minister's approach to China. The headline in The Globe and Mail was “Trudeau’s embrace of China exposes his naïveté”.

● (1550)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I let it slide the first time, believing that the member had accidentally mentioned the Prime Minister by name. This is the second article in which he has made reference to the Prime Minister by name, and I would ask him to refrain from doing so.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Durham has heard the comments and I trust he will ensure that he refers to members in the House by their ridings or positions.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: I agree, Madam Speaker, and I apologize. In my rhetoric and passion, I let these headlines get the better of me.

Let us look at foreign policy. Canada historically has leveraged its national and shared interests with another country in order to advance values that maybe the other country does not share, values like human rights and respect for the rule of law. We use trade, economic relations, aid and development to leverage a relationship to have an influence in other areas, such as peace, security and human rights. That is the Canadian tradition and it has been Liberal and Conservative throughout our history, until the current Prime Minister, who puts his own brand or, in the case of India, his own electoral prospects in Canada ahead of our national interests and those of our exporters.

Do we think India will be taking some of our excess canola? Do we think the UAE or Saudi Arabia will be taking our excess canola, as, I would add, it has in the past? No. Canada has fewer options because the Prime Minister has allowed our reputation to be diminished on the world stage. It is one of the biggest reasons Canada, our people and our country need a change of government in October.

We balance interests and values. Sometimes they are aligned, as I mentioned, such as with Australia and New Zealand, whose values and interests we share, and it is easy. Diplomacy is truly an art when we do not share the values and we leverage trade and economic interest to be able to have an impact elsewhere. The Prime Minister has done it the opposite way. He puts his brand and his own electoral prospects ahead of the national interest, and our exporters are paying.

Let us look at China, which has brought us to this opposition day motion. We know the Prime Minister's much-ridiculed pre-election 2015 statement about his admiration for the basic dictatorship, but that underlined the naïveté that former ambassador Mulroney highlighted. Right off the bat, the Prime Minister established two foreign policy goals. He wanted a UN Security Council seat, and that election is not going well when we look at the list of countries upset with us, and he wanted a free trade agreement with China. To do this, the Prime Minister green-lighted a number of takeovers, including a security company called Norsat, which had contracts with the Pentagon. There was not even a security review of that contract.

We need to get back to basics. We need an ambassador who is not a hand-picked Liberal insider like Mr. McCallum. That is why Conservatives brought this debate today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if I were to pick and choose, I would reflect on Stephen Harper travelling to India and paying an extra million dollars to have a limousine go with him. I guess it was because there were no cars or vehicles in India. It was not well received back in India. Furthermore, when Stephen Harper made a trip to China, he made a commitment to bring back a panda, or something of that nature.

At the end of the day, the proof is in the pudding. We have seen an increase in the number of jobs from coast to coast to coast, in excess of 900,000 jobs. One of the reasons for that is the hard work that this government has invested in international trade. We have seen more trade agreements signed by this government than in 10 years of Stephen Harper. Conservatives can say what they will, but that is a fact and the reality.

Why not recognize that this government has done more for external trade opportunities than any other government in the last four decades? That is the reality.

● (1555)

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, 98% of Canada's export access has been negotiated by Conservative governments. That is a fact.

What is interesting, and the member would know this because he has been here a while, is that a former Liberal deputy prime minister and former Liberal foreign affairs minister like John Manley says that Canada has never been so alone in the world. Even Liberals' own insiders are saying that the Prime Minister has taken our reputation down several notches.

I refer the member to the last speech John McCallum gave in this place. He said this:

> ...when China and Canada have disagreed on something, and this sometimes happens, all three prime ministers I have served have drawn on this friendship to speak respectfully but frankly to their Chinese counterparts. I know this long tradition will continue.

The Prime Minister has not picked up the phone, has not sent a minister or an envoy for over four months. Canadians are in prison and there are billions of dollars in losses. It is his failed leadership.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, as vice-chair of the Standing Committee on International Trade, I know that the canola issue is something we have been seized with at the committee. We had an emergency debate at the committee that the opposition parties called for. We heard from farmers about the very desperate situation they are in.

Although we see the government coming forward with some funding today, it will not resolve this issue. At the heart of this issue is the diplomacy, the differences between our countries and what has happened with the detention in our country of a Chinese citizen. This is a very deep and serious issue. I hope that the Liberals will be taking it seriously, because what they have done today is not enough. They should not be patting themselves on the back.

One thing that has been called for by the canola farmers is to launch a WTO challenge. Canada is constantly having challenges lobbed at it and we are being dragged to the WTO over multiple trade issues on a constant basis. Here we see a clear-cut case for a challenge. Does the member agree with me that we need that WTO challenge to be initiated now, because we do not know how long this dispute will go on?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member for Essex. She likely notices that in our opposition day motion we talk about bringing that challenge to the conduct of the Chinese. We have recommended several other options, including with regard to the China-controlled Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. We have recommended envoys. We have pushed the government to take this seriously, because we saw the impact it would have on our citizens and our trade. It is a sign. Inaction by the Prime Minister is viewed as weakness.

This is why we have brought this debate. When we were in power, former minister Ritz had a market access secretariat. If there was a trade issue anywhere, he had people there and then he travelled there to get that access. Slowly, first with India on lentils, then with Italy on durum wheat and now with China on canola, we are losing market access, despite the sunny ways and photographs or, I would say, because of the sunny ways and photographs. When the Prime Minister goes to these countries and campaigns, they notice.

It is time for a serious approach and a new ambassador, but realistically, it is time for a new government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Durham for his excellent speech, for the very strong position he has taken and for his motion to protect Canadian canola producers.

Business of Supply

I now want to read out the motion. It was read out once before, but I think it is important for all Canadians to be aware of today's discussion.

My colleague from Durham moved:

> That, given the Prime Minister has weakened Canada's international reputation during his disastrous trip to India and his capitulation to Donald Trump during NAFTA negotiations;
>
> and given he continues to do so with his handling of the canola trade crisis with China;
>
> the House call on the government to cancel its investment in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and immediately:
>
> (a) appoint an ambassador to China;
>
> (b) increase the cap and interest-free portion of the Advanced Payment Program; and
>
> (c) launch a complaint at the World Trade Organization.

It is simple and easy. The government could have done something about the canola crisis a long time ago. Unfortunately this is just one more failure among many for the Liberal government when it comes to international trade and Canadian producers.

I would like to provide some context to explain why we are at this point today and why the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food today announced some initial measures to deal with the canola crisis.

It is very simple. For the past two months, the government has done absolutely nothing to help Canada's canola producers. There were three requests for an emergency debate. The first was rejected and the other two were accepted. The official opposition asked nine times for an emergency debate on the canola crisis. What happened every time? The Liberals refused to hold an emergency debate on a crisis that is affecting hundreds and thousands of Canadian producers.

The Liberal members for Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Quebec all refused to hold an emergency debate. They did not lift a finger to stand up for canola producers. We asked the House for the opportunity to debate this matter so that Canadian producers could have their voices heard in the House of Commons.

That is not all. Canadian canola producers, the Canola Council of Canada, provincial premiers and the Leader of the Opposition all had to intervene to identify measures that can be taken immediately to resolve the crisis. Members on the other side of the House apparently had no idea. The only thing they could do was wait for something to happen. That comes as no surprise from a party leader who thinks deficits disappear all by themselves. We all know the Prime Minister thinks deficits take care of themselves. A crisis involving China will not disappear on its own. If we do nothing, the crisis will go on.

On Monday, the Leader of the Opposition laid out a clear three-part plan. First, he urged the government to appoint a new ambassador to China without delay. Canadians need to know that Canada has been without an ambassador to China for three months now. Who can talk to Chinese authorities? Who has the moral authority? Who has the respect of Chinese authorities and can discuss the canola crisis? Nobody. The government fired the previous ambassador. Now we have no ambassador, and we want to resolve the crisis, but nobody is in a position to do that. This is scandalous.

The second request is to raise the cap for advance payments to $1 million and increase the interest-free portion of this program. This morning we learned that the government did that. The government decided to take action two months after the crisis began.

There is just one problem. Doing that without adopting other measures and improving trade is the equivalent of giving a credit card to someone who just lost their job without giving him the means to find a new job. That credit card bill will have to be paid one day. If the worker is not given employment, how is he supposed to pay off his credit card bill? If we do not find any alternative markets for Canadian canola, how are Canadian farmers going to repay these loans in 18 months?

● (1600)

This certainly needed to be done, but not without taking into account the other two aspects we discussed.

Thirdly, we are calling on the government to stand up to China by filing a complaint with the World Trade Organization, since China is violating international trade rules. It wants to be part of this great assembly of nations that hold discussions and have trading relationships, but there have to be rules.

China claimed that the canola sent by two Canadian companies, Richardson and Viterra, was substandard. However, the samples analyzed here in Canada show that that was not true. Canadian canola is the best in the world. Canadian companies that send canola to China are the best in the world. The quality is there.

If quality was not the problem, why were the exports blocked? There are all kinds of political reasons, but the Liberals do not want to talk about them. Above all, we cannot speak with China's ambassador to Canada. The Prime Minister cannot telephone his Chinese counterpart to discuss it. We are being told that we will wait for a technical solution.

Well, we have waited two months, and the drop in canola prices has cost producers $1 billion. Why? It is because the price of all Canadian canola, not just the canola exported to China, has dropped by 10%. Canola exports total $10 billion, so the loss is $1 billion. That is the reality. That is what the Liberals do not understand.

In addition, when the crisis started, farmers were getting ready to plant for the next season. The government does not care about planting. It is going to wait for the crisis to resolve itself. Farmers had to make a decision, and they had many questions. What would they plant? Would they have enough money? Would the crisis continue? Would they be able to continue exporting their canola? We also know that producers rotate their crops. If they are going to make changes, they have to make decisions well in advance. They want some guarantee of stability when the time comes to plant their fields. Unfortunately, the Liberals decided to wait, as they said the crisis would resolve itself. That is not true.

I would like to quote one of the farmers who testified in committee. Stephen Vandervalk, the vice-president of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, said:

> The timing of this issue and the timing of my being here could not be worse. I should be at home seeding.... The season is short, and this issue is weighing heavily on every grain farmer.

I had the opportunity to go to Winnipeg and speak with other farmers who all told me that what matters most right now is reopening markets in China. Canola farmers do not want a handout from the government. They want to be able to sell their products. They are proud of their lands and what they produce. They also want a government that will stand up for them, not an agriculture minister who sends a letter asking to send a delegation to solve a technical issue. Everyone agrees that we need to resolve this matter, but we have been waiting for an answer from China for a month now, and we are being told that all we can do is wait for its response.

This government is incapable of standing up for canola farmers. The only thing it knows how to do is get out the cheque book, because it has no other solutions. It is doing absolutely nothing to resolve this matter, and canola farmers will not stand for it. It is time we had a prime minister who will stand up for Canadians, for Canada's canola farmers and for all farmers across the country.

This is a serious crisis. We are losing thousands of dollars, and Canada's canola farmers need government support and someone who will stand up for them. If the Liberals will not do so, unfortunately for them, on October 21, we will take their place, and we will stand up for all of Canada's canola farmers.

