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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: I understand the hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake will now lead us in the singing of the national anthem.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

MEMBER FOR VAUGHAN—WOODBRIDGE

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the fine people of Vaughan—Woodbridge.

[*English*]

For six years, I have served the dynamic residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge. They are an inspiration for the work I do here in the House. Their perseverance and commitment to growing our community is what powers this diverse, forward-looking and vibrant community. I witnessed these qualities first-hand in my volunteers, who were more than a team as we became a family. I am grateful to every single one of them.

[*Translation*]

They all worked very hard to get me re-elected to represent them in Ottawa, because they know that now is the time to build a healthier, more inclusive and fairer Canada, in which everyone has a chance to achieve their full potential.

[*English*]

It is a privilege to be their strong local voice.

[*Translation*]

I am proud to represent the riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge.

[*English*]

We are a community that faces all challenges head-on, and we are ready to do our part in building a stronger, healthier and more prosperous Canada.

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RIDGE MEADOWS RCMP DETACHMENT

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for decades Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge residents have been well served by the Ridge Meadows RCMP. The men and women of this detachment have always worked very hard to serve and protect our communities, often through challenging times. Right now, along with other first responders and emergency service providers, they have been heavily engaged with the major flooding hammering British Columbia.

Our communities are rapidly growing, and with that growth have come new needs for policing. Last week, I was honoured to join RCMP officials, the Katzie first nation, mayors Dingwall and Morden, and councillors in the announcement of a new RCMP detachment in Pitt Meadows. It will more than double the number of on-duty officers and create positions to improve safety and community outreach.

I send congratulations to all those who have made this project happen and many thanks to the Ridge Meadows RCMP for its outstanding service.

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COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians living in coastal regions from east to west have been hit hard by extreme weather in the last few days, from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, all the way to British Columbia. I send my sincere condolences to everyone from coast to coast who has been impacted by the flooding, who has had damage to homes, farms, livestock, business and infrastructure, and who has had to leave their homes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank just a few of the many local organizations in Surrey that leapt into action as water levels rose in British Columbia last week: the Akal Sewa Foundation, Guru Nanak's Free Kitchen, the Guru Nanak Food Bank, the Gurdwara Dukh Nivaran Sahib, the Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar, the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, Khalsa Aid, Maskeen Farms and the members of the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver.

Statements by Members

I thank everyone who stepped up to support their neighbours in need, and I am thinking of all those who are hoping to get back to their homes and communities.

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● (1410)

*[Translation]***LONGUEUIL HELP CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to highlight two organizations that are doing incredible work: the Comité d'actions féministes de l'agglomération in Longueuil and La Traversée.

The two organizations have joined forces to create the very first help centre for victims of sexual assault, or CALACS, in Longueuil. These centres take a feminist approach to providing direct help and support to victims of sexual and domestic violence and their loved ones. Their work includes prevention, awareness, training, activism and rights advocacy.

Before the pandemic, 493 complaints were reported in Longueuil. It was unfathomable that the fifth-largest city in Quebec did not have a CALACS, given that incidents of sexual and domestic violence have been on the rise for almost two years. I am very proud of the women's groups in Longueuil that have joined forces, and I am particularly proud of the project leader, Sylvie Langlais, and commend her on her work.

This CALACS was created by and for women. It will serve women and girls aged 14 and up in Longueuil and the surrounding areas. On behalf of all women who are victims of sexual and domestic violence, I commend this effort and thank those involved.

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TOWARDS A GREEN AND PROSPEROUS PONTIAC

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I was pleased to launch the initiative for a green and prosperous Pontiac. This is an integrated action plan to address climate change in our communities.

[English]

To fight climate change we must act locally. As MPs, we can mobilize our communities and support them in achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. This is why I take this time to thank the 18 mayors of the MRC of Pontiac and warden Jane Toller for adopting a resolution last Wednesday to support this initiative.

[Translation]

I am very much looking forward to working with all our other provincial and regional leaders, as well as with organizations such as the Conseil régional de l'environnement et du développement durable de l'Outaouais, or CREDDO. I would also like to thank the organization's executive director, Benoit Delage, for his support.

*[English]***GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, China, by far and away, is the largest emitter of GHGs and has made no hard commitment to reduce them over the next decade. One would think that this would be of concern to the Prime Minister, yet when he jet-set off to the farcical COP26, the Prime Minister, instead, launched his latest attack on Canadian energy, committing to a hard emissions cap.

With Canada contributing a mere 1.5% of global GHGs compared to China's 27%, this will have virtually zero impact in reducing global GHGs, but it will kill good-paying Canadian jobs while increasing the cost of energy for everyday Canadians. It is attacking clean Canadian energy while giving the world's largest emitter a free pass. There is one word to describe this policy: insane.

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EGMONT

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few of the qualities that form the backbone of my community of Egmont are a sense of quiet competence, determination, hard work and deep respect for community. Those qualities have sustained Egmont over many years and have also built a deep sense that hard work will help to overcome any challenges.

Some years ago, when I served in the Government of P.E.I., the federal government of the day closed the air base in Summerside. In response, the entire province banded together and, led by the hard work of Summerside, developed real solutions that eventually turned into a thriving aerospace sector.

In many ways, Egmont responded in the same way to COVID, with a belief that everyone was part of the solution. As a result, we have had an extremely successful fight against the virus.

Now we face a new challenge in the form of a potato fungus that is hurting our potato farmers. Egmont is responding with solidarity and determination. Like the challenges of the past, we will emerge in a better position to sell our first-rate products to a world that values the products we grow.

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, gun control is a woman's issue. During the 16 days of activism to end violence against women, we must recognize that access to firearms by an intimate partner increases the likelihood of femicide by 500%.

Statements by Members

Darian Hailey Henderson-Bellman, a young woman from Halton region, was shot and killed in an act of gender-based violence. Alison Irons' daughter Lindsay Wilson was murdered by her ex-boyfriend, who used his firearms licence to purchase the weapon he used to kill Lindsay. On December 6, we will remember the women who were shot at Polytechnique simply because they were women.

All of these young women would have changed their communities and our country for the better, but their lives and the lives of so many others were cut short by violent men and violent weapons. Let us remember them and commit to taking action on gun control in a world without gender-based violence.

* * *

• (1415)

RHODES SCHOLAR

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, each year 11 Canadian students are selected to join a class of Rhodes Scholars to study at Oxford University in London, England. Only two are chosen from Atlantic Canada.

Established in 1903, the Rhodes Scholarship is the oldest graduate scholarship in the world and is considered the most prestigious. Its intention is to promote unity and to instill a sense of civic-minded leadership and moral fortitude in future leaders.

This year, Jane Hutchings from the great province of Newfoundland and Labrador is the recipient of this distinguished honour. Jane is a graduate of Queen's University with a B.Com., and has a graduate diploma in accounting from the Smith School of Business.

Through a partnership with Mitacs and the community revitalization research program at the Smith School of Business, Ms. Hutchings researched community involvement and cultural custodianship on Fogo Island.

Please join me in congratulating Jane Hutchings on her tremendous accomplishment.

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[*Translation*]

WORLD AIDS DAY

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, December 1 has been World AIDS Day since 1988.

It is an opportunity for people around the world to join forces against HIV-AIDS, to demonstrate support for people living with HIV and to remember those who died.

I would like to thank the researchers and doctors for the medical advances that revolutionized HIV prevention and treatment.

I would also like to invite all members of the House and all Canadians to join me in thanking the people in our community who work to prevent AIDS, put an end to stigma and all forms of discrimination, and help people get the care, treatment and support they need.

[*English*]

BOB KILGER

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our community is mourning with yesterday's news of the passing of former Liberal member of Parliament and mayor Bob Kilger.

A pillar of the local sports team, including time as head coach of the Cornwall Royals, Bob also spent time as an NHL referee. He served for 16 years as a member of Parliament in our community and later two terms as mayor of the City of Cornwall.

People do not win six elections, or serve as chief government whip, or deputy speaker of the House or as a mayor without having solid leadership skills like Bob had. Always a good ambassador for our region, Bob was known for his style of bringing people together. I always appreciated his good nature and positive resolve when we both served as mayors in our region.

Bob made a positive contribution over nearly 30 years in public life. We thank him for his contributions and offer our heartfelt condolences to his wife Courtney and his family as we remember an effective community leader and member of the House.

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KILDONAN—ST. PAUL

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this holiday season, I am grateful beyond words to all those who have supported my journey in public service. I want to thank my family for its steadfast support and encouragement, and thank my incredible team and staff that worked tirelessly on my re-election campaign. All members in the House know it takes a team to get us here. I am so grateful for the incredible people on my team.

I want to thank the constituents of Kildonan—St. Paul for once again entrusting me with the great responsibility and honour of representing them in Parliament. In this Parliament, I will be working hard to heal divisions and bring Canadians together: for affordability for seniors and families; for public safety; and for a thriving economy, with jobs and opportunity for every Canadian in every region of this country.

I wish my constituents and every member in the House togetherness and love this holiday season.

Happy Hanukkah, merry Christmas and good health, joy and prosperity in the new year.

*Oral Questions***COVID-19 PANDEMIC MEASURES**

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with new variants of COVID-19 being detected in Canada, Canadians understand that we are not out of the woods yet. While everyone has been touched by the pandemic, those living with low incomes have often been the first to lose their jobs.

We have seen women and gender-diverse individuals take on the majority of caregiving and household responsibilities. Women-led businesses are still being hit hard. Rates of domestic violence have risen during the pandemic and few supports have followed. In response, frontline organizations in my riding of Nanaimo—Lady-smith have led the way in supporting women and gender-diverse individuals during these difficult times.

As we continue to live with the pandemic, we must ensure that the necessary supports the government provides will lift up all women and diverse-gendered individuals so no one is left behind.

* * *

• (1420)

[Translation]

MARIE-CLAIRE BLAIS

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply saddened today to acknowledge the passing of Marie-Claire Blais, a formidable writer, a pioneer and a great Quebecker.

With her stellar pen, Ms. Blais devoted her entire life to crafting one of the most outstanding pieces of Quebec literature. She was only 20 years old when *La belle bête* was published in 1959. It was an astonishing literary debut that set her apart from her contemporaries and led U.S. critic Edmund Wilson to say that she was quite possibly a genius.

In her nearly 60-year writing career, *Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel* stands out as a masterpiece. This work earned her the prestigious Prix Médicis in 1966, one of about 40 honours that would mark her career, along with the Ordre national du Québec.

Marie-Claire Blais passed away yesterday at the age of 82.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to offer my deepest condolences to her loved ones and commend her for the invaluable legacy she has left for Quebec culture.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning, I asked on my Facebook who had started or finished their Christmas shopping. My inbox quickly filled with heartbreaking messages from my constituents who had no money to buy food or pay rent, never mind Christmas presents.

Our economic crisis is a mental health crisis. How can we help people if they cannot afford groceries? How can we help people if they cannot afford a house or rent? How can we help people if they are so stressed about paying bills that they cannot sleep at night?

The average Canadian carries a debt of over \$70,000. What a burden to carry. What a burden to leave to our children. The cost of everything is going up. Wages are stagnant and the Prime Minister just shrugs his shoulders.

The biggest crisis we are facing is the cost of living. The Conservatives will not just accept it as just inflation. We will fight for Canadians.

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NAV BHATIA SUPERFAN FOUNDATION

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Nav Bhatia is best known as the official Raptors superfan. He has not missed a single home game since the inception of the team in 1995.

With his endearing love of the sport, Nav created the Nav Bhatia Superfan Foundation, with a goal to unite people of all ages and backgrounds through basketball.

He introduced so many racialized children and youth in the GTA to the Raptors. In 2019, Canada's team became NBA champions and fulfilled one of Nav's dreams of winning the ultimate prize in basketball. Nav uses his influence as a superfan to combat racism, to bridge our differences and to promote our diversity. Nav often says, "Canada is heaven on earth. Everything I have is because of this beautiful country."

Nav Bhatia is a proud Sikh, a successful entrepreneur, an infectious Raptors fan and a great Canadian role model. Nav's remarkable story will be showcased on CBC this Friday.

Please join me in welcoming Nav Bhatia today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is in a real housing crisis. Only New Zealand has worse housing inflation than Canada. Homes are not getting built, which is making inflation worse, and the Liberal government's out-of-control spending is also making inflation worse. The median price for a house in the city of Toronto went up 33% last year alone.