● (1605)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as someone from the west, I want to assure those who are following this debate that this government has indeed been shoulder to shoulder with our canola producers, standing up for them in many different ways.

Today we announced an increase in the maximum loan limit, from $400,000 to $1 million. Interest rates have been forgiven, from $100,000 to $500,000. The government has been working with the different stakeholders, in particular our producers and others out in western Canada, to ensure we minimize the negative impact of what is taking place.

We have been doing this for weeks. However, it is only now that the Conservative Party is trying to raise the issue. When the Conservatives tried to raise it before, it was always that they need unanimous for this or that. They knew they were out of place at the time. Why did they not bring it in on an opposition day or something of that nature?

● (1610)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, we tried to raise it in committee, but they refused. We tried to raise it by requesting an emergency debate, but they refused.

I was in Winnipeg last week, close to my colleague from Winnipeg Centre's riding. Farmers in Winnipeg do not believe a single word he just said. They do not believe that the people from Winnipeg, the Liberals in western Canada, have stood up for them or that this government has defended them. I spoke to them. They called this a political crisis and wondered why their politicians were not getting involved and not including Chinese politicians in this crisis.

They are sick of the Liberals being elected. They are just plain sick of the Liberals. They cannot wait to have people in their riding who will represent them and stand up for them.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague knows how proud I am to represent a riding where the agri-food sector is the main economic driver.

Would he agree that the government's lack of support for canola farmers is yet more proof of its lack of consideration for the agri-food sector?

The farmers I represent became disillusioned in the first six months as they saw how little consideration the government gave to the agriculture sector in all of its international trade agreements and international relations, from the agreement with Europe to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, which, incidentally, had been initiated by the previous Conservative government.

Dairy farmers and food processors struggle to understand why 17,000 tonnes of European cheese is flooding into Canada. Our beef farmers cannot believe they are barred from exporting their beef to Europe. Veal farmers in my riding worry that Europe's veal market will kill our own. Farmers in supply-managed sectors are afraid of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the USMCA.

Does my colleague agree with Canadian farmers that this government's agriculture ministers have no voice at all at the cabinet table?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, my colleague is right.

This government is not interested in respecting the agricultural sector. Agriculture ministers were conspicuously absent from every trade mission to negotiate agreements such as the TPP and CETA.

The Liberal government's agriculture minister was not at the table for talks on agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is unwilling to talk to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food about the canola crisis. I even saw the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food laugh when we talked about how difficult things are on the international stage. We have problems with chickpeas in India, problems with durum wheat in Italy and Vietnam, problems everywhere, yet they sit there and do absolutely nothing. They have no interest in resolving international crises. All they want to do is wait until things sort themselves out.

We will wait until October 21. We will sort things out then.

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to point out that I farmed my ancestors' land for 40 years, so I too have experienced this sort of crisis first-hand.

I thank the members for Durham and Mégantic—L'Érable for their interest in this important issue for our canola farmers and our economy. The government is well aware of the concerns of farmers and their families regarding the current upheaval in international markets, particularly since it coincides with spring seeding. That is why, this morning, we announced two important measures that we are taking to support them at this difficult time.

First, we made changes to the advance payments program and the maximum loan amounts for 2019. The advance amounts for all agricultural products will increase from $400,000 to $1 million. The first $100,000 will remain interest-free for all producers, while the interest-free portion for canola farmers will increase to $500,000.

Second, we came to an agreement with the provincial and territorial governments to extend the application deadline for the AgriStability program by two months without penalty for 2019, from April 30 to July 2, 2019. This is a federal-provincial program that seeks to stabilize farm income whenever production margins experience significant decline. By giving farmers more time to register for the program and benefit from it, we are giving them another effective way of managing the risks associated with market volatility.

Canola is a symbol of agricultural innovation and prosperity for Canada. Today, the canola industry contributes nearly $27 billion to the Canadian economy, an amount that has tripled in the past 10 years.

Canada is the world's largest producer and exporter of canola. Canada's canola industry, producers and other stakeholders in the value chain have worked hard, and as a result, Canadian canola is recognized around the world as a top quality product. That is something we can be proud of.

Furthermore, we know that stable markets for our canola mean more money in producers' pockets and good jobs for the middle class. This is why the trade dispute with China over canola is a top priority for Canada. We take this issue very seriously and are working tirelessly to resume the trade of canola with China.

Canada has a strong, longstanding relationship with China. We are working on all fronts and are doing everything possible in China and here, in Canada. We are also working closely with the industry and the provinces. It is important to act based on science.

Canadian representatives inspected the canola seed shipments before they were exported to China. These inspections complied with all relevant procedures and analytical methods, and the representatives certified the shipments in accordance with the Chinese authorities' import requirements.

The data on the export samples and the investigations by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency support Canada's position that these pests were not present in the Canadian canola shipments. Our inspection system remains robust, and we will continue to stand up for the Canadian canola industry. We are looking to find a science-based solution as quickly as possible. Close collaboration and ongoing dialogue are absolutely essential to moving this issue forward.

● (1615)

A few weeks ago, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister of International Trade Diversification went to Saskatchewan to meet with their provincial counterparts and farm leaders. We set up a working group including the Canola Council of Canada, the Canadian Canola Growers Association, Richardson International, Viterra, and representatives from the federal government and the Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan governments.

The group will ensure that a collaborative and coordinated approach is taken to resolve the matter. Meanwhile, it will be looking at other potential markets for the short and medium terms. We continue to diversify our trade on the global market to give our farmers greater access to more markets for their canola, and to help them mitigate the risks associated with the closure of the Chinese market.

Last year, Canada's agriculture and food trade hit a new record of $66.2 billion. A record part of that sum came from markets other than our traditional trading partners.

Diversifying our trade relationships is vitally important and Canada has a strategy for that.

Under the Canadian agricultural partnership, we are investing almost $300 million over five years to help the industry grow trade and expand market access.

In the past 18 months, we have signed two trade agreements with some of our top markets in the world: the European Union; and the countries party to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, the CPTPP. The latter is already showing some encouraging signs of success.

For example, Canadian beef exports to Japan doubled in the first two months of 2019. Our pork exports increased by 14%. We expect these numbers to go up as a growing number of Canadian exporters take advantage of the market opportunities provided by the CPTPP.

Under the CPTPP, when tariffs are fully eliminated in Japan and Vietnam, the industry expects exports of Canadian canola oil and meal could increase by up to $780 million per year. We are optimistic about the enormous potential that this agreement has to offer.

As well, the Canada-United States-Mexico agreement will secure our $31-billion trade in agriculture and agri-food products with the United States and Mexico, including almost $5 billion in canola alone.

Thanks to all our trade agreements, Canada's canola producers will benefit from a competitive advantage in two-thirds of the world's markets. The Conservatives had 10 years to take action, but they never managed to make real progress. We are also continuing our efforts to further diversify our canola markets.

The Minister of International Trade Diversification will soon be leaving on a trade mission to Japan and South Korea to promote our canola, and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food will be attending the G20 agriculture ministers' meeting next week in Japan.

We stand firmly behind our canola producers at every opportunity. We also know that they are increasingly concerned about such issues as planting, storage and prices. As producers know, the government has two programs to help them manage risks and cash flow, and these were the subject of two announcements made today.

Canada's canola industry has ambitious plans for growth and innovation, which we actively support. The industry continues to develop new varieties of canola. The quality will be even better and the environmental footprint smaller. We are helping stimulate innovation in Canada's canola industry with a federal investment of $12 million in a canola research cluster.

● (1620)

Together with investments by canola producers themselves, the total investment will exceed $20 million.

Canada's canola industry has tremendous potential. To achieve that potential, we need to resolve trade disputes with China by fighting tooth and nail for our farmers. We will not stop fighting until the situation is resolved.

The opposition latched on to this issue just this week, but our government has been working very hard to take concrete steps. The government is collaborating with working groups and taking steps to diversify our markets. This issue continues to be a priority.

From the start, we have worked hand in hand with the industry and our provincial partners to find practical concrete solutions that will help our farmers now. We will do everything we can to resolve this trade dispute. Now that the members opposite have suddenly decided to take an interest in this issue, we hope we can count on their support in finding a solution.

We stand by canola producers and farm families across the country. We know Canada has the best canola in the world, and we are determined to resolve this issue.

Farmers are having a tough time right now, but we will get through it by having a frank and open dialogue and standing up for Canadian values and interests. There are lives at stake. Canada should take a single, consistent approach to these issues, not use these issues to score political points. We owe it to our farmers and their families.

In closing, I would like to tell the House what the Premier of Saskatchewan, Scott Moe, said this morning. He said that he appreciates the effort made by the federal government, which shows that it supports agriculture in western Canada and across the country. He also appreciates the fact that the government has moved forward with a plan for supporting these farmers as they go into spring seeding.

● (1625)

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague knows full well that when former prime minister Stephen Harper came into government, we had free trade agreements with four different countries. When he left, it was more than 50. We know which government stood up for free trade agreements around the world and certainly stood up for Canadian producers.

I want to question my colleague on his stance on the expansion of the advance payment program. This program will only work if the other issues are addressed, including reopening that Chinese market.

More than 40% of the 90% of our canola seed that we export goes to China. There is not another market in the world that can carry the displaced market we are losing from China, not Japan, not South Korea and not India.

Taking this advance payment program would put our farmers and our producers in debt. They will have to repay that debt within the next year. If we are unable to get access to that Chinese market, how does my colleague expect our farmers and producers to repay that debt?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, we put this program in place to help farmers who are starting to seed. We will keep working to open the markets quickly.

I want the House to know that the Government of Canada's priority is to restore full access to the Chinese market for our canola seed exports. We are still committed to resolving this issue, including through ongoing technical discussions. At present, these discussions are taking place via video conference, but we are ready to send our technical experts to China at the earliest appropriate time.

We continue to work with the provinces to help our farmers with programs that will support them through this situation.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is rather difficult to believe in the Liberals' competence right now. The parliamentary secretary boasted about having 40 years of experience in agriculture. However, the Liberals just signed agreements that gave away 10% of our dairy farmers' market share. What is more, the Liberals have still not begun to compensate these farmers, who are anxiously awaiting that compensation, since it equates to 30 days of pay to date.

The Liberals have also failed to do anything on the diafiltered milk file. The canola issue is a diplomatic crisis, but the government is trying to find a scientific solution. There has not been a Canadian ambassador in China for three months. The Liberals are dragging their feet on every agricultural file.

Why are they waiting so long to compensate those who need it and to find a diplomatic, rather than scientific, solution to this diplomatic crisis?

● (1630)

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Madam Speaker, I am wondering whether that question was about canola or about the recently signed trade agreements, since the member is talking about dairy farmers.

We understand the concerns of Canadian canola farmers and their families. Our priority is to regain full access to the Chinese market for our canola seed exports, while supporting our farmers.

We are looking at all possible scientific solutions. Canada believes that open, predictable, rules-based trade is the only way global trade can succeed in a way that benefits all citizens. We are maintaining our robust, world-class inspection system, and we will not give up until this situation is resolved.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his speech. At least there is a Liberal here who actually will talk about canola. It seems like the Liberals have been blocking it for the last six weeks.

The member talks about all the things the Liberals have been doing or are going to do. However, if they do not reopen this market, it is really useless. He talks about the trade delegations going to Japan and South Korea. I am going to check and see how much crush capacity is in Japan and South Korea, because canola is not served in a salt shaker. It needs to be processed. When it is shipped to Japan, it has to have crush capacity to turn it into oil and meal.

The Liberals think they can appease the Canadian population by saying they are doing something, but they are doing nothing. We have to reopen the market to China. What is the game plan to do that? Do you have a game plan? When is the minister going there? When will the Prime Minister pick up the phone and call the leader of China or even call the ambassador of China in Canada? Why have the Liberals not done that? This is crazy.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that he is to address his questions and comments to the Chair, not the individual member. He did at one point address him directly.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, a working group has been set up. It includes representatives from the canola producing sector, provincial governments and our government.

Restoring full access to the Chinese market for our exports is a priority for the Canadian government. At present, discussions are taking place via teleconferencing, but we are ready to—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member for Prince Albert that he had the opportunity to ask a question and comment. If he wishes to add something, he may want to try to see if he can be recognized again when it is time.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, so far, discussions have been taking place via teleconferencing, but we are ready to send our technical experts to China at the earliest appropriate time.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to re-emphasize that virtually from day, this government has been working shoulder to shoulder with the canola producers and other stakeholders—

Mr. Randy Hoback: You blocked an emergency debate. You're responsible for not seeing it in the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member for Prince Albert one more time that it is not his turn to speak at this point. Therefore, I would ask him to hold off on his questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, virtually from day one, this government, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture have been working shoulder to shoulder with Canadian canola producers and the various stakeholders, including the various provincial entities and other groups with a vested interest, to try to deliver something that is tangible. That has happened today, and it has been received exceptionally well in all corners.

We are doing more than that. We have brought forward the trade delegation, about which the parliamentary secretary talked. We have also looked at alternative ways to continue to expand the canola market. We have seen great success stories from our cattle and pork industries with respect to their expansion.

Would my colleague not agree that to a notable degree, this government has made canola a priority virtually from day one, which is more than can be said about the official opposition?

● (1635)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Madam Speaker, indeed, we have been working on this file since day one. It is important to remember that we have managed to maintain agreements that are working very well. Consider, for example, the seafood that we continue to send to Shanghai every day. Maple syrup also keeps going to China every day. While trying to reopen those markets, we continue to protect the markets we have at this time.

[*English*]

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that Liberals say the Conservatives have not been involved. I remember many times when the Conservatives stood to request an emergency debate on this. They were shut down procedurally. We have been involved in trying to do this for a long time.

With respect to what needs to be done, I note there is no more storage space in the canola bins on our farms. The Liberals are basically telling farmers that they need to pay for more bins to store something that needs to be moved now, and should have been moved a month ago. Farmers have had to make decisions recently.

How can the member say the Liberals are helping now?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant: Madam Speaker, our government continues to focus on trade. It has set an ambitious goal of increasing the export value of agri-foods to $75 billion by 2025. In 2018, Canada exported over $11 billion in canola products to more than 50 markets. We know that access to new markets for our high-quality Canadian canola means more money for our farmers and creates good jobs for Canadian farm families and middle-class families.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I recognize the next speaker, I would like to take a couple of seconds to wish my husband a happy 37th wedding anniversary. It is the least I can do, since I cannot be with him today. I know hon. members fully understand what this is all about.

[*Translation*]

Order. 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 Windsor West, Automotive Industry; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, Social Development.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Essex.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will take a quick moment out of my time to congratulate you and your husband on 37 years of marriage. All of the partners of members of Parliament who serve along with us certainly play a big role. To my own husband, Germaine, I also say thank you for that.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques today to speak about the opposition motion.

Before I do that, though, I want to set the record straight a little. We have heard from the Liberals today about the opposition parties not bringing this forward at any other time. I would like to say that the NDP attempted to bring this before the agriculture committee as a very important issue and could not achieve that.

As vice-chair of the international trade committee, I was a participant in calling for an emergency meeting. We were able to achieve that, but we had only two meetings. In this Liberal-majority committee, we were only able to secure two meetings on canola. As members can see, there is no report before the House. The Liberals are speaking about the importance of this issue, but that certainly was not reflected at committee by the Liberal members who sit there, so I would like to set the record straight.

I would like to start with some facts about the canola industry, because it is important that we understand what is at risk here, and there is a great deal at risk.

The canola sector contributes $26.7 billion toward our overall GDP, much of it through exports. The total value of canola exports in 2017 was $11.4 billion. Canada shipped $1.7 billion worth of soybeans to China in 2018, $2.7 billion worth of canola; and $514 million worth of pork.

There is a lot at stake in our relationship with China, and recently we have heard from the Chinese that they are looking at other commodities to impact. The fact that today there was some badly needed movement on the canola file does not insulate and protect us from what could be coming forward, unfortunately, in this very bad trade relationship in which we currently find ourselves.

Bank of Canada Governor Stephen Poloz was quoted as saying that the global trade war was “the biggest threat” to the Canadian economy. We need to take this issue seriously.

This could be the beginning of a very difficult trade period for our agricultural communities. There are 250,000 Canadian jobs related to canola. A lot of folks across our country rely on canola for their livelihood, not just farm families but everyone involved in the production down the line. The value of farm cash receipts for canola was $9.9 billion in 2017. That makes canola Canada's top agricultural commodity. Canola is a homegrown Canadian success story and a major driver of our agricultural exports.

At the committee, we heard from farmers who are very concerned. Currently they have the seed on their farms and they are ready to go for this year, but they find themselves in a financial position where they cannot back away. Quite frankly, canola has been quite good to these farmers and their families and the communities where they live. When they are rotating crops, it has become a necessity for them to use this to be able to make money to sustain themselves.

It is very important that we work hard to get out of this precarious position that we are in. Canola producers should not be paying the price for the Liberals' icy relationship with China. Our farmers need a government that will stand up to China.

New Democrats will be supporting the motion before us today because we recognize the importance of canola farm families and the canola producers in our country and the importance across our entire country of canola as a very critical export.

Currently we are going to other countries, but China is certainly the number one destination for our canola. We heard from farmers at the committee that they have enjoyed a good relationship with China. They have never had any of these issues come forward in the past. They have been able to send canola, and our canola is quite highly sought after, as members can imagine, in China. This issue does not stem out of their relationship with their trading partners there; they are being caught up in a diplomatic problem that the Liberals currently have with the Chinese government.

The decision to stop accepting or to delay shipment Canadian canola is very concerning and completely unjustifiable. Hard-working Canadian canola producers in our canola industry are in a crisis. It is essential that these people do not suffer from these current diplomatic problems between Canada and China.

I want to talk a little about what has happened here, but also about the decision being completely unjustifiable.

● (1640)

If we ask canola farmers, those in canola communities, or average Canadians why we currently find ourselves in this situation, they understand—because certainly this issue has been across the national new recently—that these actions are about a tit-for-tat and that we cannot just stand by and let this situation threaten Canadian jobs. Canola producers should not be the ones who are paying the price for the Liberals' inability to fix their dispute with China.

We know that part of this motion today relates to not having an ambassador to China. We actually have no one at the diplomatic level who can have those conversations with China. We have no one in China right now who is representing us in an ambassadorial role. The Liberals will say that we do have folks over there, but this is the way that our diplomatic system works. It is an ambassador who would be the key person to talk through this dispute. With the lack of that person, the Liberals are not taking this issue seriously enough. As I have said, we rely on other commodities being exported, but those commodities are already being threatened. What are the Liberals waiting for? When it comes to appointing an ambassador, the time is now.

New Democrats do not agree with Canada's membership in the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank or any efforts that results in the privatization of public infrastructure, whether here or abroad. We know that the Conservatives supported our participation in the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank. At the time, New Democrats raised the alarm and said that we should not be a part of it. Now that we find ourselves in this trade dispute, the Conservatives are coming on board with the NDP to say that we cannot be a part of a bank that is funding private infrastructure for China when we are suffering under China's unfair attack on our canola sector, so we are pleased that the Conservatives are calling for this along with New Democrats.

I will talk about today's announcement.

We certainly saw the limit increased beyond the previous $400,000. This is something that farmers have asked for, but this alone is not enough, because these farmers, once they plant and harvest, are going to be looking for a market for their canola. If they cannot find a market for that canola, then that canola will sit, and it is a perishable item. It cannot just sit on farms indefinitely. This is a cyclical problem, and it is not ending with this announcement today. It is a beginning and it is part of what needs to happen, and I know that the canola farmers will be pleased to see this step by the government, but that alone will not resolve this very serious issue that we find ourselves involved in.

As New Democrats, we also strongly believe that the Liberals need to file a complaint with the World Trade Organization. Why is the Liberal government so afraid to launch complaints? No one else is afraid to launch complaints against Canada at the WTO. The U.S., other countries and all kinds of people are launching complaint after complaint at us. Why is it that we are so timid in that space?

We just had the steel producers asking for safeguards, which the Liberals failed to do. They let down steel producers and steelworkers in this country. Why? It is because they do not have the courage to challenge them. We are being challenged on trade at every single turn, and no matter how many agreements we sign, that is not going to stop the fact that we are going to continue to be challenged, because we have painted a big target on ourselves. We have said that we are nice. Canadians are nice, and we play by the rules. Other countries are not playing by the rules, and they are not being nice to Canada. What do we do? No, we are not going to launch a complaint. Why? We still do not have an answer as to why we have not launched a WTO complaint right now on the canola issue.

Yes, there is a working group, but the working group, I believe, will result in asking the government to launch a complaint. We have no choice. Across the globe we see that trade is being challenged in every single country. It is time for Canada to stand on its own two feet and show the courage that is necessary to protect the industries at home—farmers, in this case—who need our help.

We are initially talking about two major Canadian grain companies, Richardson International and Glencore, which was Canada's Viterra. Their export licences, of course, were revoked, but this is just the beginning of what could end up hitting our pork and soybean industries. It is very important, and the Liberal government must consider a wide range of options to restore this market access.

We are not going to be able to get canola into other countries fast enough by the end of this harvest season. It is time for us to stand up for canola producers and truly look at every single one of the steps that we have: appoint an ambassador, talk about getting out of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and do everything we can to support agricultural canola farmers in Canada.

● (1645)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Essex points out some extremely important things about this debate. It is a non-partisan debate. This is about Canadians on the ground who are losing, in many cases, their entire livelihoods. I think all of us here are ashamed at the weak response of the Prime Minister and the Liberal government.

The Prime Minister stated before the election that he admired the basic dictatorship of China. This seems to be holding him back from any action. We have been asking for an emergency debate every day for the last several weeks. The Liberals keep blocking it by moving to the orders of the day. Finally, we get this debate and we only get one hour to debate this important issue. That is just shameful.

How dangerous is this weak, dithering approach by the Prime Minister to the future of Canadian trade? When does the member think the government will actually take action?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, most certainly Canada has not been showing strength under the Liberal government and under the Prime Minister when it comes to trade disputes. We saw that in the renegotiation of NAFTA. We ended up with a worse deal than we had before. How is that possible? Some aggressive bargaining happened and the Liberals stood and talked about it.