Oral Questions

If billions in Liberal spending has been making housing more expensive, how is billions more going to make it cheaper?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as outlined in the Speech from the Throne, housing is a major priority for this government, and we will deliver on it with programs like the housing accelerator fund, which will help municipalities build more and better, faster.

Whether it is building more units per year or increasing affordable housing, we will work with partners to get real results for Canadian families. We will also help families buy their first home sooner with a more flexible first-time homebuyer incentive and a new rent-to-own program, and by reducing the costs for closing for first-time buyers.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that it is a "priority for this government", but Canada has the largest housing bubble in the world.

Canada's inflationary crisis is only getting worse under the government. Just today RE/MAX has stated that housing prices are going to rise another 10% in 2022, and the reason, according to it, is "the ongoing housing supply shortage". Therefore, now we have an inflationary crisis and a housing supply shortage.

Why does the Prime Minister not have a plan to get houses built?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservative Party of Canada when it comes to investing in housing. For 10 years, under Stephen Harper, the Conservatives did nothing on housing, which is why we stepped up in 2017 with a national housing strategy, and are stepping up now with four billion dollars for municipalities to invest and to accelerate the construction of new housing supply, which contrasts with the Conservatives' approach, which was to give massive tax breaks to wealthy landlords to help them sell their buildings. That would not have helped housing costs in Canada.

We are acting and we are delivering.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister likes to go back in time to a Conservative government, back when there was a balanced budget and low taxes, and when Canadians were not falling behind in their monthly payments. There is no debate when Canadians are going to the gas pump; fuel prices are setting records.

The Prime Minister and the finance minister complain about the global supply chain shortage. Do members want to know the best example of a smooth supply chain? Pipelines. If we could actually get pipelines built in the country, we could get gas prices down.

When will the Prime Minister stop the attacks on our energy sector?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, we understand that the best way to build a strong economy and a stronger future, including not just good jobs but good careers for Canadians, is to invest in fighting

climate change at the same time as we invest in growing the economy.

We have invested to support Alberta workers; we have invested to support getting our oil to new markets, but we have also stepped up in the fight against climate change, because that is what Canadians expect.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are feeling the effects of inflation. Even though some products are made here in Canada, the cost of groceries, gas, housing, chicken and beef continue to rise. Increased spending means fewer opportunities for families and seniors.

When will the Prime Minister realize that monetary policy matters?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of this pandemic, we promised Canadians that we would have their backs, and that is exactly what we have done. Although the Conservatives wanted us to invest less in families, workers, businesses and students, we have been there for them and will continue to be. The best way to create a strong economy for everyone is to end this pandemic, and that means everyone getting vaccinated.

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EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there were one million job vacancies in Canada in September. The labour shortage is another factor affecting the cost of living. Nothing is being done about the labour shortage.

When will this government address the problem in order to help Canadians?

● (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, what we are seeing is that our economy is recovering even more quickly than that of the United States, and more jobs have returned in Canada than in the U.S. and elsewhere.

At the same time, we know that the labour shortage we experienced during the pandemic is ongoing, and that is why we are taking action on immigration, training, investments in families, job creation and investments in small business. We are there to help our economy recover quickly.

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, many educational institutions in Quebec want to welcome francophone students from Africa. Thousands of French-speaking African students want to attend schools in Quebec in full compliance with the rules.

Unfortunately, Canadian immigration services reject them over 80% of the time. This rate is out of line with the rejection rate for students of any other origin, and the pretext given is that African students may not want to return home when they are done. Those are some serious accusations, a form of discrimination that should not be tolerated. It is harmful to our exchanges and to development in Africa.

Will the Prime Minister raise the matter with immigration services?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague that these reports are quite troubling. Discrimination is unacceptable in any form, and we will not tolerate any systemic discrimination in our programs.

To ensure that our programs and services treat everyone fairly, we are conducting a detailed review of their impacts. We will continue to work closely with the provinces, including Quebec, of course, to ensure that our immigration system is robust and fair to everyone.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, those were some nice empty words.

The real impact, which is still happening today, is that the government is hurting French; it is hurting educational institutions in Quebec; it is hurting francophone Africa and it is hurting those students. Eighty percent of them are being rejected. That is discrimination.

Do I understand correctly that the Prime Minister is describing the behaviour of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada as systemic racism?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Bloc Québécois and some others, we have recognized that systemic racism exists in all of our institutions in this country. Ever since we recognized it, we have been working hard to eliminate it and to transform our immigration system and all of our other systems to ensure they are fair and can recognize their inherent biases. That is the work that we are doing, and we take it very seriously.

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[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the omicron variant is deeply troubling to Canadians. People are worried about their families and their communities. This variant has also shown very clearly that we will not be able to beat this pandemic unless the entire world is vaccinated.

Why does the Prime Minister continue to defend the interests and profits of wealthy pharmaceutical companies rather than ensuring

that every country in the world can produce vaccines in their home countries so they can vaccinate their populations?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working to ensure that countries across the world have access to COVID-19 vaccines through our investments in the COV-AX facility. We were one of the early adopters and leaders in investing to make sure that vaccine equity across the world is real. Furthermore, Canada is taking leadership at the World Trade Organization to work with the international community on ensuring that the global trading system contributes to removing barriers to vaccine access. We are advancing progress on these issues, which include IP, yes, but also supply chain, production and export restrictions.

We will be there to help end this pandemic everywhere, because without that, we cannot end it anywhere.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is literally continuing to defend the profits of pharmaceutical companies.

[Translation]

The omicron variant of COVID-19 is deeply troubling. People are worried about their families and their communities. The variant has shown that the entire world must be vaccinated to beat this pandemic.

Why does the Prime Minister continue to defend the profits of major pharmaceutical companies rather than defending the interests of poorer countries so that they can produce vaccines themselves?

● (1435)

[English]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the member opposite, and not just because he uses “literally” metaphorically.

[Translation]

Canada is taking leadership at the World Trade Organization, and we are working with the international community to ensure that the trading system contributes to removing barriers to vaccine access.

We are advancing progress on these issues, which include—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the Prime Minister, because I cannot hear his response. I would therefore ask him to start over so we can all hear his response.

Again, the right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we are all concerned about the omicron variant. That is why we will continue to be there to help people get vaccinated around the world.

With respect to the World Trade Organization, we are working with the international community to contribute to removing barriers to vaccine access. We are advancing progress on these issues, which include intellectual property, but also the supply chain, production and export restrictions.

We are committed to finding solutions to accelerate the equitable production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

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[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the average home price in Canada right now is \$717,000. Do members want to know what it was last year? It was \$606,000. That is an 18.2% increase. In 2015, when the Prime Minister came into office, it was \$450,000.

Under what metric in the world can the Prime Minister explain that his plan is working?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from 2015 onwards, we began to invest in housing in this country, which had been underinvested in by the federal government for many years. We came forward with the national housing strategy in 2017 that has led to hundreds of thousands of families getting into new homes. We further built on initiatives like the first-time homebuyer incentive and the rapid housing initiative. We have just put forward a \$4-billion investment toward municipalities to help build more supply. This contrasts with the Conservative plan to give tax breaks to wealthy landlords.

We are acting to fight this housing crisis.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what he just said is that he is off-loading all of the responsibility onto the provinces and the municipalities. Who is he going to blame once that fails? It is the provinces and municipalities.

The Conservatives had a plan in the last election to sell off 15% of federal government assets to increase supply. When will the Prime Minister get off his assets and help Canadian families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives play partisan attacks, we focus on Canadians. We are actually moving forward with a \$4-billion investment in municipalities to support the rapid advancement of housing and the building of supply. We are even working beyond the rapid housing initiative that we have moved forward. We have signed landmark deals with the provinces across the country on investing in housing. We will continue to be there for first-time homebuyers with a dedicated program and with the ability to reduce costs on closing for ownership.

There are many initiatives we are putting forward because we know there is not one silver bullet to fix this. It is a comprehensive approach, and that is what we are doing.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the more the Prime Minister spends, the more it costs. Housing prices have gone from \$450,000 under the last year of the Conservative government to \$716,000 under the government, up 32% in just over a year. We now have the biggest housing bubble in the world outside

Oral Questions

of New Zealand, and Toronto and Vancouver are the fifth- and second-most expensive housing markets in the world, ahead of Manhattan, San Francisco, London and others.

If the Prime Minister is not to blame, then exactly what is causing this housing price inflation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one has to at least recognize that the Conservatives are consistent in their approach and that they want to do less whenever they are confronted with a problem.

Canadians are challenged with a housing crisis right now, and we are moving forward with programs to help first-time homebuyers and to invest money into municipalities so they can cut red tape and build more supply. We will work with the provinces on initiatives that are going to bring forward more housing and tie it into rapid transit. These are initiatives we are putting forward.

The Conservatives answer, “Well, you have to do less.” That is unfortunately the kind of austerity that they continue to push, despite the fact that Canadians need help.

• (1440)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives were in office, it cost less to own a home. The average family could buy a place for \$450,000, not the \$720,000 of today. Why are prices rising so suddenly? Well, the number of wealthy landlords buying houses went up by 100% since March 2020, according to the Bank of Canada. What happened in March 2020? That was when the government began printing money, flooding the mortgage system and ballooning housing costs.

When will the Liberals stop flooding the market with cheap cash for wealthy landlords?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I recommend that the member opposite take a careful look at the Bank of Canada's independent mandate around monetary policy, which on this side of the House we respect.

Second, it is interesting that the member opposite brings up wealthy landlords, because the heart of the plan the Conservatives put forward and he defended in the last election was about giving wealthy landlords a tax break to help them sell their buildings, with nothing for families and nothing for affordable housing. That was the Conservative plan, and again they are complaining that we are doing too much to help families. We will keep doing more.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Government of Quebec is pulling out all the stops and launching Opération main-d'oeuvre, a game plan to address the labour shortage, this government is just sitting on the sidelines and does not appear to understand the situation. Our companies are slowing down production, and that is because they do not have enough workers to fill the 280,000 jobs currently vacant in Quebec.

Will the Prime Minister show some leadership, take a cue from Quebec, and take the labour shortage seriously?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, although the labour shortage is real, it was there before the pandemic began. That is why we have continued to boost federal immigration levels for the past several years. That is why we are going to keep making greater investments in immigration and job training in order to help young people who have been hit by the pandemic. We will invest in the growth of small businesses so that they can pay better wages.

We will be there to help the economy rebound, and that means addressing the labour shortage.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do not want speeches and words; we want action.

With respect to immigration, last week I told the House about Rotobec, a company in my riding that is currently trying to fill 30 jobs, including a dozen through immigration. It was confirmed to me today that, once again, Rotobec will have to wait months and months before it can fill these job vacancies and bring in these newcomers.

What is the Prime Minister waiting for to help our businesses and finally take action to address the delays in processing immigrant worker applications?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to point out that my hon. colleague should talk to her hon. colleague from Carleton, who complains that we are doing too much. She wants us to do more. That is what we will continue to do. We recognize how important it is to invest even more in immigration and to speed up the arrival of new Canadians. Yes, for a year and a half, the pandemic forced us to close our borders, but we are going to catch up, bring more people into Canada, and create growth for everyone.

We will work with Quebec and the other provinces to address the labour shortage.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when the federal government banned irregular border crossings at Roxham Road, asylum seekers began to use other, more perilous routes, even if it meant putting themselves in danger. Something had to be done. What did the government do? Did it

suspend the safe third country agreement so that asylum seekers could use regular, secure border crossings? No. Instead, it reopened Roxham Road. It reopened Roxham Road, so we are back to square one with the same situation as before the pandemic.

Would the Prime Minister agree that that is not the solution?

● (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with our American partners on matters pertaining to immigration and asylum seekers. We will be there to continue to manage the situation properly. Our government has maintained close contact with our provincial counterparts to prepare for this recent change at the border. We have procedures in place to ensure that asylum seekers are subject to strict public health measures, including quarantine and testing.

Canada is committed to continuing to work with our counterparts to move forward.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have the solution and we are handing it to them.

It is quite simple. Article 10.3 of the safe third country agreement states that the Prime Minister may unilaterally suspend the agreement for up to three months and renew this suspension for as long as necessary without asking for anyone's permission. It is safe for the asylum seekers and reassuring for Canadians, and it takes the pressure off Quebec, which, by the way, manages 97% of irregular asylum claims in Canada.

Will the Prime Minister suspend the agreement instead of reopening Roxham Road and winding up with the same old problem?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are doing what is necessary to ensure the safety of all Canadians with respect to COVID-19 and to fulfill our international obligations with respect to asylum seekers.