We are not doing well with respect to trade. We are having disputes with our closest trading partners. We are now talking about farmers who are at great risk. We could be doing a lot. Why are we not sending an attaché to China right now? Why is that not happening? Why is the agriculture minister not in China? Why is she in the House? That makes zero sense.

Considering the fact that this is our largest export, why on earth are the Liberals not showing any strength by getting to China and resolving this issue? It is a baffling question. I have absolutely no idea why the Prime Minister refuses to have the backbone to go and stand up for Canadians. It is extremely frustrating across the spectrum.

● (1650)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, based on what my colleague just said, I wonder if the government should take drastic measures immediately instead of taking the diplomatic route to resolve this problem. It is a serious problem that affects a major market for Canadian canola farmers.

What does my colleague suggest? Is she suggesting that we take drastic measures at the risk of losing these major markets?

[*English*]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, I am baffled by that question, to be quite honest. I am not sure what the member is suggesting. Is he suggesting force, that we go in militarily? I do not know what that question even means.

We have been pretty clear about what we are suggesting, which is to go to China and to appoint an ambassador to China. Let us talk about the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Let us pull out of that. We could be doing many things. I do not know the member's definition of force, so I will take him at his word that he means to be strong. The New Democrats are asking the government to stand up, to be strong and to take these other initiatives.

Let us send someone, a trade attaché, to China. Let us resolve this face to face. Let us get an ambassador over there as soon as possible, because this is only the beginning. China is already threatening us on other commodities. We need to be prepared.

We have not even talked about the fact that lives are hanging in the balance. The lives of Canadians who are detained and imprisoned right now are hanging in the balance because we have no diplomatic tie there. No one is going to China where Canadians are being detained. Canadians are being sentenced to death right now in China and the government is sitting in Ottawa. It is not sending our foreign affairs minister, nor our agriculture minister, nor our Prime Minister to China to do what needs to be done, and that is to stand up for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Essex for the excellent speech she gave. She spoke at length about canola, and I will be focusing first and foremost on the diplomatic issue.

This situation has been going on for over three months. Our ambassador to China was fired, resigned or was “asked to resign” over some awkward remarks he made about the highly sensitive case of Huawei's chief financial officer being held here in Canada. This resignation or firing made sense, because he had definitely crossed the line.

However, as we have been saying from the beginning, this government's mistake was not having a plan B. For all his flaws, Mr. McCallum, the former ambassador, had a special relationship with China. He understood the spirit, the thinking and the diplomatic philosophy that was needed to approach the Chinese government. That is extremely important in diplomatic circles. Just as we hope that ambassadors representing other countries in Canada understand how the government operates, we need to be able to demonstrate the same knowledge at our embassies abroad. Mr. McCallum had that special relationship with China, but now it is lost. That is why it was doubly important to replace him promptly.

Three days after Mr. McCallum's departure, Guy Saint-Jacques, a former Canadian ambassador to China, said that if the ambassador could not be replaced immediately, we should at least send a special envoy. This would have shown that we take the situation and our relationship with China seriously. The fact that stand-ins and backups are currently representing the Canadian embassy in China is not necessarily an insult, but I must say that it does not show respect for China. This has created all kinds of problems, and the canola issue is one of them.

We know about Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, the two Canadians who are currently in prison. In three months, two Canadians have been sentenced to death. This is obviously in retaliation for Canada's inability to maintain sensitive, reasonable diplomatic relations with China.

I want to quickly address the canola situation. This is a problem because, as my colleague mentioned, this product is right at the top of the list. We know very well that China's decision to revoke the canola export permits has nothing to do with the quality of the product. The decision was quite obviously made in retaliation. Other Canadian products like pork, peas and soybeans are currently in jeopardy. What will happen if China decides to move forward and ban these Canadian products from the country? At what point will the government step up and say that this is unacceptable? We must fight and complain to the World Trade Organization. We must use the trade tribunals. My colleague mentioned that other countries do not hesitate to do this with us. If the reason truly is unfair, as is the case here, then we should start using the tools at our disposal.

What is the government going to do now that canola is under attack? If soybeans and pork are targeted, will it finally wake up and do something? In light of the government's inept handling of this diplomatic relationship, I am seriously starting to doubt it. This is a problem because things are not going to get better.

I believe it is now clear that China is feeling out this relationship and sees that we are not reacting. It sees that we have no intention of appointing a Canadian ambassador to China, that we have no intention of sending a special envoy to open the dialogue. The Prime Minister has not even bothered to call his Chinese counterpart. There is no acceptable line of communication open to Chinese representatives. Therefore, chances are that in order for Canada to get respect, it will also have to show signs of strength. I am not referring to military strength, as the parliamentary secretary seemed to allude to, but we have to establish our own means of retaliation. The issue of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, in which we have invested $256 million over five years, is part of this.

● (1655)

Why invest in an infrastructure bank when we have our own? In both cases, it is a bad idea. Infrastructure banks serve to facilitate the privatization of public assets and income.

Investors in an infrastructure bank, whether it be the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank or the Canada Infrastructure Bank, want a return on their investment. If they want a return on their investment, there must be some way to achieve that. This is done through user fees, such as tolls, which are forced sources of income. These are forced fees for these pieces of infrastructure. The public loses control to the private sector. Our governments have made us complicit in the way the private sector is taking over, taking control of our infrastructure, or Asian infrastructure in this case, with the government's blessing.

Some $256 million has been invested in that bank, with the goal of obtaining a 1% share of the bank. At first the government tried to sell us on this idea by saying that it would serve as a gateway for our businesses, which could benefit from contracts with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Well, first of all, the bank's articles of agreement prevent it from giving preferential treatment to any country when awarding contracts, whether that country is a member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank or not. Second, no Canadian firm has been awarded a contract since the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. That settles that.

If we want to send China a clear message that it is not playing by established trade rules and if we want to stand up for ourselves, we can pull out of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. We can also exert pressure by filing a complaint with the World Trade Organization, as the former Canadian ambassador to China, Guy Saint-Jacques, suggested. We also plan to have a delegation at the 2022 Olympic Games in Beijing. Chinese athletes are currently training in Canada. We can graciously send them back to their country to send the message that the situation is unacceptable and this is our way of standing up and expressing our displeasure. I am not saying that this would improve the relationship, but at this point, nothing can.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food said that this needs to be resolved through diplomatic channels. I agree, but we do not have an ambassador. Canada has not had an ambassador in China for three months, and the government has not given any indication that it intends to appoint one.

It is true that we need to use diplomatic channels. That only makes sense, but the government needs to make that the priority. The government needs to stop improvising all the time and start taking the situation seriously.

One can hope for the best by being nice to a giant like China, but that is not what has happened so far, quite the contrary. The government needs to hire or appoint an ambassador as soon as possible. The Liberals need to appoint someone who is very familiar with China and who understands the situation so that we can open a real dialogue.

If the government does not intend to do that, which appears to be the case right now, then we need to start thinking about sending a special envoy to open a dialogue, which should have happened three months ago. Right now, there is nothing to indicate that the government plans to do that. If it does not, then the Minister of Foreign Affairs or, ideally, the Prime Minister, needs to contact their counterpart in China to try to rethink and improve that relationship, to reach and understanding and to pave the way for the new ambassador.

We will support the Conservatives' motion in spite of its omissions. This is a complex situation, after all. We are going to support it because the Liberal response to the canola crisis and to our companies' exclusion from the Chinese market is unacceptable.

The Liberal response is unacceptable and far too tepid. The absence of a Canadian ambassador to China is compromising diplomatic relations, making it very difficult to resolve a number of problems. For various reasons, we should never have invested in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Pulling out of this bank would send a clear message that we are standing firm against the pressure being exerted on Canada.

● (1700)

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is about one of the frustrations I am hearing from farmers back in western Canada about the fact that they cannot seem to get attention from Ottawa and make the Liberal government recognize how important this issue is, how seriously it needs to be treated and how they need action as soon as possible.

Does he have any advice for this House and the farmers back in western Canada about what we can do to make sure that the government understands the consequences of the Liberal leader's foreign trips and that when he goes abroad and upsets all the customers we sell commodities and products to, it impacts us here at home? Can he give us any advice on what we can do to hold the Liberals' feet to the fire so that we can get the results we need for our farmers?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question. I know he was involved in the grain sector in the past. The canola issue is also important.

I think that the Canadian Canola Growers Association and canola producers have done their job by putting pressure on the government and asking a few weeks ago for the appointment of an ambassador to start fixing the problem. They are a powerful voice for the industry, but they are not being heard.

There have been many calls for an emergency debate. My colleague spoke about the fact that she asked to discuss the canola issue in committee. When her request was approved, they held just two insignificant meetings and no report followed.

It is clear, then, that the government is not interested in taking a thoughtful and systematic approach to this issue, and that we must continue to fight together with our partners. In the case at hand, we are working with canola representatives, but eventually it may be representatives of the pork or soybean sectors, although I hope it does not come to that.

● (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the issue has been going on for many weeks now, and it is only in recent days that the New Democrats and the Conservatives have given it any attention in question period. That is true.

This is a government that has been working with provincial entities, our producers and other stakeholders to bring together what we have witnessed today, which is a tangible action that is going to make a difference. There is also a commitment to continue to work with provincial jurisdictions and stakeholders to ensure that we can look at alternative ways to get products to market.

I believe that the producers and others recognize that this government has the backs of our farmers. Our actions clearly demonstrate that. Does the member have anything to say about the package announced today?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Madam Speaker, everything he said at the start is totally false.

As I said in my speech, the Conservatives made a few requests for an emergency debate. Debates were requested several times as soon as this whole thing started. My colleague spoke about this situation in committee, where members asked not only that the minister appear, but that we hold a meaningful and full debate on the canola issue. That request was initially denied and at the end of the day, two meetings were granted. What he said at the beginning was false.

We have another problem right now. The canola issue is a major problem, but it is just one aspect of Canada's current diplomatic crisis with China. Since December, and more specifically since January, the government has been improvising a lot in this extremely important relationship that we have with this world giant. Three months into this crisis and we are nowhere near a resolution. In fact it looks like things might escalate with reprisals targeting not only Canadian canola farmers, but possibly pork and soya producers, as well.

All we want to do is to condemn the Liberals' obviously improvised approach to Canada's relationship with China. That is why we will be supporting the Conservative motion.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to put a human face to this debate this afternoon. A lot of farmers in my riding, across western Canada and even some in Ontario and Quebec are really concerned with the lack of inactivity from the government and how it has put their livelihoods at stake and in jeopardy.

It has been said that the Liberal leader is out fiddling around while canola farmers burn, and that is very true. That is exactly what is happening today.

I also want to say how frustrated I am with this situation. I am frustrated because we have tried over and over again to give this situation the attention it deserves, to try to create a positive situation and get a game plan put in place to get a positive resolution for our farmers. The Liberal government has basically blocked everything we have done. It has used procedural tactics to do that.

This afternoon I do not get a full 10 minutes to talk and I do not get a chance to answer questions. Other colleagues want to talk on this topic today, but they will not get that chance. This is because the member from Winnipeg keeps blocking us over and over again. We have made nine requests for an emergency debate and he has used procedural tactics to stop that every time.