We are ensuring that we have the resources required to properly screen irregular asylum seekers and follow up. We will continue to work with the Government of Quebec and the U.S. government to ensure that the situation remains under control.

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[English]

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian companies are losing contracts around the world because the Liberals have failed to address the shipping container crisis, which worsens every single day.

Agricultural products and manufactured goods are bottlenecked at ports in Vancouver and Montreal. The United States has taken action, and shipping routes are being rerouted from Canada to the United States.

The Liberals are continuing to erode Canada's reputation as a reliable and trusted trading partner. Why has the Prime Minister refused to open an investigation under the Canada Transportation Act to resolve this crisis?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, COVID has disrupted supply chains. The recent extreme weather events in B.C. have further disrupted supply chains. It is why we have stepped up, including with an investment of \$4 million directly to the Port of Vancouver to help ease the backlog.

We know there is more work to do in the short term and we are doing it with partners, including the Government of B.C., but there is also work to do in the long term.

I know the members of the Conservative Party of Canada are beginning to understand we need to act with determination and solidarity on the fight against climate change. I am glad to see them beginning to recognize that.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this has nothing to do with climate change or global shipping lanes. The United States have resolved this crisis, and shipping lanes are now moving to the United States from Canada.

I suppose the Prime Minister also thinks the ban on P.E.I. potatoes is a result of supply chains around the world. Hundreds of islanders have lost their jobs, and the livelihoods of farm families hang in the balance. Now they are told there is no guarantee this issue will be resolved before Christmas. This is unacceptable.

When will the Prime Minister understand this is not a little potato problem but a big potato problem, and that our entire industry is at risk? When will he do something to address this export ban?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, islanders are suffering right now and are worried, and the Conservatives are making jokes. This is a very serious situation.

We will continue to step up to defend Prince Edward Islanders and the potatoes they produce. It is why we have taken initiatives with the United States to put a hold on it, so that we remain in control of the situation. We have islanders' backs. We will continue to be there to fight for them, despite all the silly jokes made by the Conservatives.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, "a little bit concerned". Those were the words of the Prime Minister when he was asked about President Biden's proposed tax rebate for electric cars that excludes the ones made right here in Canada.

Is he "a little bit concerned" about the tens of thousands of Canadian jobs in jeopardy? Is he "a little bit concerned" about our second-largest export?

The Americans are walking all over the Prime Minister. What is it going to take for him to show a lot of concern for the Canadians who are out of work because of his lack of courage?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we did for steel and aluminum workers with measures the Leader of the Opposition called dumb, we are continuing to stand up for Canada's electric vehicle industry and its workers.

I raised the issue directly with President Biden and congressional leaders in Washington just a couple of weeks ago. I made it clear to them that this policy would have significant negative consequences, not just on Canada but on the U.S. auto industry. Canada and the

U.S. have a shared priority of protecting our cross-border supply chains. We will keep pressing the United States on this important issue.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this has nothing to do with supply chains. President Biden has enhanced the buy America measures, strengthened his protectionist agenda and raised tariffs on Canada.

Under the Prime Minister, our relationship with our strongest ally has become our biggest failure. The Prime Minister went to Washington, lost the fight on lumber, lost the fight on farmers, is about to lose the fight on auto workers and did not even bother to put up a fight for the workers in the energy sector.

Is the Prime Minister even trying anymore?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should know that our auto sector is all about supply chains. That is exactly what we have been working on with the United States, to demonstrate to them that the integration between the Canadian and American economy and the Canadian and American supply chains is something that is important, not just for Canadian jobs but for American jobs as well.

We stood up for steelworkers and we stood up for aluminum workers despite the capitulation proposed by the Conservative Party of Canada. We have continued to stand up for Canadians. We will continue to stand up for Canadian workers.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of a climate crisis and we have seen the devastating impacts of this crisis in B.C. We know we need to act immediately. The environment commissioner has pointed out that the Liberal government's subsidies are actually not working to reduce emissions as they have claimed. In fact, they are not working at all.

Why will the Prime Minister not end the fossil fuel subsidies once and for all and invest that money into renewable energy, into workers and into reducing our emissions and protecting our environment?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are doing. We have committed to ending fossil fuel subsidies. At the same time, we have made historic investments in energy sector transformation, in support for workers across the country, in renewables and in the kind of future that we know leads not just to cleaner air and clean water, but also to better jobs and careers for Canadians going forward. We have put forward in the last election the most ambitious plan to fight climate change that any party has ever put forward. It is recognized by experts as being significantly stronger even than the NDP plan.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, those are more fine words without meaningful action.

We are in a climate crisis that is hitting hard. We saw the disastrous consequences in British Columbia, and we must take action. The environment commissioner made it clear that oil subsidies do not help reduce emissions.

Will the Prime Minister immediately stop subsidizing the oil companies?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago in Glasgow, we announced our intention to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies by 2023, or two years before our G20 partners, whose target is 2025.

We also announced that Canada will stop funding international fossil fuel projects. On this side of the House, we know that climate action is essential and that the fight against climate change requires an effort from each and every one of us.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the recent election just over two months ago, community leaders, residents and groups such as Pride Toronto in my riding of Davenport have been writing to me and encouraging our federal government to rapidly reintroduce a bill that would implement a ban on the harmful practice of conversion therapy.

Can the Prime Minister update this House on Bill C-4 and the importance of banning conversion therapy for all Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Davenport for her advocacy on this issue. Just like her, I have heard from conversion therapy survivors, and anyone who has knows this horrid practice must end.

This week, we introduced even stronger legislation to ban conversion therapy. Last Parliament, more than half of the Conservative caucus voted against a ban. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition has already signalled he will let them do so again. Today, I call on all members to stand in support of LGBTQ2 Canadians by supporting this bill.

• (1455)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period, the Conservative leader asked the Prime Minister when he would stand up for workers in Canada's energy sector. The Prime Minister responded by implying that energy jobs in Canada are not good careers. I will give him the opportunity to clarify.

Does the Prime Minister believe that those who work in Canada's rapidly decarbonizing, fair trade energy sector, people who work hard to power Canada as we move toward a low-carbon economy, have "good jobs"?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for giving me the opportunity to repeat here in this House something I have said many, many times. We do not reach net zero by 2050 unless the extraordinarily hard workers of Alberta's energy sector are part of it. We do not get there unless we can lean on the innovation, the hard work, the imagination, the creativity and the drive of Albertans, Saskatchewanians, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in the energy sector to make sure we are going in the right direction. I look forward to continuing to work with them to build a better future and better jobs for all of our kids.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is interesting, because the Prime Minister is actually encouraging Canadians to use energy from high-carbon, unethical sources like Saudi Arabia.

Canadian energy is rapidly decarbonizing its production. Until there are readily available, low-cost alternatives to high-carbon products, Canadian energy should be filling that gap.

Why has the Prime Minister, if he cares about Canadian energy workers so much, not put caps on the importation of unethical, high-carbon, foreign carbon products from Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, when Alberta is already providing decarbonized, carbon emission-capped, fair trade energy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, throughout this crisis and indeed the years leading up to it, we have been working with the energy sector in Alberta to move forward on decarbonization initiatives, to do things like addressing orphan wells and investing in methane reductions. Indeed, at Glasgow we made one of the world-leading commitments, not just to reduce our methane emissions by 30% but to cut methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 75%.

This is the kind of leadership we can do only in partnership with the extraordinary workers in Canada's energy sector, who are looking for a better future for their kids as well.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, greenhouse gas emissions in Canada have actually grown each and every year the Liberal government has been in power, and the number of jobs in Canada, particularly in our natural resources sector, has decreased, being offshore to other countries that do not have ethical standards like we do.

We are going to need a lot of rare earth minerals in order to build things like batteries for electric-powered cars, but we know that in certain countries, child labour is what supports the mining of those particular minerals.

Will the Prime Minister commit to sourcing rare earth minerals for the batteries that power Canadian electric cars from fair trade Canadian mines, as opposed to offshoring our jobs to foreign child labour?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for a number of years now we have been working on our critical minerals partnerships around the world to demonstrate that yes, there is an alternative to minerals from China right here in Canada, whether it is cobalt or nickel or lithium or copper or other metals that are essential in the production of the technologies we use every day and will lean on even more into the future. Canada can be a strong, safe, reliable supplier of these minerals to ourselves and to our allies around the world. That is exactly what we are moving forward on.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the world is not investing in Canada, because the Prime Minister chases away investment in our ethical sources of energy. Frankly, I think that his record on this is abysmal.

I want to remind the Prime Minister of something. Good jobs are ethical, regulated jobs in Canada's natural resource sector. Bad jobs are those that are done by children in cobalt mines in other parts of the world. Bad jobs are those given to countries where gay men are murdered and women are not seen as people. Those are bad jobs. Bad jobs there; good jobs here.

When will the Prime Minister commit to supporting the workers in Alberta's energy sector?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through this pandemic, we stepped up, with \$9 out of \$10 going to Albertans from the federal government during the pandemic. In the years leading up to it, we continued to invest in infrastructure and in supports for Albertans. We have continued to be there for workers in the energy sector.

What is not being there for workers in the energy sector is pretending that climate change is not real and pretending that we should not look at it as both a challenge and an opportunity. That is what the Conservative Party of Canada has been stuck with for the past decade.

Oral Questions

• (1500)

[Translation]

SENIORS

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the poorest working seniors have been plunged into poverty by Ottawa. Those who lost their jobs during the pandemic and who had to apply for CERB ended up having their guaranteed income supplement cut because CERB benefits are treated differently from work income, even though the benefit is designed to replace work income. For example, a worker who earns \$10,000 in income would normally lose \$100 of their guaranteed income supplement, but someone earning \$10,000 of CERB loses \$400. That is \$300 less every month.

Will the Prime Minister correct this injustice?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been promising Canadians since the beginning of the pandemic that we would be there for them as long as they needed and that we would do everything we could to help them. That is exactly what we are doing. We have always prioritized helping the most vulnerable. We created CERB to help people during the pandemic, and we know that this benefit has repercussions for some of the most vulnerable Canadians. The ministers are working on this issue to find the best solution and support Canadians. We will always be there to protect our seniors, and that includes the GIS.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is not what we are talking about.

The Bloc Québécois alerted the Minister of Seniors and the Minister of Finance months ago, and nothing has been done. We need the Prime Minister to get involved. The CERB should be treated like employment income and seniors need to be able to have their benefits recalculated based on their current income. It is simple. This administrative mess is plunging people into poverty and some are suffering a decline in their health. Some seniors are having to choose which of their medications to skip because they can no longer afford them.

Is the Prime Minister going to take charge of this matter?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always been there for our seniors and we always will be. I can assure the House that we are working on this issue and we will resolve it very soon.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister cannot get his priorities straight.

Oral Questions

Last week, he again approved the entry of illegal migrants at Roxham Road, but, in the meantime, he is unable to follow through on his commitment to bring 40,000 refugees from Afghanistan to Canada. He can do whatever it takes to encourage illegal migrants, but, when it comes time to bring over those who helped us in Afghanistan, we must wait.

Can he tell us when this matter will be resolved?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we stand in solidarity with the Afghan people, as we always have. We will be there to welcome the 40,000 Afghan nationals and refugees. As the hon. member knows very well, the challenge is that the Taliban has blocked access to the airport and the border, and so it is not safe for people to leave.

We will continue to work with our partners in the region and our international partners to welcome Afghan refugees, because Canadians want to do more. We will be there to help these Afghan families.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Prime Minister is saying that there are complications and that things are not easy on the ground, but at the same time, when a promise is made it is nice to have a date and real action.

Can we have an idea of how long this will take? How will it be done? Can these people who are at risk of being killed by the Taliban on a daily basis still believe that Canada will take care of them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada will be there for them. In fact, we are once again proving the extraordinary generosity of Canadians who want to welcome people who are dealing with atrocious and horrific situations for themselves, their families and their daughters. That is why we are working with our partners in the region to exert pressure on the Taliban to be able to send refugees to Canada. We are more present than almost any other country in the world when it comes to welcoming refugees. It is thanks to the generosity and openness of Canadians, and we can be proud of that.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat my question.

Could the Prime Minister be more specific about how long that will take? Can we get a timeline? At this point, can he tell us how many of those refugees have already come to Canada and how many have yet to be resettled?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has welcomed thousands of refugees, but we still have a lot to do. That is why we continue to work with our international allies to exert pressure on the Taliban to let people leave Afghanistan and come live in countries like Canada that want to welcome them in large numbers. We will be there to take in 40,000 refugees. That is what Canadians want, and that is what we will do together.

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our economic recovery is going well thanks to our high vaccination rate and the support measures put in place by our government. I am thinking of the Canada emergency wage subsidy, the Canada emergency business account, and many more. We are seeing the effects of that today with very robust economic growth in the third quarter.

Would the Prime Minister like to enlighten members of the opposition on the current state of the economy, and the latest employment numbers in particular?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend the member for Outremont on getting re-elected. She has asked an excellent question.

COVID-19 had a significant impact on Canadians and our small businesses across the country, but our approach to fighting the recession caused by COVID-19 is working. Canada has recovered 101% of the jobs lost, compared to only 81% in the United States.

We will continue to support our workers and small businesses to finish the fight against COVID-19 and ensure a strong recovery for our economy.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when Afghanistan fell to the Taliban earlier this year, thousands of Afghans who worked alongside our troops were led to believe by the Prime Minister that Canada would keep them safe. National Defence has received over 23,000 applications from Afghan interpreters and support staff who served with us, yet Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is only processing 14,500 applications. That means that over 9,000 Afghan interpreters and support staff have not been invited to apply.

When will the Prime Minister bring to Canada the 40,000 Afghan nationals he promised?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada remains firm in its commitment to welcome 40,000 Afghan refugees to Canada. We are working tirelessly to stay in support and contact with those who remain in Afghanistan and wish to resettle to Canada.

IRCC has mobilized its entire global network to process visas and issue them on an urgent basis. We will continue to do everything we can to help the people of Afghanistan, not because this government wants to, which we do, but because Canadians expect us to. That is exactly why we are doing it.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Prime Minister that Canada's veterans have stepped up and done more than their share to protect their Afghan friends who were left behind. They set up safe houses to protect hundreds of Afghan interpreters and their families, but when these veteran-operated safe houses came to the government and asked for \$5 million, the Liberals said no. Our Afghan friends were forced to leave, and now they are trying to escape the clutches of the Taliban.

I will ask the Prime Minister again: Can the Prime Minister tell the House and the 40,000 Afghan refugees exactly when they can expect to come to Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the largest and most difficult hurdle in getting people out of Afghanistan remains the lack of safe and secure routes out of the country. We will continue to do everything we can for the people of Afghanistan.

I want to recognize and thank all of those organizations, including veterans' organizations and NGOs that have been there to support Canadian troops on the ground, and the IRCC officials who have been there to support Afghans as they get out of the country.

We will be welcoming 40,000 Afghans to Canada. We are going to keep pushing on the Taliban to ensure that people have safe access out of the country.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our veterans and all of those non-governmental organizations had to step up because this government did not. Our Afghan interpreters and support staff have been left behind to face the brutality of the Taliban who are hunting them down as we speak. Our veterans are doing everything in their power to get people out of harm's way, including chartering their own planes to take them to safe third countries, but it seems the Prime Minister only cared about this when it was happening during the election.

On behalf of our veterans, on behalf of members of the Canadian Armed Forces and on behalf of the 40,000 Afghan nationals he promised to bring to Canada, on exactly what date will the Prime Minister bring these Afghans to Canada?

• (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working tirelessly to bring those 40,000 Afghan refugees to Canada as quickly as possible. We are working with the international community to put pressure on the Taliban to allow for more safe routes out of the country. We have demonstrated our ability to welcome them in.

I would remind the hon. member, who was around for the election of 2015, that when his government turned its back on Syrian refugees, Canadians stepped up and brought in 40,000 Syrian refugees in those first months of 2015-16. That is why we stepped up, and we will do exactly the same right now for Afghanistan. I will take no lessons from the Conservative Party.

Oral Questions

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past summer, my province of British Columbia was hit by devastating wildfires. In recent weeks, heavy rains have brought flooding and landslides to communities across the interior and Fraser Valley. This has taken the lives of at least four people and damaged countless homes, businesses and family farms.

Can the Prime Minister update the House on what our government is doing to support the people of British Columbia during this difficult time?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for Surrey—Newton for the question and for his hard work in supporting his colleagues in British Columbia.

British Columbians can be assured that we will always be there for them in the face of devastating natural disasters, such as the recent flooding. Canadian Armed Forces are on the ground, and we are collaborating with the B.C. government on the immediate response and eventual rebuilding. Alongside the province, we are further matching every dollar donated to the Red Cross, turning every dollar Canadians donate into three.

Our government remains committed to helping the people of B.C. through the immediate response to this crisis and into recovery. We will be there for British Columbians.

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HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is World AIDS Day, and I think about so many Canadians who have lost loved ones and people close to them to HIV/AIDS. What is worse is that we have all the tools right now to completely eradicate HIV/AIDS. What we are lacking is a plan that particularly addresses the barriers faced by the most vulnerable people.

Why does Canada not have a plan to completely, once and for all, eradicate HIV/AIDS?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago, we signed on to the global compact to eliminate HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. We are working internationally with colleagues and partners to do just that, even as we continue to step up our efforts at home to ensure that we are supporting people living with HIV/AIDS and preventing further tragedies and challenges around that.

We have come a long way as a country in fighting the stigmatization around HIV/AIDS. We have come a long way from the first time we were celebrating December 1.

I am glad to see so many members of the House standing as allies alongside not just the LGBTQ2 community, but others who are suffering the impacts of HIV/AIDS.

[Translation]

The Speaker: That is all the time we have for oral questions.

Routine Proceedings

The hon. member for Montarville on a point of order.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion: That the House congratulate Barbados on renouncing the British monarchy.

The Speaker: This being a hybrid sitting of the House, for the sake of clarity, I will ask only those who are opposed to the request to express their disagreement.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*English*]

The Speaker: I just want to remind everyone that singing, unless it is the national anthem and it is the right time, should not be done in the chamber.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

* * *

• (1515)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

(Bill C-4. On the Order: Government Orders:)

November 29, 2021—The Minister of Justice—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights of Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy).

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): I am asking today for unanimous consent from the House to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of the House, Bill C-4, an act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy) be deemed to have been read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole, deemed considered in Committee of the Whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at the report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

The Speaker: This being a hybrid sitting of the House, for the sake of clarity, I will ask only those who are opposed to the request to express their disagreement.

Accordingly, all those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Hearing no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

There being no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to, bill deemed read the second time, considered in committee of the whole, reported without amendment, concurred in, read the third time and passed)

[*Translation*]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the following members have been appointed as members of the Board of Internal Economy for the purpose and under the provisions of the Parliament of Canada Act, subsection 50(2), namely:

The Hon. Dominic LeBlanc and the Hon. Mark Holland, members of the Queen's Privy Council; the Hon. Steven MacKinnon and Ms. Ruby Sahota, representatives of the Liberal caucus; Mr. Gérard Deltell and Mr. Blake Richards, representatives of the Conservative caucus; Ms. Claude DeBellefeuille, representative of the Bloc Québécois; and Mr. Peter Julian, representative of the New Democratic caucus.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

The Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to subsection 94(2) of the Access to Information Act and subsection 72(2) of the Privacy Act, to lay upon the table the reports of the Auditor General of Canada on the administration of these acts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

• (1520)

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), these reports are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

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IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-205, An Act to amend the Impact Assessment Act.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is my great honour to stand today to table my bill, an act to amend the Impact Assessment Act. I want to thank the member for Edmonton Griesbach, my colleague in the NDP Alberta caucus, for agreeing to second this bill. I also want to thank the members for Victoria and South Okanagan—West Kootenay for assisting and supporting me with this legislation. This bill is vital and timely and I look forward to the support of all parliamentarians to pass this legislation.

This bill is about protecting our cherished Rocky Mountains and fundamental protections of our water, our wild spaces and our endangered species. This bill recognizes the incredible work that indigenous leaders like Latasha Calf Robe and the Niitsitapi Water Protectors have done to defend our land. This bill is about environmental protection, activists like Kevin Van Tighem, Lorne Fitch and so many others who have fought tirelessly against corporate interests that will destroy our environment for money.

Coal is not our future. When this bill becomes law, all proposed coal mines will trigger federal environmental impact assessments, regardless of size. This is vital. While I am pleased that the former minister of environment and climate change adopted this policy, we need this embedded into law so that no future government can put the beautiful Canadian Rocky Mountains and eastern slopes at risk ever again.

I am going to finish with the words of my favourite Alberta artist, Corb Lund:

This is my prairie, this is my home
I'll make my stand here and I'll die alone.

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

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PETITIONS

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am still a bit emotional about that wonderful display of unity in this place.

I stand to present a petition from petitioners in my community and elsewhere who remain concerned that the Government of Canada is not following the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. They are particularly troubled by the actions on Wet'suwet'en territory, where the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and others are standing to protect all of us by keeping fossil fuels in the ground. Also, parenthetically, concerns have elevated recently due to the militarized actions in arresting protectors of the land, as well as journalists.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada, the people of Canada and the House of Commons to ensure that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is respected across Canada, particularly on Wet'suwet'en territory.

• (1525)

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my constituents in Peace River—Westlock and particularly the folks in the towns of Swan Hills and Fox Creek.

The petitioners are calling on the government to recognize that both Fox Creek and Swan Hills are remote communities at some of the highest elevations in the country. They are calling on the government to recognize that living in these places costs more and they are looking for increased deductions in the northern living allowance. They are just below the line by about 12 kilometres and if the line could be moved down just a little, they would be in the intermediate zone and get an increase in the northern living allowance deductions. The people of both Fox Creek and Swan Hills are looking for this and I look forward to the government's response to this petition.

Speaker's Ruling

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on November 23, 2021, by the member for Barrie—Innisfil concerning allegations about the Clerk of the House.

First of all, I want to point out that the Clerk recused himself from this matter and did not participate in the preparation of this ruling.

In his remarks, the member for Barrie—Innisfil said he was troubled about a report about the Clerk on the CBC a few weeks ago. According to the member, the House must defend its dignity and its integrity and that is why the matter should be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The member for Calgary Nose Hill also expressed concern about the way in which harassment complaints were being dealt with, adding that if employees could not do their work in complete safety, then members could not properly fulfill their parliamentary functions.

[Translation]

For his part, the Leader of the Government in the House said that the House must not be used to spread rumours and that it was not the appropriate place to consider the matter because the people involved could not defend themselves. In his opinion, and in that of the members for Saint-Jean and New Westminster—Burnaby, the Board of Internal Economy was the appropriate forum for such matters.

[English]

First and foremost, the Chair must reiterate, in light of certain remarks about harassment made by the members for Calgary Nose Hill and Saint-Jean that there are indeed mechanisms in place in the House of Commons to deal with all forms of harassment in order to ensure a safe and secure workplace for everyone. There are policies in place, for members and their employees and for House administration staff, to prevent workplace harassment and to investigate complaints. Earlier this year, these policies were updated to reflect the most recent statutory requirements. All members of this House can rest assured that any complaint is taken seriously and investigated diligently using well-established processes.

[Translation]

It is not in anyone's interest to have allegations of this sort dealt with on the floor of the House of Commons.

The Address

That being said, given the concerns raised in the correspondence from the member for Calgary Nose Hill from September 2021 concerning the policy applying to members, the House administration is conducting a review of the policy and its application. It will then report to the Board of Internal Economy, which will be able to review it and decide if changes to the policy are required. The matter is on the agenda for the next meeting of the Board of Internal Economy.

As regards the allegations against the Clerk, the Chair considers the most appropriate forum to deal with these issues to be the Board of Internal Economy. It is the administrative body responsible for human resources issues.

• (1530)

[English]

Indeed, section 52.3 of the Parliament of Canada Act gives the Board of Internal Economy jurisdiction over administrative and personnel issues. As has already been mentioned, this matter will be on the agenda of the next board meeting. Since the board is already seized of this matter, the Chair cannot conclude, at this stage, that there is a *prima facie* question of privilege. However, if members were to conclude that certain elements related to privilege should still be raised in the House after the Board of Internal Economy has considered the matter, it would be possible to raise them at that time.

I thank the hon. members for their attention.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[Translation]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from November 30 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Speaker: Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Repentigny has three minutes remaining in her speech.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when I was interrupted last night, I was talking about an April 2019 publication from the Public Health Agency of Canada that links climate change to health.