When we asked for an emergency debate on this issue at agriculture committee, the Liberal members would not allow it. They will not even call their own Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to talk about this issue. It is embarrassing. Then the member for Winnipeg North says that the government has farmers' backs. That is absolute hogwash and farmers know that.

I was in Winnipeg last week and I sat down with a group of producers. It was really emotional. I am really concerned about their mental health. I am worried about suicides on the farm because of the implications those guys over there have put them under.

One farmer told us last week that he had not even decided yet what he would seed. He was going to hit the field this Monday, but he did not know how many acres of canola, how many acres of oats and wheat and barley he would to seed. He was not confident that the Liberal government would resolve the canola issue.

Canola is a very expensive crop to seed. The inputs are fairly high. That farmer would like to have some confidence in the government and know that the government is taking this issue seriously for him to take the risk. He would like to see the possibility of this market reopening so he can get a good price for his good quality product.

What did we hear from the government last week? Nothing. What did we hear from the government two weeks ago? Nothing. It did say it would put a working group together. What did we hear from the government from March 11 forward?

On March 11, when this first came out, the Minister of Agriculture was in western Canada, but she did not stop in Saskatchewan. She did not talk to canola producers. We had to shame her into coming back. We had to inform her that she did not need a passport to come to Saskatchewan. That is embarrassing.

Last Tuesday the Prime Minister was in Saskatoon for private meetings. I do not know who he met with, but I know the premier said he never met with him. He never met with canola producers.

We have a crisis going on in the province of Saskatchewan. We had two things going on last Tuesday. We had a very bad grass fire and we had many canola producers trying to figure out a path forward before they seeded. The Prime Minister was in town and he would not even talk to a farmer. He would not even talk to the premier. Talk about who is having private meetings and for what. We do not know.

Let me get back to the farmer about whom I was talking. He told us about the economic consequences of what had happened. Right now, of his 1,000 acres of canola, he has lost roughly $50 an acre and he figures it will get worse. That is $50,000 out of his back pocket. I want to ensure that everybody understands this. That money is out of his back pocket, not CP's, not JRI's, not the shippers who ship it across the ocean. They all get their cut. It is the farmer who will pay. The farmer will lose the market value. Again, we get a shrug and an “oh, well.” That is the way it is with the Liberals. It is what they did to forestry workers, and they are doing the same thing now to farmers and canola producers.

I talked to another farmer. He showed me the canola in his bin. He told me that canola producers had a tough harvest last year, that some of the canola was not of the best quality and would not keep the way it should. He said that it needed to be moved. He is now looking at a falling market and a situation where he will have a tough time moving his canola. He will do the best he can, because that is what farmers do. They do the best they can, given the situations they have to face. There is no question that we grow the best crops in the world. Farmers will take the environment and all those conditions in stride and do what they can to ensure they survive.

What they do not need is the Liberals shutting down markets around the world, and that is what the Liberal government has done.

● (1710)

Let us look at the situation right now facing farmers. With regard to durum in Italy, what has been the response from the government? Nothing. With regard to pulses in India, what has been the response from the government? Nothing.

Saudi Arabia is a big market for Canadian farmers. We sold a lot of barley and canola into that marketplace. Because of one tweet, it is not buying anything from Canada. I am not saying we should not be talking to the Saudis about human rights and women's rights; we should be. However, when we cut off all economic activity with Saudi Arabia, we have zero influence in that environment right now. How do we move those yardsticks in a positive fashion?

We have a non-tariff trade dispute with Vietnam at this point. What is the government's response? Nothing.

Business of Supply

Now there is China. No wonder the Chinese said that it could put a tariff on canola or just shut it down. The Chinese know we will do nothing, because we have such a weak leader on the world stage. Therefore, they can do whatever they want because there will be no response from the Liberal government.

The people paying for the mistakes the Liberal government is making on the international scene are our manufacturers, forestry workers and, in this situation, our farmers. It is unfair to ask them to pay for Liberal mistakes. The Liberals are making mistakes day in and day out.

In fact, one farmer in Winnipeg asked me to do farmers a favour, to steal the Prime Minister's passport so he could not leave Canada and do any more damage abroad. The Liberals have done so much damage. There is so much work to be done and we know the Liberal government is not up to it. Therefore, in October, we will ensure there is a government here that will be up to it and fix all of that damage.

● (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

● (1755)

(The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 1302)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Allison
Angus
Ashton
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Bergen
Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boucher
Boulerice
Brassard
Calkins
Caron
Chong
Clarke
Cooper
Davidson
Deltell
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Eglinski
Falk (Provencher)
Finley
Gallant
Genuis
Gourde
Harder
Hughes
Kelly
Kitchen
Kusie
Laverdière
Liepert
Lobb
MacGregor
Maguire
Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Nantel
Nicholson
O'Toole
Pauzé
Poilievre
Raitt
Rankin
Reid
Richards
Saroya
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
Trudel
Vecchio
Wagantall
Waugh
Yurdiga

Albas
Alleslev
Anderson
Arnold
Aubin
Barrett
Beaulieu
Benzen
Berthold
Blaikie
Block
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau
Cannings
Carrie
Choquette
Clement
Cullen
Davies
Diotte
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseault
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Fortin
Garrison
Gill
Hardcastle
Hoback
Julian
Kent
Kmiec
Kwan
Leitch
Lloyd
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Martel
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz
Nater
Obhrai
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Quach
Ramsey
Rayes
Rempel
Sansoucy
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stetski
Stubbs
Thériault
Trost
Van Kesteren
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Zimmer– — 132

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Arya
Badawey
Bains
Beech
Bibeau

Alghabra
Arseneault
Ayoub
Bagnell
Baylis
Bendayan
Bittle

Blair
Boissonnault
Bossio
Bratina
Breton
Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Champagne
Chen
Cormier
Cuzner
Dabrusin
DeCourcey
Dhaliwal
Dhillon
Drouin
Dubourg
Duclos
Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz
Easter
Ehsassi
El-Khoury
Ellis
Erskine-Smith
Eyking
Eyolfson
Fergus
Fillmore
Finnigan
Fisher
Fonseca
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Fuhr
Garneau
Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale
Gould
Graham
Hajdu
Hébert
Hehr
Hogg
Holland
Housefather
Hutchings
Iacono
Joly
Jones
Jordan
Jowhari
Khalid
Khera
Lambropoulos
Lametti
Lamoureux
Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Leboutillier
Leslie
Levitt
Lightbound
Lockhart
Long
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McDonald
McGuinty
McKay
McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès
Mendicino
Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef
Morneau
Morrissey
Murray
Nassif
Nault
Ng
O'Connell
Oliphant
Oliver
O'Regan
Ouellette
Paradis
Peschisolido
Peterson
Philpott
Picard
Poissant
Qualtrough
Ratansi
Rioux
Robillard
Rodriguez
Rogers
Romanado
Rota
Rudd
Ruimy
Rusnak
Sahota
Saini
Sajjan
Sangha
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schiefke
Schulte
Serré
Sgro
Shanahan
Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand
Simms
Sohi
Sorbara
Spengemann
Tabbara
Tan
Tassi
Tootoo
Vandal
Vandenbeld
Virani
Weir
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj
Yip
Young
Zahid– — 163

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

Private Members' Business

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CREDIT CARD FAIRNESS ACT

The House resumed from April 10 consideration of the motion that Bill C-419, An Act to amend the Bank Act, the Trust and Loan Companies Act, the Insurance Companies Act and the Cooperative Credit Associations Act (credit cards), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-419.

● (1800)

(The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 1303)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Albrecht
Alleslev
Allison
Anderson
Angus
Arnold
Ashton
Aubin
Barlow
Barrett
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Benson
Benzen
Bergen
Berthold
Bezan
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block
Boucher
Boudrias
Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet
Brassard
Brosseau
Calkins
Cannings
Caron
Carrie
Chong
Choquette
Clarke
Clement
Cooper
Cullen
Davidson
Davies
Deltell
Diotte
Doherty
Donnelly
Dreeshen
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault
Eglinski
Erskine-Smith
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)
Fast
Finley
Fortin
Gallant
Garrison
Genuis
Gill
Gourde
Hardcastle
Harder
Hoback
Hughes
Julian
Kelly
Kent
Kitchen
Kmiec
Kusie
Kwan
Laverdière
Leitch
Liepert
Lloyd
Lobb
Lukiwski
MacGregor
MacKenzie
Maguire
Martel
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore
Motz
Nantel
Nater
Nicholson
Obhrai
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Pauzé
Plamondon
Poilievre
Quach
Raitt
Ramsey
Rankin
Rayes
Reid
Rempel
Richards

Private Members' Business

Sansoucy
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stetski
Stubbs
Thériault
Trost
Van Kesteren
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga
Saroya
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
Trudel
Vecchio
Wagantall
Waugh
Weir
Zimmer– — 134

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Arya
Badawey
Bains
Beech
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Breton
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Champagne
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeCourcey
Dhillon
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Iacono
Jones
Jowhari
Khera
Lametti
Lapointe
Lebouthillier
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef
Morneau
Murray
Nault
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Picard
Qualtrough
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Alghabra
Arseneault
Ayoub
Bagnell
Baylis
Bendayan
Bittle
Boissonnault
Bratina
Carr
Chagger
Chen
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
El-Khoury
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Garneau
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Hajdu
Hehr
Holland
Hutchings
Joly
Jordan
Khalid
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Maloney
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Morrissey
Nassif
Ng
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Poissant
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Virani
Wrzesnewskyj
Young
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandenbeld
Whalen
Yip
Zahid– — 160

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

● (1805)

[*Translation*]

EXPUNGEMENT OF CERTAIN CANNABIS-RELATED CONVICTIONS ACT

The House resumed from April 11 consideration of the motion that Bill C-415, An Act to establish a procedure for expunging certain cannabis-related convictions, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading of Bill C-415, under private members' business.