The government likes to say loud and clear that we must always listen to science. I would like to draw the attention of the House to another study published during COP26 by the very reputable journal *The Lancet*. The title of the article is “Young People’s Voices on Climate Anxiety, Government Betrayal and Moral Injury: A Global Phenomenon”.

The title is certainly evocative, and this paper is the result of a survey of more than 15,000 young people aged 16 to 25 in 10 countries. I mention this study here because it goes to the heart of our responsibilities as elected officials. It directly addresses the links between the perceptions that people aged 16 to 25 have of states,

the authority of governments, and their responsibilities to this generation on a single issue, namely, the climate crisis.

Let us look at a few numbers. Almost 60% of these young people say that they are very worried or extremely worried about the crisis; 83% believe that we failed to take care of the planet; and 65% feel that governments have abandoned the younger generation and are lying about their promises. Almost as many feel that they have been betrayed and that governments care nothing about their distress.

What we see is that the negative thoughts and concerns about the impacts of the climate crisis in many areas of their lives are directly related to their feelings of betrayal, inadequate responses and, even worse, government inaction.

Let us talk a bit about Environment Minister DeMarco’s report. Its clear and devastating content shows that urgent action is required and confirms the Bloc’s suspicions and what we have been saying for years.

To anyone who is tempted to place all the blame on the Harper years, I would point out that the Liberal government chose to wait four years before ratifying the Kyoto Protocol. In 2002, the Liberal government promised to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6%, but did not establish a plan. In practice, nothing was done, and the rest, as we say, is history.

I am saying it now and I will repeat it throughout this Parliament: The Bloc Québécois will not allow the government to engage in double-talk, meaning paradoxical and contradictory policies that would undermine climate action.

I will not allow the Canadian federation to play diplomatic games by relying on the significant but insufficient progress that Quebec and many of the provinces have made by maintaining policies and public funds that have been helping destroy the planet for the past 30 years.

I will become a first-time grandmother in January. I will not look away and I will not give up the fight.

We at the Bloc Québécois are very determined. Whatever they are working on, my colleagues are all very concerned about the environment. Together, we will work for Quebec, for its youth and for its future.

• (1535)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first and foremost, congratulations on your appointment as the assistant deputy speaker. I know that many of my colleagues enjoy seeing you in the chair.

Time and time again I hear members of the Bloc talk about health care and the issue of jurisdiction. When we look at the throne speech and some of the actions of this government today and yesterday, we see there is a solid commitment to things such as long-term care, the cost of pharmaceuticals and mental health. They are important national issues, and there is a commitment from the federal government to work with other jurisdictions to ensure these very important issues are being dealt with.

The Address

I wonder if the member could provide her thoughts on why it is important for the national government to act on these important issues for her constituents and mine.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

I would simply like to say that health care is under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. They are the ones responsible for health care.

The federal government is responsible for health transfers and for the implementation of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, which causes lung, heart and kidney disease.

Not only is the government failing to act on its responsibilities, it is meddling in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. The Liberals are endangering Canadians' health and then telling us how to do our jobs.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. We can see that she has a passion for the environment and is committed to it. Before I ask my question, I want to congratulate her on her next title, that of grandmother. That is an extremely prestigious title. I am sure it will bring her a great deal of joy and happiness.

I will now talk about the Liberals, who say one thing but unfortunately do the opposite. I have a very simple example. They promised to end subsidies to oil and gas companies. Then they said they would put an end to ineffective subsidies. One would think that it is the Minister of Environment and Climate Change who defines what subsidies are effective or ineffective, but no, it is the Department of Finance that defines whether subsidies are effective or ineffective.

In her opinion, what does that say about the Liberals' actual willingness to turn the page on fossil fuels?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I sincerely thank the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his speech.

As for effective or ineffective subsidies, they are playing semantics. All the subsidies are ineffective, because all subsidies to the oil and gas industry end up generating greenhouse gases and in turn cause health problems, as I have often said.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague from Repentigny for her speech, her work and her deep commitment to protecting our planet in this climate emergency.

I am wondering if she is also concerned about the fact that the other promises made by the Liberals in other election campaigns are not found in the throne speech. For example, the throne speech says nothing about the just transition. In the last campaign, the former minister of environment and climate change promised to eliminate coal exports. That is also not in the throne speech.

I would like the member to comment on that.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her question.

It seems to me that, during the election campaign, the Liberals promised a bill on the just transition. We will ensure that we take a close look at that. We will certainly not make any progress in the fight against climate change if we are unable to support workers. There is always doublespeak. There was not much in the throne speech, which I would say was insipid. Coming back to what my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie was saying earlier, subsidies are being handed out with fine names such as the emissions reduction fund. That is a Liberal government creation. Finally—

• (1540)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. It is time to resume debate with the hon. member for Kanata—Carleton.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

I am honoured to rise today in the House of Commons for the first time during debate to have the opportunity to represent the amazing people from all corners of Kanata—Carleton. I would first like to acknowledge that we are gathered on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people. My gratitude, my awe of this institution and my commitment to affecting positive change for Canadians have never been stronger.

My sincere congratulations to you, Madam Speaker, and to all of my colleagues on their election.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to the constituents who voted for me and put their faith in me to represent them in the House of Commons. This is a responsibility that I do not take lightly. I am here because of them and their trust in me. For that I thank them sincerely.

I would also like to thank every constituent who voted and those who took the time to write to me to share their concerns or to speak to me over the last number of months.

Campaigns are made possible by countless volunteers, and I am incredibly grateful for the efforts of those who knocked on doors with me, kept the campaign office running smoothly or helped organize our volunteers.

[*Translation*]

I am always amazed at these incredible people who dedicate so much of their time and resources to an election campaign.

[*English*]

I would like to thank all my volunteers.

I would like to thank my husband Tim, the man behind the scenes and my rock, for being the incredible partner that he is and for being the dad that he is to our girls. I could never in a million years take this on without him.

The Address

Of course, there are my daughters. They are my greatest achievement and I feel truly blessed. My girls are everything and they are the reason I do what I do. I want to thank them, Riley, Ryan and Brynn, for the hugs and kind words when mommy needs them. They are incredible young ladies, and I cannot wait to see what the world has in store for them.

I want to thank my dad Bob and his partner Kim, a.k.a. chief sign installer. They are the biggest cheerleaders and are grandparents extraordinaire.

I do not have enough words to share to thank my sister Melissa for all she does for me and the girls.

Although my mom Jean is far away, her support and encouragement are felt daily. I am so grateful.

I have been fortunate to have political leaders who encouraged me to run. First, I would like to thank Marianne Wilkinson, who was the first mayor and then city councillor for Kanata, for encouraging me to run municipally. Second, I would like to thank former MP of Kanata—Carleton Karen McCrimmon, whose hard work and determination have served our community so well and whose friendship I value tremendously.

Last, I would like to acknowledge the impact that my late grandmother has had on me. She was a force to be reckoned with. She had a huge heart and a determination to help others. These are lessons that she passed on to me and I will always cherish them.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Today I would like to discuss some of the key points in the throne speech that I believe matter most to the people of Kanata—Carleton.

[*English*]

Kanata—Carleton is a diverse riding, with a vibrant suburban centre in Kanata, beautiful villages in Carp and Dunrobin, scenic communities along the river in Constance Bay and Buckham's Bay, the lovely village of Fitzroy Harbour and amazing green space all the way out to West Carleton. The diversity of our area brings promise, but it also brings challenges. These last 21 months have been very difficult times for so many in our country and in my community. With the many restrictions we have faced throughout the pandemic, the residents in Kanata—Carleton were fortunate to be able to turn to our beautiful green spaces, walking paths and trails to remain active. I am incredibly grateful for this green space and access to nature.

Our government has introduced targeted COVID supports for those who need it most and will continue to do that throughout the pandemic.

Our economy has proven itself to be incredibly resilient. Although we must acknowledge that businesses have suffered throughout the pandemic, some have thrived. I have watched small businesses, from local coffee shops to large corporations in our technology park, innovate and change the way they operate to keep their employees and their communities safe. Local outdoor markets, like the Carp Farmers' Market and the Kanata Farmers' Market,

have become places where people can come to shop and socially distance. Residents have not shied away from difficulty, but rather have used it to innovate for a brighter future.

We are truly a country of innovators and I am incredibly proud of the innovation happening in my community, in the Kanata North technology park and beyond. Digital transformation and automation are impacting every sector of our economy. This is a huge opportunity and one in which Canada can lead in many areas. I look no further than the farming industry to realize our potential. The Ottawa Smart Farm, the groundbreaking agritech playground run by Invest Ottawa, is leading.

Canada is so fortunate. We have the natural resources, the talent and the creative spirit to help not just Canada but the world to address the climate crisis. We cannot hesitate to take bold climate action. Extreme weather events are on the rise. In the past five years, Kanata—Carleton has experienced both a tornado and a flood, with devastating effects. We must act quickly. I know the innovators in my community will be tapped in the coming month and years to support our government commitment to tackle climate change. I know those who rise to the occasion will undoubtedly thrive.

Investing in public transit is key, and I am thankful for our government's commitment to funding clean, electric light rail in addition to an autonomous vehicle shuttle pilot for a last-mile solution in Kanata—Carleton. We need to ensure that investments in clean mobility solutions happen now to minimize our current and future carbon footprint.

It goes without saying that the COVID-19 pandemic has walked back the decades of progress made in labour force participation by women. Once again, it has been predominantly women who have stepped away from their paid work to take on more of the load for child care and elder care as a result of lockdowns and school closures. We must reverse this trend. I have no doubt that our government's plan to introduce affordable, quality child care will have tremendous impact and unlock the economic opportunity of more women participating in the workforce. Although Ontario has not yet committed, I remain committed to seeing this work through to the end. I know the moms and dads in Kanata—Carleton will be much better off because of it

Kanata—Carleton, like Canada itself, is a very diverse community. Sadly, there is an alarming increase in experiences of hate and racism. Like our government, I am committed to combatting hate and racism. I look forward to the renewal of the government's anti-racism strategy as well as the necessary and important work to combat online hate, which sadly we know has continued to grow.

The Address

We must also acknowledge Canada's role on the world stage. Canada must continue to engage with international partners. We have learned a lot through this pandemic, including how small the world really is.

We must continue to strive for gender equality. As a mom of three daughters, as a politician in the House dominated by men, and as a former executive in our technology sector, we have a long way to go. I am proud of the commitments our government has made, but I acknowledge more work has to be done.

I am fiercely proud to be Canadian.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

I have said it before, and I will say it again: I am extremely proud to be Canadian.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, since this is my first opportunity to rise in this parliamentary session, I want to congratulate you on being re-established in the chair. I want to also thank the people of Sarnia—Lambton for electing me for a third time to represent them.

The member opposite has mentioned some of the restrictions that we have been experiencing with COVID-19. It is the charter right of every Canadian to be able to freely exit and enter Canada. As a result of the Liberal government's policies on planes, trains and taking a boat, people who are not double-vaccinated are also not able to cross the land border and are effectively trapped in the country.

What reasonable accommodations, like testing, PPE, quarantine, will the government put in place to reinstate the charter rights of millions of Canadians?

Mrs. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, I will not shy away from stating how proud I am of the work that our government has done to keep Canadians safe. From quickly rolling out programs for wage subsidies, CERB and rent supports for our businesses to, more recent, the work we have been doing this week in the House, I know we are there for Canadians. These are difficult times, and we have learned, as I just said, how small the world actually is. I am therefore proud of the steps that we have taken and will continue to take to ensure Canadians are safe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thought for a moment that you did not want me to congratulate you on your return to the Chair. I promise that we will have very pleasant afternoons, just like we did in the last Parliament. Congratulations. I am happy to see you.

I would also like to congratulate my colleague across the aisle. Her first speech was very good. She pointed out, with some emotion in her voice, how she has the support of her spouse and children. She is better at that than I am, because every time I talk about my children and my spouse, I cannot help but shed a tear. Perhaps I am too emotional. In any case, I congratulate her on her first speech.

My colleague mentioned two things. First, she said that the House was dominated by men. That is true in terms of numbers, but I would like to say that the contribution of the female contingent in the House of Commons is indispensable and invaluable, and I think that we will all benefit from the growth of our female complement in future elections.

My colleague then spoke at length about the environment and climate change. The government she is part of can at times be somewhat contradictory. They invest in fossil fuels while, at the same time, setting greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Will we be able to count on my colleague to pressure her caucus to make decisions with the best interests of our children in mind?