● (1810)

(The House divided on the motion, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 1304)

YEAS

Members

Angus
Aubin
Baylis
Benson
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boulerice
Brosseau
Caron
Clement
Cullen
Davies
Donnelly
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Erskine-Smith
Garrison
Hardcastle
Julian
Kwan
Lloyd
Masse (Windsor West)
Moore
Oliver
Plamondon
Ramsey
Reid
Schmale
Stetski
Thériault
Trudel
Ashton
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Blaikie
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Cannings
Choquette
Cooper
Dabrusin
Diotte
Dubé
Dusseault
Fortin
Gill
Hughes
Kmiec
Laverdière
MacGregor
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Nantel
Pauzé
Quach
Rankin
Sansoucy
Ste-Marie
Sweet
Tilson
Waugh

Webber
Yurdiga– — 61

Weir

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Alghabra
Allison
Anderson
Arseneault
Ayoub
Bagnell
Barlow
Beech
Benzen
Bezan
Bittle
Block
Bossio
Brassard
Breton
Carrie
Chagger
Chen
Clarke
Cuzner
Davidson
Deltell
Dhillon
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyolfson
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Finley
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garneau
Gerretsen
Goodale
Gourde
Hajdu
Hébert
Hoback
Holland
Hutchings
Joly
Jordan
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Lametti
Lapointe
Lebouthillier
Levitt
Lobb
Long
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Maguire
Martel
May (Cambridge)
McColeman
McDonald
McKenna
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Monsef
Morrissey
Murray
Nater
Ng
Obhrai
Albas
Aldag
Alleslev
Amos
Arnold
Arya
Badawey
Bains
Barrett
Bendayan
Berthold
Bibeau
Blair
Boissonnault
Boucher
Bratina
Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Champagne
Chong
Cormier
Damoff
DeCourcey
Dhaliwal
Doherty
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
El-Khoury
Eyking
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Fillmore
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Gallant
Genuis
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Graham
Harder
Hehr
Hogg
Housefather
Iacono
Jones
Jowhari
Kent
Khera
Kusie
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Leslie
Lightbound
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Morneau
Motz
Nassif
Nault
Nicholson
O'Connell
Oliphant
O'Toole
Paradis
Peschisolido
Philpott
Poilievre
Qualtrough
Ratansi
Rempel
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Sahota
Sajjan
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Sorbara
Spengemann
Strahl
Tabbara
Tassi
Trost
Vandal
Vecchio
Virani
Whalen
Wrzesnewskyj
Young
Zimmer– — 225
O'Regan
Ouellette
Paul-Hus
Peterson
Picard
Poissant
Raitt
Rayes
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Saini
Sangha
Saroya
Scheer
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sopuck
Sorenson
Stanton
Stubbs
Tan
Tootoo
Van Kesteren
Vandenbeld
Viersen
Warkentin
Wilson-Raybould
Yip
Zahid

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It being 6:13 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

● (1815)

[*English*]

BAN ON SHARK FIN IMPORTATION AND EXPORTATION ACT

The House resumed from April 1 consideration of the motion that Bill S-238, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (importation and exportation of shark fins), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my pleasure to speak today to Bill S-238, the ban on shark fin importation and exportation act. I want to start by commending my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam for his passion and determination on this issue and for bringing the bill to the House of Commons.

I know that this is a bill he has tried to bring forward in the past. In fact, five private member's bills have been introduced in this place that would have banned the trade in shark fins, and it is my sincere hope that 2019 is the year we are finally successful. I give my commitment to the hon. member that I will do everything I can to strongly advocate for the passage of this bill.

It was shortly after I was elected to Oakville town council that I first learned about the critical role sharks play in the health of our oceans and the marine ecosystem. I had a call from Oakville resident Wendy Perkins asking me to bring forward a motion to Oakville town council to ban shark fin soup.

Former Ontario provincial member Phil Gilles had successfully encouraged the Brantford city council to pass this motion, and Wendy wanted Oakville to follow suit. I educated myself on the issue and found out that sharks are apex predators. They are crucial to maintaining marine biodiversity.

Even after years of education and awareness on the issue, millions of sharks lose their fins to shark fin soup every year. Consumption of this luxury dish has led to overfishing of many vulnerable shark species as well as to the inhumane practice of finning. The practice involves removing the fin of the shark—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I have to interrupt the hon. member. There is a little rumble in the background, and we are having a hard time hearing the hon. parliamentary secretary. I am very interested in hearing, and I am sure there are other people who are very interested, so we will just keep it down, and we will be able to hear what she has to say.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, the practice involves removing the fins of the shark and throwing the rest of the shark back into the water to suffocate or bleed to death.

I next approached my good friend and fellow councillor Max Khan to ask for his support as a seconder of the motion. As was Max's style, he did not hesitate to say yes, and so began my personal journey to protect the sharks, and by extension, our oceans. On Monday, July 4, 2011, in a unanimous vote, Oakville became the second municipality in Canada to ban shark fin soup in the community. The chamber was filled with supporters that night, and I was incredibly proud of the community's efforts to move this issue forward.

As I said at the time, given the devastating rate at which sharks are being slaughtered solely for their fins, many species face extinction within a decade. Since sharks are so important to our marine ecosystems, it seemed logical that Oakville should take a leadership role in this instance. This was another way Oakville could demonstrate its commitment to environmental sustainability. In addition to banning the possession, sale, distribution and consumption of shark fins, our motion also called on the federal government to introduce regulations to ban the importation of shark fins, cartilage and all derivative products in Canada.

At the time, I had the privilege of meeting filmmaker and conservationist Rob Stewart, who had just released the groundbreaking film *Sharkwater*. We lost Rob in 2017 when he died doing what he loved while filming his sequel, *Sharkwater: Extinction*. What a legacy for Rob and his work if this Parliament could pass this bill before we rise in June.

After watching *Sharkwater*, I realized that what I knew about sharks was all wrong. Most of what I knew about sharks came from one movie. In fact, now that I have mentioned it, members likely hear that ominous music playing in their heads. It was *Jaws*, a blockbuster movie that made all of us fear sharks and view them as a menace. Rob Stewart dispelled those myths, but it was one of the reasons sharks were able to be exploited the way they had been.

If people visit the *Sharkwater* website, they can learn a lot about sharks, about how sharks are the perfect predator, formed by 450 million years of evolution, having lived longer than the dinosaurs and surviving five major extinctions, about how they formed life as we know it and keep the oceans, our planet's life force, healthy. It explains that we exist, in part, because sharks did, and still do.

Up to 150 million sharks are killed every year. Scientists know that regional populations of large sharks have all but disappeared in places like the North Atlantic, where their numbers are estimated to be down by 95%. At the current rate, some species of sharks could face extinction.

Oceans are our largest ecosystem, which is already threatened by global warming, pollution, plastics, habitat destruction and overfishing. We take our oceans for granted, yet we are witnessing the destruction of our marine ecosystem by humans. Sharks play a critical role in the health of our oceans. As the predator at the top of the food chain, they are crucial to keeping other species in balance and maintaining the overall health of the waters. They are at the top of the food chain on two-thirds of the world's surface.

The *Sharkwater* website also states that one study in the U.S. indicates that the elimination of sharks resulted in the destruction of the shellfish industry in waters off the mid-Atlantic states of the United States due to the unchecked population of cownose rays, whose mainstay is scallops. Studies in Belize have shown reef systems falling into extreme decline when the sharks have been overfished, destroying an entire ecosystem. The downstream effects are frightening. The spike in the grouper population due to the elimination of sharks resulted in the decimation of the parrotfish population, which could no longer perform its important role of keeping the coral algae free.

Canadians care deeply about our oceans. Many gain their livelihood because of the oceans. Indigenous people have been the stewards of our oceans and waters for thousands of years.

Shark finning has been banned in Canadian waters since 1994, but Canadians might be surprised to learn that the importation of shark fins is still permitted. Canadians might also be surprised to learn that according to the United Nations, Canada is the largest importer of shark fins outside East Asia. Bill S-238 would change that.

I know that Wendy Perkins and others are watching this tonight. To them I want to say thanks for their commitment to this issue year after year. I thank Wendy for challenging me to bring this forward in Oakville and for continuing to champion the issue.

It is truly an honour for me to be here in the House of Commons to speak in favour of an issue that I first brought to the Oakville council, and on that note, I want to remember my late friend Max Khan, who supported me in all things, including on the issue of ending shark finning.

● (1820)

Finally, I want to thank my good friend, the member for Beaches—East York, who had attempted to deal with the issue of shark finning in his private member's bill. He is one of the most passionate advocates for animal welfare, and I want to thank him for his leadership and commitment.

As Rob Stewart said, "The animal we fear the most is the one we can't live without." We have the power to protect our oceans. We can honour the memory of one of Canada's finest filmmakers and environmentalists.

This bill passed in the Senate last year, and I am pleased to support the bill in the House. I encourage all members to work together to see this bill receive royal assent prior to the House rising in June.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to address the issue of shark finning.

I have listened to my colleagues on both sides of the House, and I am encouraged by the thoughtfulness with which all sides have addressed the issue. In truth, I do not think any private member's bill, except perhaps my bill, Bill C-211, has encouraged such a thoughtful and wholesome debate as Bill S-238 has.

Bill S-238, an act to amend the Fisheries Act and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act regarding importation and exportation of shark fins, was brought forward by our hon. colleague Senator Michael MacDonald. The senator has worked tirelessly to bring this issue to the forefront of public consciousness. He is passionate about this issue. He is committed to seeing this bill receive its due consideration.

There are 465 known species of sharks living in our oceans today. Their importance in the ocean ecosystem cannot be overstated.

Shark finning has been banned in Canada under licensing conditions of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans since 1994. Even though the practice is banned in Canada, the importation of shark fins continues to be permitted. In fact, data suggests that Canada may be the second-highest importer of fins outside of Asia.

The fins are used to make soup and, historically, at a time when landing sharks was far more difficult, the soup was a rarity available only to the wealthy people of some Asian cultures. It was a small industry, with the fins usually salvaged from sharks wholly consumed for food. Today, however, as a sign of social status, shark fin soup is regularly served at weddings and banquets of a wealthier and rapidly expanding middle class. With a single dish of shark fin soup costing over $100 U.S., sharks are now hunted en masse, solely for the value of their fins.

In 2017 alone, Canada imported over 170,000 kilograms of shark fins, a number that represents a 60% increase since 2012. Bill S-238 would put an end to this practice by prohibiting the importation into Canada of shark fins that are not attached to the carcass. Bill S-238 would also define, and enshrine into law, the prohibition on the practice of shark finning.

The bill proposes to amend the Fisheries Act to prohibit the practice of shark finning. It also proposes to amend the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and lnterprovincial Trade Act to prohibit the importation into Canada of shark fins that are not attached to the shark carcass. The bill permits an exemption to the shark fin ban if the minister is of the opinion that the importation "is for the purpose of scientific research relating to shark conservation that is conducted by qualified persons" and "the activity benefits the survival of shark species or is required to enhance their chance of survival in the wild."

Earlier in this Parliament, the member for Beaches—East York introduced a very similar bill, Bill C-246, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Fisheries Act, the Textile Labelling Act, the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act and the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act (animal protection). His bill was defeated at second reading and did not make it to committee for further study.

In the last Parliament, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam introduced legislation to ban the import of shark fins. His bill, Bill C-380, was also narrowly defeated, but in my research I found some interesting points that I would like to bring up in this debate.

During the debate on February 11, 2013, the member for Cardigan said this:

> It is dependent upon us as federal legislators to be very sensitive to the cultural and identity concerns of Canada's many different communities, while still taking a strong stance against the very cruel and inhumane practice of shark finning, which is still practised in countries around the world. Not all shark fisheries involve species that are threatened, and not all shark fishers participate in the cruel practice of shark finning.

● (1825)

> This is also an important point to make. We must not put countries that do a good job of regulating their shark fisheries to prevent overfishing and cruelty in the same boat as countries that permit overfishing and shark finning. If we punish only those countries that allow these practices by banning imports from them we would send them a very clear message that this is unacceptable. Perhaps this would be an incentive for those countries to change the way they handle their shark fisheries and perhaps other countries would follow suit.
>
> However, if we also punish those countries that are doing a good job regulating their shark fisheries and preventing cruelty, what message are we sending to them? We would be sending the message that it makes no difference whether they regulate their fisheries and prevent cruelty; that we will treat them the same as countries with unregulated fisheries that allow overfishing to destroy shark stocks and that allow the cruel practice of shark finning. I certainly do not feel that this would be a prudent thing to do.

I think the remarks that the Minister of Agriculture made then are just as important today.

It is important that we get this right. Our former Conservative government committed to addressing the serious problem of shark finning during our time in office. We acted on several fronts. We worked through regional fisheries management organizations, such as the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, to ensure strong management and enforcement practices globally, to prevent unsustainable practices such as finning.

The bill before us and the previous incarnations have not been without controversy. I have received tons and tons of emails, as well as recipes, at some point, for shark fin, so both sides of the argument have been heard in our office. As with previous similar pieces of legislation, cultural communities across the country have voiced their opposition to an outright ban on imports.

In late 2011, the City of Brantford, as discussed, became the first city in Canada to pass new bylaws to ban the possession, sale or consumption of shark fin products. In that medium-sized city, where no restaurants that served shark fin existed, there was no opposition to the ban, which was largely symbolic. Nevertheless, a handful of cities soon followed, notably Toronto, Calgary, Mississauga and several others in southern Ontario. Markham and Richmond Hill opted not to bring forth the motion, suggesting that this issue is a federal matter.

Chinese restaurants and businesses selling shark fin opposed the ban, and in late 2011, suggested that they would challenge the bylaws before the courts once fines were imposed. When Toronto imposed steep fines, the restaurants did just that, and they won. In late 2012, the Ontario Superior Court overturned Toronto's shark fin ban, ruling that the law, as written, was outside the powers of the city to impose without a “legitimate local purpose”, and was therefore of “no force and effect”. The judge accepted that the practice of shark finning was inhumane, but he did not agree with Toronto's justification of local purpose, namely, that the consumption of shark fins may have an “adverse impact” on the health and safety of its residents and on the environmental well-being of the city.

I want to be very clear. This topic has evoked a considerable amount of thoughtful discussion and debate, of which I am very appreciative. I also want to thank our colleagues for proposing this legislation. Canadians should expect this type of respectful discussion when legislation such as Bill C-238 is brought forth. It is what they expect us as parliamentarians and legislators to do. It is clear that we need to consider all aspects of this legislation, and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues as we continue this debate.

● (1830)

Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking Senator Mike MacDonald, from Nova Scotia, for introducing this bill, Bill S-238, in the Senate and the many parliamentarians who have been involved in getting it to this second reading in the House.

There probably is no one here today who would not recoil in disgust if they saw, as I have, the photos of line after line of shark fins spread out to dry in the sun. The waste captured in just one photograph is immense. So too is the suffering these sharks endured, casually tossed back into the sea to die a cruel death. The capacity of man to view himself apart from nature, taking what he wants without thought as to the consequences or the impact on other species, is on display in these obscene photos of shark fins stacked for drying.

My riding of King—Vaughan is blessed with many wonderful features. However, we do not have an ocean. That does not stop my residents from caring about this issue. I have received many emails and letters demanding that we do something to better manage and protect ocean species and aquatic ecosystems and to stop shark finning.

This issue was brought to my attention not only by my residents but by my son, who has recently graduated with a marine biology degree from Dalhousie. It seems that I am talking about marine ecosystems wherever I go, and the talk often is not uplifting. However, being aware of this destruction and being revolted by specific acts like shark finning is not enough. We collectively have to act when we can and where we can to create a better world.

Others more knowledgeable than I am can speak to the crucial role top predators play in maintaining ecological balance. Others will surely raise that some species of sharks or some populations of sharks are in dangerous decline. Those are important matters to consider, but rather than those issues, I would like to take my time to consider how shark finning sits discordantly with a couple of important Canadian values and traditions.

First is the characteristically Canadian value of being prudent with our resources, including wildlife resources, and avoiding overuse or wasteful practices. We do not always get the balance right, but we aspire to. When Canadians have harmed our environment, most often it has been due to inadequate knowledge or understanding rather than wanton disregard or blind destruction driven by greed. Shark finning, it seems to me, not only is incompatible with Canadian values but is incredibly wasteful.

Second is the role Canada has always played as a middle power, punching above our weight and helping to make a better world beyond our borders.

Opponents of Bill S-238 have said that the bill is unnecessary, that Canada, as a condition of granting fishing licenses, has already long prohibited the finning of sharks in Canadian waters. On this point, let me begin by noting that sharks do not know where our boundaries are. In the vast ocean, sharks swim back and forth from protected to unprotected waters on any given day, so any law preventing sharks from being finned in Canada's exclusive economic zone does not prevent this abhorrent practice from taking place. Therefore, Bill S-238 is not about protecting sharks within Canadian waters. It is about protecting sharks outside of Canadian waters from being caught and finned to service a demand created by people within Canada willing to import these shark fins for human consumption.

As others have noted, Canada currently is a significant and growing market for shark fins imported from abroad, with about 170,000 kilograms of shark fins imported annually. Canada is a small country, population-wise, but as a major shark fin importer, we have a huge negative impact on the health of the world's sharks. The hypocrisy of protecting sharks in Canadian waters from this wasteful and cruel fishing practice, only to import shark fins harvested in this same manner from elsewhere, is not consistent with our values, especially for a nation that prides itself on environmental leadership.

Nevertheless, arguments against a total ban on shark fin imports have been raised based on Canada's international trade obligations. The potential legal issue is whether the legislation provides a satisfactory distinction between fins obtained sustainably and those obtained via the cruel and wasteful practice of finning. The difference, it seems to me, is whether the whole shark is used or whether just the fins are used. These issues are not unresolvable and have been addressed in the bill and likely are resolvable through further regulation.

Surely there are some species of shark in such endangered states that no imports should be allowed for conservation reasons, whether the entire shark has been harvested and used or just the fins.

● (1835)

For species of shark with demonstrably healthy populations, a rigorous track-and-trace system could be employed to demonstrate that the fins were derived from a shark sustainably harvested and used in its totality rather than just the fins. Of course, the onus of providing adequate tracking and tracing should rest with the importer of such fins.

Moving forward, it seems it is finally time to take action regarding this abhorrent and wasteful practice of shark finning. Given the devastation being experienced in the world's oceans and the collapse of many of the world's largest fish species, we need to ensure sustainable fishing practices are in place to protect our ocean ecosystems and our apex ocean species.

I look forward to seeing this bill move through the process quickly and getting the bill passed as soon as possible.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to first thank Senator Mike MacDonald for introducing the legislation and for his passion and hard work in getting it through the Senate.

I would also like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, the member for Oakville North—Burlington, who mentioned Rob Stewart and the legacy, as parliamentarians, that we could leave if we passed the legislation. She is right on the money; that is the case.

I have worked on introducing this issue. I introduced legislation in 2012 and 2013, when it went to a vote in a previous administration. It failed by five votes.

Since 2013, over half a billion sharks have died. Sharks around the world cannot wait for another election or another Parliament for legislation to go through. Many members on both sides of the aisle in this debate have raised excellent facts, presented good information, have talked about the endangered sharks and about the fact that there are not sustainable shark fin fisheries around the world. There may be some sustainable shark fisheries, including in Canada, but a sustainable shark fin fishery does not exist. In fact, organized crime plays a role in driving the shark fin fishery around the world.

Canada can take a lead role by passing the legislation. I implore the members of the House to vote in favour, to pass this legislation, to get it to committee and through committee as fast as possible so it has a chance to get back for third reading in the House. Even that is going to be very close, given the timeline we are up against in mid-June.

I appreciate the members who have spoken in support of this. I appreciate that their passion, like mine, is to get this through the House. We need to act now. Let us vote in favour of getting it to committee. Let us pass the legislation and leave a legacy for sharks and healthy oceans and do the right thing on the world stage for Canada.

● (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Proceedings

[*English*]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise again tonight to talk about the Canadian auto industry, specifically about the case of General Motors.

We have seen a reduction in investment in the auto industry that is unprecedented in Canadian history, given the fact that massive investments have been made not only in Mexico but also in the United States.

General Motors in Oshawa has been acquiring another product, but unfortunately, the divestment there has taken place at the expense of the workers.

Active talks are going on with the union and the company right now, but the lack of a federal auto policy has seen our investment percentage shrink quite significantly. Despite what the government says about what it has invested, it is much smaller in our auto environment.

What is concerning is that the USMCA, the new NAFTA agreement, which has been agreed to in principle but will likely not be implemented because of several problems, also contains further auto concessions. That is another issue.

The Prime Minister famously said in London, Ontario, that we have to transition out of manufacturing, but record investments are taking place within a matter of miles of Windsor, two miles across the border, where $14 billion is being invested by Fiat Chrysler and General Motors in Detroit, Michigan.

Today is the first day of a new incentive program the government has rolled out with regard to electric and other greener vehicles. Ironically, the Liberal government originally proposed a $300-million incentive program that restricted and eliminated the only electric vehicle in Canada, the Windsor-built Chrysler Pacifica. Ironically, they had to be brought to the table to include this multi-passenger vehicle with an electric motor, because the government excluded it. That was after the Prime Minister visited the plant in Windsor. He promised to come back many times. He promised to support the workers, and then he left them off the incentive program.

Thank goodness that a number of auto workers across Ontario, including not only in the Windsor area but along the 401 all the way to the Brampton assembly area, were signed up to have the Pacifica included in the incentive program.

There are several problems with that program. We are talking about $300 million that is likely primarily going to be for foreign vehicles. The Chrysler Pacifica is on that. The foreign vehicle incentive program the government has laid out unfortunately should have gone to creating a cleaner, greener manufacturing industry in Canada.

Canada has not had a national auto strategy. What is interesting is that the Fiat Chrysler and General Motors investments of billions of dollars in Detroit are for advanced technology vehicles that we could have had here.

My question is with regard to General Motors and the closure in Oshawa. The government did not even follow through with its own auto czar, Ray Tanguay, who two years ago tabled a report for the government. Ironically, the minister received the report in Detroit, not even in Canada. The minister did nothing with the report he paid for. Over the next year and a half, we witnessed plant closings here and plant openings and investments not only in Mexico but in the United States.

It is wrong. We have to reverse it. We can still do it.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to respond to the comments of the member for Windsor West regarding the auto industry and, more specifically, the situation in Oshawa.

As we and the minister have repeatedly said, General Motors made a mistake when it announced the closure of the Oshawa assembly plant. The minister made our position clear to GM's CEO, Ms. Barra, at a meeting in Detroit in January.

We want the workers in Oshawa and all Canadians to know that we are committed to ensuring the growth, strength and diversification of Canada's economy. We remain committed to keeping the Canadian auto industry competitive and innovative.

[*English*]

Canada's automotive industry is centred in the heart of North America's largest vehicle producing region, known as the “Great Lakes automotive manufacturing cluster”. Canada's automotive sector is highly integrated within the North American framework, with free trade between Canada and the U.S. dating back to 1965 and trilateral trade, including Mexico, growing since the introduction of the North American Free Trade Agreement. It is a significant driver for our economy and remains one of Canada's largest manufacturing sectors.

Some members may not be aware of this, but despite producing less than one-fifth of all vehicles in North America, Canada's assembly plants have won one-third of all J.D. Power quality awards in North America over the last 30 years.

Contrary to what the hon. member thinks, we do have a strategy for the automotive sector.

[*Translation*]

Our government has taken measures including creating the $2-billion strategic innovation fund to attract large-scale investments. The government also created the Invest in Canada agency and launched the global skills strategy. All of these measures aim to make Canada's automotive sector more competitive. These changes have brought in more than $6 billion in investments to the automotive sector since 2015.