[*English*]

Mrs. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, our government has done some great work and is committed to doing more when it comes to climate change.

When it comes to creating a more resilient economy, creating jobs and growing the middle class, we know that Canada must take strong and bold action. That is why we are moving forward to cap and cut oil and gas sector emissions; investing in public transit, as I mentioned; and mandating the sale of zero-emission vehicles. With these measure, we are on the right path. We are increasing our price on pollution, as we have talked about, and we are putting more money back into the pockets of Canadians. We are protecting our lands and our waters with the Canada water agency.

We in Canada are so fortunate to have the incredible natural resources, the talented people and the innovation at our fingertips to really lead when it comes to this climate crisis, and I am really excited to see us play our part.

• (1555)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on your reappointment as Assistant Deputy Speaker. I have always enjoyed my time in the House when you have been in the chair, and I look forward to many more opportunities to come.

I am very excited to talk about the ambitious plan this government has laid out in the throne speech. I will be totally honest that when I set out to develop the themes of my speech on this earlier today, one of the themes I was quite passionate about in the previous Parliament and looked forward to engaging on today was resolved through a unanimous consent motion just moments ago.

I hope that Canadians understand the historic nature of today. Today is the day this Parliament came together and gave unanimous consent. Every member in the House agreed to pass such important legislation to ban conversion therapy. I look forward to the legislation moving to the Senate and then finally receiving royal assent, so it can be enshrined into law. Then such a horrific practice will be part of the Criminal Code, banned and outlawed in Canada.

The Address

I know it is hard to change one's mind from time to time on various pieces of legislation. I know it is hard to change people's minds when they become entrenched in a position on an issue. However, I know a number of Conservatives, in particular, did change their minds, and I want to thank them. I want to thank them not just on behalf of myself and other members in the House, but, in particular, on behalf of Ben Rodgers.

Ben Rodgers is a survivor of conversion therapy. He is from my riding of Kingston and the Islands. When this debate was in the House in the last Parliament, I had the opportunity to read into the record his story. He has been an advocate for bringing about this ban for a very long time. To do this in such a fast-tracked manner in the House, I know that Ben would want me to thank members on behalf of himself and other survivors, and not just for Parliament coming together and doing this but for those who were able to change their minds on this issue.

There are two other issues in the throne speech that I will focus on with my remaining seven-or-so minutes, and they are extremely important and pivotal in terms of the future of our country. Those issues are child care and the fast-tracking of electrifying our country.

First, as it relates to child care, there was a previous commitment in the government's budget to bring in \$10-a-day child care throughout the country. This is not an easy to do in a country like Canada because of the various jurisdictions, the way our country works with the provinces and the way we are constitutionally set up. Indeed, it takes time to go out and work with the provinces and jurisdictions to bring in the necessary agreements. However, because various provinces may have already started their own or had their own versions, like Quebec, which was much more progressive than some other provinces, the deals that need to be reached and the agreements that need to be formed will not be unilateral and the same for every province and jurisdiction.

However, the work that has been ongoing for about a year now has truly started to pay off. All but four jurisdictions, of which there are two provinces, have signed on. Some of those jurisdictions will start to see the benefit of \$10-a-day child care, such as Alberta, on January 1 of next year, a month from now. In fact, my understanding is that Saskatchewan has put something into its agreement where it will make this retroactive to July 1 of this year. People will get the \$10-a-day child care retroactively.

Why is this so important? I have talked about this on social media. I have seen people put stuff out there, saying that they had to pay to put their kids in day care, so why should other people not have to pay for it. When we look at it like that, we look at this as though it is a handout, which it is not.

• (1600)

This is about investing. This is about unlocking economic potential, as much as it is about helping individual families. There are a lot of households out there where one spouse, usually the woman, has chosen to stay home because it just makes more economic sense than having a child in day care that costs \$50 to \$60 a day. It just does not make economic sense.

By doing this, we will see more people spend \$300 to \$350 a month to put a child in day care and more people saying that both spouses can get into the work force now. What will that do? It is not just going to generate economic activity within the work force. It is going to generate taxes and more opportunity for the government to pay for such an ambitious program.

I am really glad that after decades of this being talked about, and after getting very, very close in 2006 with Paul Martin, we are finally seeing this come to fruition. As this is a day of celebration, I will not mention the manner in which that died, as I have done so a number of times in the House before. After talking about this, and after pressure from other progressive parties in the House, such as the NDP, who should get credit for applying that pressure when needed, we are finally seeing this come to fruition.

Despite the fact that we are partisan here, and we might get caught up in debates over whose idea it was, who implemented it or who made it better, at the end of the day, I hope we all take great satisfaction in knowing that this is going to change families and change participation in the work force. This is going to be extremely meaningful for Canadians.

In the last couple of minutes I have, I would like to switch quickly to the electrification of our fleets and our infrastructure throughout the country. We are putting a big emphasis on electrifying vehicles right now. It is extremely important to do that. We know why. We understand the science behind climate change. We understand that we need to move as quickly as possible toward electrification.

Yes, there are problems, because the naysayers out there say that lithium needs to be extracted by dozers and mining equipment that are using petroleum products. I get it. I do not disagree. If we are being honest, that is the case right now, but I also think that we have to be honest about where the electric vehicle is. A fair comparison of an electric vehicle right now would be to compare it to the Ford Model T. It is in the very beginning stages of its evolution and opportunities to advance technologically.

My wife and I bought our first electric car in 2012. It was a Chevy Volt, a hybrid plug-in. We would get 40 kilometres on it, which was really more like 30. We would drive around a little bit and then the gas would kick in. It was a good start, but by no means was it going to be a solution in the long run.

We now have a Chrysler Pacifica, which is a minivan. After plugging that in we get about 60 kilometres, so we can do the majority of our travelling throughout the city using electricity. If we go out of town, we still have that backup gas. More recently, we purchased a Hyundai Kona, which is completely electric. We get about 450 kilometres on a charge, and I have been driving it to and from Ottawa every week.

The Address

I have noticed an uptick in electric vehicles right here on the Hill, because when I started plugging in, in 2015, I would be one of one or two cars in the maybe eight slots available in the parking lot next to us. Now, when I showed up on Monday morning, there was no availability, so people are changing. The evolution is happening and we are moving toward electric vehicles.

There is a role for the government to play in this and that is to incentivize people to do so, as we saw the Ontario government had done in collaboration with the federal government previously. We need to do more of that. I am very happy to see that in the throne speech, and I am looking forward to accelerating that transition toward electrification.

• (1605)

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, my ears really perked up when the member opposite talked about electric vehicles. I am very proud to represent the great people in my riding of Simcoe—Grey, where Honda of Canada Manufacturing operates.

One of the concerns I heard in his speech was with respect to the government's role in incentivizing people to buy electric vehicles. I had a visit last week with the president of Honda Canada. I heard some great concerns about the program and the negotiations going forward with the United States regarding the \$12,500 rebate, which will not be for cars in Canada not manufactured by the big three.

I am curious if the member has any comments. Has he listened to some of the auto manufacturers, and has he really heard their concerns?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I have heard during question period some of the questions regarding this. I will say that, back when we had the whole issue with the former president of the United States and the tariffs being imposed on Canadian products, the way our government, in particular a key group of people within the government, was able to react to that and position itself to negotiate led to us coming out better, in my opinion, than we were going into it.

Am I concerned when I hear language like that from the United States? It is absolutely concerning. Do I have confidence that our team will be able to navigate through this, in a way that would be of benefit to Canadians? I do.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, first, allow me to congratulate you on your election.

I heard the speech by my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, and I would like to tell him about a situation that concerns me. There is a very important word missing from the throne speech, and that is “science”. In the middle of a pandemic, the government did not see fit to include the word “science” in the speech.

Canada is the only G7 nation that was unable to produce a COVID-19 vaccine, the only G7 nation that resorted to the COVAX program to obtain vaccines that were intended for the poorest countries and developing countries, and the only G7 nation that cut

funding to scientific research and development between 2009 and 2019.

Is the government actually interested in reinvesting in science?

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, this government and the Prime Minister have always, even back in their days in opposition, prided themselves on listening to scientists and using data and science to inform the decision-making process. Perhaps one particular word was not found in the document, but I think it would be a far stretch to try to link that to the fact that this government does not believe in science.

I have said it before, and I will say it again: If we do not learn from this pandemic that we need to make sure we are able to manufacture vaccines in Canada, then I think we, as Canadians, have quite frankly failed. I believe we will see Canada come forward. We will be able to ensure that we do not put ourselves in the position we were in at the beginning of this pandemic when we were not able to manufacture our own vaccines. Getting to that point was the doing of a number of different governments.

• (1610)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, there is a situation that is increasingly worrying our entrepreneurs.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the federal government offered assistance, but in the form of a loan. For many small businesses whose operations have not yet returned to normal, the repayment date is fast approaching. In Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, that is the case for Gabriel Campeau of Vélo Festif Montréal, who wrote that he is very concerned about the imminent deadline.

Are the Liberals willing to listen to Canadians and show some flexibility by cancelling the debt, reducing it or even allowing repayment over time?

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the recent bill we were discussing, Bill C-2, specifically addresses the issue of the hardest-hit sectors in the pandemic. If businesses have been hard hit and have still not been able to recover, they should look into the legislation, and the programs that will come through that legislation, which is before the House.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

As this is my first time rising in the chamber in this Parliament, I want to first thank the voters of Regina—Qu'Appelle for once again selecting me to represent them in this chamber. I have had the good fortune to serve in several different roles in the House of Commons. I was Deputy Speaker and Speaker, House leader of the official opposition and Leader of the Opposition, but every time I walk into this chamber, I am very aware that there is no role I can serve in the House if I do not first earn the trust of the people back home in Regina—Qu'Appelle. I sincerely thank everyone who supported me in the last election.

The Address

There is once again a great clash of ideas dividing the world. As Canadians look hopefully to the future about how to emerge from the pandemic and its aftermath, there are two very distinct versions of what comes next. This clash of ideas and philosophies is basically the same as it has been at several times throughout human history, especially in the 20th century.

There are those like the Prime Minister and his friends in the global elite who would use COVID as an excuse to expand the size of government. They believe in more government intervention in the economy and more restrictions on individual liberty. Then there are those who understand that it is not government that creates prosperity, it is the free market, people buying and selling freely, that creates wealth and lifts people out of poverty. In essence, it is the age-old debate of whether we should put our faith in government or put our faith in people.

It is often said that the best indicator of future results is to look at past results. History is clear on this matter. When we look at the examples where the ideology of government control was put into place, in every country it was tried, it failed miserably. After all, nobody was ever shot trying to get over the wall to get into East Berlin, and nobody ever tried to paddle a raft to get to Cuba. The terms for that ideology changes from time to time. What we once referred to as communism and socialism, those on the left now call their progressive agenda, but changing the name does not change the reality.

In November, we marked the 32nd anniversary of the Berlin Wall being torn down. Throughout the course of human history, walls were generally seen as a good thing. Walls kept us safe. In times of danger, people would run toward the walls to get inside, but that started to change with the rise of socialism. The Berlin Wall was to keep people in.

Berlin was a real-time experiment in economics and human behaviour. In the east was socialism, state control of the economy. Government officials planned what would be produced, by whom and how much of it. They set wages and prices. They also took away basic human rights like free speech and prohibited any criticisms of their regime. The result was misery, bread lines, shortages and a stagnant quality of life.

In the west, the free market decided. People buying and selling relatively freely set prices and signalled to the market what needed to be produced. The result was plenty, huge increases in the quality of life. The difference between life in a free market and life in a society controlled by the government was stark. While the people of East Berlin could not vote in real elections, they could vote with their feet, and they did. There was a steady stream of people fleeing the horrors of socialism.

That is why the wall went up, not to keep enemies out, but to keep people in. This is the hallmark of big government intervention in our lives. Those on the left are constantly telling us how wonderful their socialist policies will be, but then they have to build walls, sometimes virtual, eliminating our choices and taking away our freedoms to keep people in.

When I was first elected in 2004, Canada had its own experiment between the free market and government interference. The differ-

ence between Alberta and Saskatchewan throughout the course of Canadian history was also very stark. For decades, Saskatchewan was ruled by the NDP, which adopted big government intervention policies. They stifled the free market and drove away private sector investments. As a result, my province had a long history of economic stagnation and a relatively flat population. In Alberta, there was growth. In Alberta, there was opportunity.

● (1615)

When I was fortunate enough to visit Alberta while I was leader, I always asked how many people in the audience were from Saskatchewan or whose parents were from Saskatchewan originally. In almost every room across Alberta, when I asked that question almost half the audience would put up their hands. I used to like to tell people that the good people of Saskatchewan built two great provinces in this country.

The language changes, but the policies remain the same. Communism proved to be such an epic failure that its most loyal promoters conceded that it would never be accepted again. However, we are now seeing a resurgence of that same type of thinking, that government knows best approach.

As we emerge from the aftermath of the pandemic, we can already see the drastic negative impacts of the large expansion into the free market by the government. In March of last year, the Bank of Canada started doing something unprecedented in Canadian history: It started creating money out of thin air, to the tune of \$5 billion a week. The government had run out of money to borrow from people, so it had to turn to the central bank to crank up the printing presses to buy the government debt that nobody else was buying.

I am often asked by people back home in Regina—Qu'Appelle how the Prime Minister is going to pay for his massive deficits. He is not. The Canadian people are paying right now, through inflation. We are paying the cost today in real time as prices continue to go up, because the government forced the bank to flood the system with brand-new money created out of thin air. What happens when we have more dollars chasing the same number of goods? Prices go up.

We had a decline in economic activity due to the restrictions imposed on our economy because of the COVID pandemic. Not only did economic production go down, but the money supply grew exponentially. Governments love inflation.

Back through the course of human history, we will find examples that show when governments spend too much money, they start to devalue the currency. It is a fraud committed on the people who have worked so hard to earn their pay cheques and to put a bit of money away for savings when the government comes and essentially devalues that work by creating new money.

If any of my colleagues has ever been to a silent auction, there might have been a print up for auction of a beautiful painting. At the bottom it is numbered one out of 100 or one out of 500. That is a limited edition print. It means the artist only created so many of those types of paintings. If someone buys that for what they believe the value is and then the artist goes and creates 5,000 more copies, that person has been defrauded. They purchased something that had its value stripped away by simply having more created of it. That is what is going on in real time with the money that hard-working Canadians are earning.

What can we do to get our economy back on track? In the time I have left, I wanted to make a pitch for the government to listen to the concerns of the people in Saskatchewan, Alberta and across Western Canada.

We have an amazing source of wealth in our country with our oil and gas sector. We are now living in a completely topsy-turvy world where the first thing that President Biden did upon taking office was cancel the Keystone XL pipeline. This is something that the government did not even raise with the incoming President. The Prime Minister cancelled northern gateway and cancelled the energy east pipeline, which would have taken Western Canadian energy to Eastern Canadian markets.

I see a lot of alarmists and radical activists chaining themselves to trees and laying down in front of bulldozers in Western Canada to try to prevent the exportation of our oil and gas. However, I never see them lining up along the St. Lawrence protesting tanker after tanker of foreign oil coming into Canadian markets. We have an opportunity to provide the world with ethical Canadian energy, and that benefits everyone. Since 2018, Canada's oil and gas production has paid almost \$240 billion to provincial governments and \$66 billion to Ottawa.

Conservatives will always be champions of the hard-working men and women in our energy industry. It is something that the world needs more of, not less of. We can get off of foreign oil coming from brutal dictatorships that have no respect for human rights, and get Canadians back to work.

• (1620)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will confess that the Government of Canada had to borrow money for a very good reason. With the worldwide pandemic, in order to support Canadians and businesses alike, there was a need to be there in a very real way.

Had we not borrowed the money that the member opposite tries to portray as a bad thing, we would have seen far more bankruptcies. We would have seen many other societal issues, whether family breakups or suicides. The government made the decision to have the backs of Canadians.

The Address

Is the member saying that we should not have provided those programs that were so critical to helping Canadians through the very difficult time of the pandemic?

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, a huge percentage of the deficit the government has racked up came before the pandemic even hit. It was running \$87 billion worth of deficits before COVID-19.

During the pandemic, the government decided to give \$1 billion to its friends in the WE organization, and sole-sourced contracts to former Liberal MPs as well. The government took the time during the pandemic to make sure that it enriched its friends.

Let us talk about inflation. The Liberals would have us believe that it is some kind of external phenomenon like the weather: Inflation just happens. It does not happen in countries that did not run the printing presses. I could go on and on about billions of dollars in wasteful spending, corporate welfare and \$35 billion through the Canadian Infrastructure Bank to bankroll large projects for profitable private companies.

The member is going to try to convince Canadians that all of the inflationary spending was related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that is demonstrably false. When we go through the public accounts and look at where the government spent money, a lot of it was on increased discretionary spending. We heard throughout the week that it actually had the opposite effect of its intention. The government spent more money on housing but got fewer units built, and the price of housing is going up because of it. That is why we need less government intervention in the economy and more free market solutions.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, as the critic for status of women, I would like to congratulate you. I am very happy to see a woman in the chair.

That being said, I would like to make a comment. Then, I will ask my colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle a question.

He spoke about what the U.S. President did about the Keystone XL pipeline after he was elected. Perhaps the U.S. President understands something that even the Conservatives do not seem to understand, namely that it is important that we make a green shift toward using less oil, not more. It is important to invest in a green recovery, a recovery that will truly allow us to develop new green technologies. Perhaps that is it. That is my comment, but, at the same time, my colleague spoke about investments.

I would like us to invest in green technology. I would also like my colleague to reassure me; in times of fiscal restraint, if there is a sector that should not suffer cuts, it is the health care sector. Unfortunately, both the Liberals and the Conservatives have had a tendency to make cuts to health care in times of fiscal restraint, and that is why we are in this situation today.

The Address

Does my colleague not think that it is important to reinvest massively in health transfers, up to 35%, just as it is important to invest in green technologies? Regardless of the state of the economy at the end of the pandemic, these two sectors will need investments.

• (1625)

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, very quickly, I have to correct the record. The Conservative government restored the health care funding that the previous Jean Chrétien-Paul Martin government slashed in the 90s.

It is the Conservative government that stands up for provincial autonomy and innovation when it comes to the health care system, standing up against the Prime Minister's threats to claw back Saskatchewan's health care transfers during the election.

The member asked whether President Biden understands the global issues around oil and gas. I know the President cancelled Keystone. He cancelled a project that would have brought western Canadian energy from a safe ally and a trusted partner. It was an ethical source of energy. Just a few months later, the President of the United States is begging OPEC, and countries like Saudi Arabia with terrible human rights records, to supply the United States with more oil and gas. That makes no sense.

Those are the types of ideological decisions that the Prime Minister supports, and that is why Conservatives will always stand up for our western Canadian energy sector.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak for the first time in this Parliament. This is my sixth time being elected to represent my constituents, first in Edmonton—Mill Woods and then in Edmonton—Wetaskiwin. I want to thank those voters first and foremost. As my hon. colleague said, we would not get the opportunity to do all of the other things that we do if we were not accountable to our voters and if those voters did not support us through election. We have been fortunate in the last two elections to have the highest vote total in the country in Edmonton—Wetaskiwin. I am so thankful to the voters and so thankful to the many volunteers who come out to support us.

I will not mention the whole list of volunteers, but I will mention specifically my mother Bonnie and her husband Dale, who have been tireless volunteers on the sign crew each time for all six elections. My mom turned 75 years old yesterday, so happy birthday to my mom. I love her, and she is a role model to me and to our family in her love for people and everything that she does. She gives and gives, and I am so thankful for her.

I am also thinking about my father as I am standing here today. My father passed away in 2003. It would have been his 78th birthday coming up on December 4. I am thinking of my dad as I take on a new responsibility as shadow minister for mental health, addictions and suicide prevention. My dad was an absolute inspiration. He had challenges. We all have challenges in some ways, and my dad was no different. Despite the many challenges that he faced, he was also one of the most amazing human beings I have ever met, not in spite of those challenges, but because of the way he faced up to them and lived with them. He was an absolute role

model and again, someone who did not let the difficulties he had get in the way of trying to make a difference and loving people. I am thinking about him. He died three years before I was elected. He never would have envisioned that his son would be a member of Parliament, but I know that he would be very proud of the work that we all do here.

I am going to thank one more person and again single someone out. We could not do what we do without unbelievable staff, and one of my unbelievable staff members is leaving me in the next week. It is his birthday tomorrow, so it is sort of a birthday theme here. David McClelland is my EA. He has been with me for five years and is kind of a cynical type. He is moving back to Australia. He has not seen his family for a few years and I know that even as I am talking, he is probably rolling his eyes and making a sarcastic comment to the office. We will miss Dave. He meant the world to our team over the last five years, stepping up to do anything that we needed done. My thanks to David.

Diving into the Speech from the Throne, I mentioned that in Edmonton—Wetaskiwin we have had the highest vote total in the country for the past couple of years. I want to give that some perspective. This time around in the province of P.E.I., where they elected four Liberal members of Parliament, the total vote count in the entire province for four members was 38,956. In Papineau, where the Prime Minister was elected and where he got just over 50% of the vote, the total vote count was 45,423 votes. In Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, we in the Conservative Party received 48,340 votes. When we do the math we get some perspective. This is important because each of those votes should matter as much as any other individual vote in this country.

I know that we have a first-past-the-post system. I do not want to comment on the complicated electoral map or all of those different things. That is not what I am trying to say. What I am trying to say is that when there is that disparity and an election where the Conservative Party of Canada had more votes, and despite losing we had more votes than any other party in the country, that has to be taken into consideration in a functioning democracy. It has to be taken into consideration in a government that cares about all of its citizens, not just the citizens that feed into its electoral map. We have faced an unbelievable amount of frustration in Alberta, Saskatchewan and other parts of the country over the past six years. That frustration is felt because people are not listened to.

• (1630)

To give members a little perspective, the Liberal Party could not get anyone from my constituency to run in either of the last two elections. In Canada's most populous constituency, with probably 200,000 residents in the constituency, not a single Liberal put their name forward to even run for a nomination.

Now, there are members of Parliament who do not live in their ridings for a variety of reasons, such as electoral boundaries changing and things like that, but the Liberals could not find anybody to even put their name forward for a nomination. As a result, for two elections in a row, someone from outside the riding was acclaimed to run in Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

The Address

What that speaks to is the fact that Liberals almost never come to my riding. They come once in a while, because the airport happens to be in the centre of my constituency. They will come and call people, largely Liberals, from across the province to meet in a not-very-large room, because they do not need too large a room to meet in Alberta. They will come, have a bit of a session and then hop on their plane and go somewhere where there might be more votes. This is highly problematic.

I talk a lot about finding common ground. In Alberta we can find common ground on a lot of different things, but I will speak to one of the hardest areas to find common ground, because I think it is emblematic of what we need to do on energy, and that is the balance between energy and the environment. My colleague for Regina—Qu'Appelle and others have brought this up over the course of time.

It is unbelievable that in this country we have hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil being imported into eastern Canada that is not subject to the same rigorous regulations around upstream and downstream emissions as the oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland. This is unbelievable to people in my constituency. It is one thing to have a debate about energy and another thing to have a conversation about how we reduce emissions in this country. Everybody in the House would welcome that conversation and ideas on how we can reduce emissions even further to ensure a clean climate for our kids and grandkids down the road.

However, even as we debate those things, surely one thing we should be able to agree on is the fact that oil coming from Saudi Arabia and Nigeria should at least be subject to the same regulations as oil coming from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland.

I am looking across the way. Can I see some nods, maybe? Is it a reasonable expectation that oil coming from other countries, where human rights standards, labour standards and environmental standards are not even close to what we have in Canada, would be subject to the same standards that Canadian oil is held to? Again, there are not many nods coming from the other side. Maybe in the questions and comments some folks will stand up and agree with me on this.

On the theme of common ground, I will move to a couple of areas where I hope that maybe we can find some common ground over this Parliament. A very beloved colleague of ours on this side of the House, who is friends with many colleagues in other parties, is the member of Parliament for Cariboo—Prince George. He put forward a motion on December 11 of last year, which passed with unanimous consent in the House. All members agreed to the following motion, which read as follows:

That, given that the alarming rate of suicide in Canada constitutes a national health crisis, the House call on the government to take immediate action, in collaboration with our provinces, to establish a national suicide prevention hotline that consolidates all suicide crisis numbers into one easy to remember three-digit (988) hotline that is accessible to all Canadians.

Hopefully, if we can find agreement on that, we can find agreement on having a functioning Parliament. This is promising, and it is nice to be here with the numbers we have had over the last couple of weeks. Hopefully, we do not see Parliament being shut down.