This plan achieved real results on Monday, when Toyota and the Prime Minister announced that the company will move production of the Lexus NX and the leading-edge Lexus NX hybrid to its Cambridge plant. This plant will manufacture these models for the entire North American market.

● (1850)

[*English*]

Canada remains uniquely positioned to design and build the cars of today and tomorrow. Canada is a natural home for automotive innovation, with strengths to leverage that include a mature automotive cluster, expertise in advanced technologies, a highly skilled workforce and strong R and D capacity. Canada's competitive advantages align with the future of the global automotive industry, and the automotive sector is well positioned to compete for innovative investments in R and D and vehicle production.

Contrary to what the hon. member may think, our government does have a plan for our country's automotive industry. It works, and we remain committed to it.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of what I think; it is what the facts are. The reality is that Detroit, Michigan, has more investment than all of Canada in the auto industry. The parliamentary secretary cannot even come to the realization that one single city in the United States has outperformed all of Canada.

The reality is that we have not been producing autos just since the 1960s in our area. It was 1904 when we had the first Ford plant, and subsequently there was a sit-down strike to protect auto workers.

We have come forward with propositions to the government. Since that time, there has been a layoff at the Windsor assembly plant. The government has not answered my February 27 letter, in which I called upon the government to work with all the suppliers, the union, the workers and the companies to get that investment from Detroit and get access to the parts, supplies, tool and die equipment, mould makers and all those things. It cannot even answer that question.

Everybody but the government wants to work on it. It is giving up opportunities. Innovation is being left at the table—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Rémi Massé: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, our government has committed to building on Canada's strengths by promoting innovation, investment, growth and trade in the automotive industry to create quality jobs for Canadians—

Mr. Brian Masse: Detroit outperformed everything you did.

Mr. Rémi Massé: Our government has worked hard to maintain free trade in the markets where we currently do business and has opened up new markets to help diversify our trade strategy—

Mr. Brian Masse: I would even include Ford and Toyota with Detroit too. That is another six billion right there.

Mr. Rémi Massé: At the same time, our investments in innovation, through the innovation and skills plan, have helped bolster Canada's robust automotive cluster by supporting reinvestment in Canadian vehicle assembly plants by global automakers. These initiatives are helping ensure that Canada's workforce will have the advanced manufacturing skills employers will need in the future economy.

As I said earlier, our plan works, with six billion dollars' worth of investment in the industry over the last three years or four years.

Mr. Brian Masse: That is not even Detroit. It is $16 billion without Toyota.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I just want to remind the hon. members that I know these are adjournment proceedings, but the rules of the House still apply, so when someone is answering or asking a question, I would like to see a little respect for the person who is speaking. I think that would be fair for all the members. I just wanted to point that out for some of you who may have forgotten.

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, the question that prompts this adjournment debate is with respect to the agenda for a premiers' conference that occurred months ago. I would like to broaden the adjournment debate to talk about the federal government's role in coordinating among provinces. Specifically, I would like to address the new Alberta government's proposal to slash its provincial corporate income tax rate to 8%.

The reason this should be of concern to the Government of Canada is that our federal corporate tax structure includes a 10 percentage point abatement to allow provinces and territories to levy their own corporate taxes. Currently, all provinces have corporate tax rates of around 12%. The only exceptions are in Atlantic Canada, where provinces have slightly higher corporate income tax rates. Therefore, that obviously accounts for the abatement from the federal government.

In proposing to slash Alberta's corporate tax rate to 8%, Jason Kenney is effectively asking the federal government to continue to provide a 10% abatement to companies operating in Alberta, even though they will only pay 8% provincial corporate tax. I do not think this makes sense and I want to suggest that the federal government should not go along with that. The federal government should require that to receive a 10% abatement, a province should be levying a corporate income tax rate of at least 10%.

Why would the federal government want to establish this type of a corporate tax floor for provinces?

The first point is obviously one of common sense. If the federal government has provided an abatement of 10% to allow provincial and territorial corporate taxes, those provincial and territorial corporate taxes should be at least that amount. However, a more fundamental reason is that the federal government should not want to encourage a race to the bottom on corporate taxes.

The federal government has wisely resisted the temptation to engage in such a race to the bottom with the United States. When confronted with the Trump administration's corporate tax cuts, the Government of Canada did not actually cut the federal corporate tax rate in this country. Instead it provided an accelerated depreciation for companies that were making investments in Canada.

Therefore, I do not think it makes any more sense for the federal government to be facilitating a race to the bottom among provinces on corporate taxes. That is exactly what Mr. Kenney is contemplating in proposing an 8% corporate tax rate for Alberta. He has specifically talked about achieving a competitive advantage relative to B.C. and Saskatchewan.

Clearly, the federal government needs to look out not only for Alberta's competitiveness, but also for the competitiveness of its neighbours. Indeed, in preserving our economic union, we should hope that industries will make decisions about where to locate among provinces based on real economic factors, not based on tax differences. It makes the Canadian economy less efficient if companies are moving around between provinces simply to take advantage of lower corporate income tax rates.

In summary, I believe the federal government should make its corporate tax abatement of 10 points contingent on provinces and territories levying corporate taxes of at least that amount.

● (1855)

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility (Accessibility), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments, although I was informed we would be talking about the challenges facing Canada's energy sector, and I will comment on that.

Our government has been seized with expanding Canadians' access to global energy markets from its first day in office, and I will give the hon. member an overview of what we have been doing. That is why we approved the Line 3 replacement pipeline. It is why we have continued to support the Keystone XL project. It is why we are moving forward the right way with the Trans Mountain expansion projects in accordance with the guidance we received from the Federal Court of Appeal through meaningful consultations and broader environmental considerations.

While we work to build new pipeline capacity and open new access to non-U.S. markets abroad, our government also continues to take action to support Canadians.

The hon. member may recall for example that we announced a $1.6-billion package last December to support workers and boost the industry's competitiveness. That package includes $1 billion in commercial financial support from Export Development Canada to invest in innovative technologies, address working capital needs and explore new markets.

It also includes a new $500 million energy diversification commercial financing envelope over three years from the Business Development Bank of Canada; $50 million through Natural Resources Canada's clean growth program, which is expected to generate $890 million in new oil and gas investments; and $100 million through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada to support energy and economic diversification related projects. All of this is in addition to our $4.5-billion investment in the Trans Mountain pipeline and its related assets.

I am pleased to say that our efforts are helping. For example, the oil price differential is at its lowest point in more than two years and this comes as Canada has also secured more than $50 billion in new private sector investments in the oil and gas sector, projects such as LNG Canada's $40-billion plan to build the world's cleanest LNG facility of its kind, not to mention the single largest private sector investment in Canadian history.

Then there is the $4.5-billion petrochemical chemical facility planned in Sturgeon County, two new inter-pipeline projects, including the Heartland Petrochemical Complex in Strathcona County and Nauticol methanol plant just south of Grand Prairie. Together these projects will create more than 16,000 new jobs at the peak of their construction.

These are real investments in our energy sector and in Canadian ingenuity and knowhow.

● (1900)

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to the parliamentary secretary. It certainly was not my intention to catch anyone off-guard. The question that this adjournment debate was based on was indeed about energy issues on the agenda of the premier's conference. However, since that conference is over, I wanted to speak about another federal-provincial issue that has a big impact on our energy sector, which is Alberta's proposal to slash its corporate income tax rate to 8%.

I certainly do not expect the parliamentary secretary to come up with a snap response to that issue. However, I would encourage the federal government to seriously consider whether it makes sense to continue extending a 10% corporate tax abatement to corporations in Alberta if that provincial government decides to cut its corporate tax rate below that 10% threshold.

This is an important issue for the House to deal with going forward.

Ms. Kate Young: Mr. Speaker, the member's points are well taken. I wish I had an idea that this would be the topic and be able to offer a more fulsome response.

I will add to some of the things I was saying. In addition to everything I listed in my previous remarks, we are also investing $72 million to fund three clean-tech projects in Alberta's oil and gas sector. Those investments will leverage another $415 million from other sources. We are also investing $49 million to support petrochemical innovation in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. Through budget 2019, we are providing $100 million toward the clean resource innovation network.

It bears repeating that our government and all Canadians stand proudly with workers in our energy sector.

[*Translation*]

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the G20 in Argentina, the Prime Minister once again made headlines for his disparaging remarks. He said that the influx of male workers in rural Canada would have a negative social impact. Seasonal workers have been coming to our rural regions for many years. They drive our economy and no one complains.

Instead of wondering how to adjust and adapt, should the Prime Minister not be happy that Canada has access to such a skilled workforce?

[*English*]

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility (Accessibility), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day construction workers across the country, both women and men, are working hard to build a better Canada. They are the backbone of our country, and their efforts are paying off. We are seeing real growth across the country, the fastest growth among all G7 countries last year, and the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years. This is to be applauded. We are proud of their contributions, but we also know that Canadians expect the economy to work for everyone, including those who are in jobs far from their communities and support networks, as well as those working on major projects close to home.

There are real challenges associated with these opportunities, including gender-based violence, which disproportionately affects women and girls, as well as other diverse populations such as indigenous peoples and those living in northern, rural and remote communities. That is why our government adopted the gender-based analysis plus, or GBA+, to inform all of our decisions and to ensure a safe, inclusive and more equitable workplace for all Canadians. Why is GBA+ important? It is an analytical tool that can be used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs, legislation and initiatives differently.

The "plus" in GBA+ acknowledges that equality goes beyond biological and socio-cultural differences. It recognizes that we must consider all intersecting factors that shape our experiences, such as age, region of residence, indigenous status, income and so on. The federal government has committed to using GBA+ in the development of its policies, programs and legislation since 1995. It has led to real progress in the workplace, but we also recognize that more needs to be done. The alternative is to simply deny facts and hope problems go away. That may be the easy way out, but it is not leadership.

We have heard from many Canadians, from all parts of the country, who are disappointed with attempts to pit Canadians against one another. They are saddened by what they are seeing. They believe we should be working together to support workers and marginalized Canadians. That is what we are committed to doing on this side of the House, because that is the Canadian way. It always has been and always will be.

● (1905)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect for the parliamentary secretary, that was not the issue. We are not talking about pitting people against each other. This is not about us or about other MPs. It is the Prime Minister himself who made headlines for his disparaging remarks. He said that the massive influx of male workers in rural Canada would have a negative social impact.

I live in a rural area where there are foreign workers. We have nothing negative to say about them. They work hard and contribute to our economy. My concern is that our Prime Minister is making insulting comments when he goes abroad. Whether it is about men or women, it has to stop. We are not the ones who need to apologize. It is the Prime Minister who needs to apologize for his comments—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Kate Young: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the member opposite is against: ensuring Canadians have safe workplaces or recognizing the reality that some workers face when they are far from home.

However, I can tell her that a succession of federal governments have been using gender-based analysis to inform their decision-making for more than two decades. There has been important progress made, but we know that more needs to be done to narrow the gaps that exist not only between women and men but among historically under-represented groups, such as indigenous peoples, visible minorities and people with disabilities.

We are proud to be standing up for all workers.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:09 p.m.)

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