Hopefully, we get committees up and running so we can study some really important things, like the economic crisis facing this country and the inflation crisis facing this country. Hopefully, we can get the health committee up and running to study COVID and this new variant that is on the rise and of concern.

• (1635)

I know my time is up. I will end my comments here on the floor to take any questions or hear any comments my colleagues might have.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be selective in my question. It is related to the motion we passed, because there was a good feeling inside the House of Commons when we recognized the importance of mental health and in particular suicide.

The idea of having one line for Canada is something that is very well received in virtually all jurisdictions, but there is a considerable amount of background work that needs to take place, including working with some stakeholders, in particular the provinces, and other organizations that have these lines. I suspect that if we were to be a bit more patient, hopefully we would see that materialize.

My question for the member is with respect to the commitment from the federal government to move more on providing resources and supports in mental health and what he might have to say about that and the need to build that consensus.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I do not always appreciate every question the hon. member asks when I am speaking, but I appreciate that one. Maybe it is in the spirit of what happened earlier in this place.

The mental health issue is one on which all parties were pretty much on the same page during the election campaign. The parties put forward plans to take very meaningful action on mental health. As we try to move forward I think we will find that it will be an area where we can co-operate in a world where we do not always co-operate in every way.

A great starting point would be to tackle the suicide hotline. It was a year ago that we passed the unanimous consent motion. We know that the number 988 is the number used in the United States and is a number we can use here. Surely we can come together at this time of crisis, particularly mental health crisis, to address that in an urgent fashion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, let me start by congratulating you. I am very happy to see you back in that chair to oversee our debates.

I would also like to congratulate my colleague on winning his sixth election. I gather from the first part of his speech that he was disappointed about the disparity between the number of votes his party got and the number of seats it ended up with. Would he have liked to see a commitment to electoral reform in the throne speech?

*The Address**[English]*

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I am pretty sure that had there been a commitment to electoral reform in the throne speech, it would have been ignored by now. As the member knows, there was a commitment to electoral reform back in the 2015 Liberal election campaign, and it was one of those moments where all the members of the opposition were united in a proposal brought forward.

He might remember that the campaign promised that the 2015 election would be the last election fought under first past the post, but when presented with a unified opposition coming together with a solution that was widely regarded, the Liberals shut down that conversation right away because that math did not work for them.

• (1640)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is nice to see you back in the chair.

I want to congratulate the member on his re-election to the House. I note his regret that we did not make it harder for him. I assure him we will try to do better in the future.

Like me, the member has a lot of constituents who are in receipt of the GIS and who may have accepted the government's advice that they could take the CERB without negative consequences. I know he has a lot of families, as we do in my riding, that collect the Canada child benefit and did not realize their benefits would be clawed back. I wonder if the member and his caucus will be joining us, and I know the Bloc has talked about this, in pressuring the government to not just say it is working on this, but to get the job done so that seniors and families are protected from these clawbacks, because they are the most vulnerable among us.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I were once seatmates. It seems strange to say, but we were right on the boundaries of our respective parties at one point. Now we are about as far away as we could be in the House. However, I always enjoyed our conversations. When it comes to the measures the member is talking about, he will find a willing ally in our party in pushing the government to account.

I talked about a fully functioning democracy. One of the things we have really been hurt by over the past couple of years, other than the pandemic, is the fact our Parliament has not been functioning the way it should. Right now, because of the election, we have gone months without fully functioning committees where these really important measures could be studied. We need to get committees up and running as fast as we can, because Canadians are being hurt by the fact that we are not studying these important issues.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for London West.

When I first entered this House as the representative for Newmarket—Aurora, I had no idea how much our day-to-day lives would change, including here in the House of Commons. I am willing to bet none of us here did either. We all had to learn and act quickly to make sure Canadians were safe, supported and brought back home.

While it can be difficult to see what is in front of us as we are dealing with it, the picture becomes clearer the more we learn, the more we experience and the more we reflect. It has been almost 20 months since we were told to go home and go digital, to protect ourselves, our staff, our families and our communities from an unknown virus at the time.

We have had time to adapt and to pivot. We have now learned that the challenges we have faced with this pandemic have also highlighted the need and the opportunity to build a better, fairer and more inclusive Canada for every single Canadian.

As I see it, the Speech from the Throne we are debating today outlines much of what has been learned and much of what Canadians have asked for. My duty as the member for Newmarket—Aurora is to bring our local perspective on what has been presented to Canadians as the government's priorities in the 44th Parliament. Therefore, I am honoured to stand in this House and share what my constituents have told me are their priorities, the same priorities we see in the Speech from the Throne.

In my riding and across Canada we have made significant progress against COVID-19. I am proud to share that in York Region, where my riding is located, 86.5% of eligible residents aged 12 and older are now fully vaccinated. From the start, our number one priority has been to keep the pandemic under control and finish the job on the vaccines. We have secured next-generation COVID-19 vaccines, boosters and pediatric doses, and we will continue to encourage everyone who can to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

As we turn the corner on this pandemic, our government will take the lessons learned to build an even better health care system. We must improve access to mental health and addictions treatment, clear the backlog on procedures, and strengthen long-term care conditions. This will require us to work together in this House, but also with provincial and territorial partners, to get the job done.

Our recovery from this pandemic provides us with an opportunity to rebuild an economy that is more resilient and works for everyone. Thanks to our government measures, employment is already back to pre-pandemic levels and we have been able to transition to more targeted supports to provide help for those who still need it.

Now is the time to focus on the work needed to make life more affordable for Canadians. A Canada-wide early learning child care system is key to lowering costs for families and helping parents return to the workforce. A mother of three in my riding once shared with me that had a national child care system been in place when she had her children, she would have been able to keep her job, purchase a home and, most importantly, raise her children together with her husband, rather than working opposite schedules.

The Address

For her and many others with similar stories, I am hopeful that my home province of Ontario will soon see an agreement on child care. For her and many others like her, our government is going to take action on housing affordability and put home ownership back in reach for Canadians.

As we look to rebuild our economy, we must also look to make sure it is more inclusive and diverse. We are making it easier for women and vulnerable groups to access training to help them gain and strengthen needed skills to re-enter the labour market. We must continue to work towards ending systemic racism, sexism and discrimination in our workplaces, schools and communities.

True equality makes our communities and our economy stronger and more resilient. No one should miss out on an opportunity to get ahead because of their gender, who they love, where they come from, what language they speak, who they pray to or the colour of their skin.

• (1645)

Because every Canadian deserves to feel safe and welcome in their own community, we are continuing the work with supporting organizations that provide critical services to those who are victims of gender-based violence and discrimination. I want the residents of Newmarket—Aurora, and indeed all Canadians, to feel safe in the places they have chosen to call home. The safety of Canadians is non-negotiable.

Speaking of safety, climate change is the biggest threat that we are facing. We know there may be some members in the House who still may not believe this is true, but they cannot argue the facts. From an increase in floods and fires to cold winters and hotter summers, climate change is real and its impacts are already being felt.

This is not news. In fact, since 2015, our government has invested roughly \$60 billion toward fighting climate change by means of investing in clean technologies, public transit, zero-emissions charging stations and more. We will continue to invest in our oil and gas workers and industry to cut pollution, while making a green economy that is more inclusive of them. We have the raw materials and the skilled workforce needed to produce clean products that will make Canada a global leader.

However, as we do this, we must also consider the important relationship indigenous people share with the land on which we live. Much can be learned from them, and we have a responsibility to work with our indigenous partners to learn from, to protect and to respect traditional knowledge. It is in that spirit of understanding and partnership with indigenous peoples that we renew our commitment to advance reconciliation.

As a parent and a grandparent, I cannot fathom the atrocity of knowing that I might never see my children again because they were taken away from me, from my home, by the government. That anguish, pain and overwhelming discrimination has faced indigenous parents and children for decades and unfortunately is still faced today.

As a country and a government, we have the responsibility to make sure indigenous communities have the support they need to keep their families together, to assess timely and culturally appro-

priate health care services, to address the overrepresentation of indigenous people in our penal institutions and welfare systems, and to ensure fair and equitable compensation for those harmed by the first nations child and family services program. We have a responsibility to accelerate the work that we have already committed to.

There is much work to be done to close the gaps that keep many first nations, Inuit and Métis from fairness and equity in this country. Let us move quickly, hand in hand with indigenous people, to not only close these gaps, but in doing so, realize the immense opportunities that are possible from an equal and renewed understanding and partnership.

A few weeks back, I had the honour to welcome the Noori family in Newmarket—Aurora. They left their home in Afghanistan believing that the hopes of a brighter future would be found in our community and in Canada, a hope that so many around the world share.

I have said it before, but I will say it again: We are lucky to call Canada our home. I know how that feels because it was Canada that welcomed my family after World War II. I have seen first-hand the compassion Canadians have for their neighbours and the support they give to those in need. When times are tough, Canadians show the courage to brace for what is ahead, with the determination to overcome challenges and compassion for their neighbours.

In my riding, during the most difficult days of the pandemic, I saw community members step up to make sure that no one was left behind. My community inspires me each and every day, and it is thanks to community members that I have found the honour to come to the House to work with colleagues from all over the country on advancing their priorities. Together and right now is how we build a better, fairer and more inclusive Canada for all, the Canada that we all deserve.

• (1650)

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, first, I would like to thank the wonderful people of Saskatoon West for once again putting their trust in me to represent them here in Ottawa. Many of those people, by the way, are seniors, and they have spoken to me many times about the difficulties they are facing. Of course, most seniors live on a fixed income, and the government has made it very difficult for them. Inflation is causing all things to go up in price, including food. Beef prices are up by 14%, chicken by 9%.

How does the member explain to the senior constituents in his riding how the government has impacted them, how it is hurting seniors? What are the answers he gives to his seniors when he is trying to answer their difficult questions about the difficulties they are facing in their daily lives?

The Address

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, I have frequent conversations with seniors in my area. We have a very active seniors community and seniors committee, both in the municipality of Newmarket and in Aurora. Those conversations are about the support they were provided with the GST rebates. The challenges we are feeling now are difficult for everyone, particularly those with a fixed income, and not just for seniors. The supports we are providing have gone a long way to helping them through this difficult time.

What lies ahead with the impact of inflation will be considered by the government as it goes forward.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, please accept my sincere congratulations on your appointment.

In his speech, the member said that he is very close to the people in his riding and that his province is important to him. I would say we have that in common.

What the people in our ridings want is a stronger health care system. I am proud to be a Quebecker. What Quebec wants is federal health transfers that meet our needs.

The throne speech did not even mention health transfers. The federal government is not meeting the health care needs of Quebec and the provinces. We are being forced to make do with less when what the federal government needs to do is reconcile the needs of Quebec and the provinces with its ability to increase health transfers to 35%.

Why was there no mention in the throne speech of increasing federal health transfers to 35%, which is what Ontario and Quebec want and need?

• (1655)

[*English*]

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, that was an important question. As a member of the board of directors for Southlake Regional Health Centre for nine years, I understand the challenges in meeting the financial obligations of dealing with inflation and particularly in increased patient loads as a result of growing communities. I do understand there is a critical need to look at funding for health care.

I believe the Prime Minister did say that was going to be reviewed in due time, as soon as we deal with what is in front of us right now with regard to COVID, vaccines and making sure that we have a plan that gets the economy back on its feet. Following that, we might be in a better position to review what should be considered going forward.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I know how sincerely my hon. colleague, the member for Newmarket—Aurora, is concerned about the climate crisis. However, I have to say that when we hear from Liberals that the government understands the science around climate, I am desperately afraid. I am genuinely afraid that the science has been misunderstood.

We have a net-zero climate act that was passed in the 43rd Parliament. The rhetoric is all about net zero by 2050, yet our commitment in the Paris Agreement is to hold to a global average temperature increase of 1.5°C if possible. We will not get to a global average temperature increase of 1.5°C if the target is net zero by 2050. It gets to be too late too fast. We really have to do more in advance of even next year's climate meeting at COP27.

I would ask my hon. colleague if he senses, within the ranks of his colleagues, an understanding that we are now on track for desperately worse and more dangerous climate conditions and potentially the loss of human civilization.

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, I share the member's concerns. I believe the entire Parliament shares her concerns. I think there is a deep and genuine desire to make sure that we do what is right and make the investments. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, we have invested in the range of \$60 billion already and are focused on exceeding our goals.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to see you back in the chair.

[*English*]

I would like to start by mentioning an unfortunate accident that happened last night in London West involving 11 people, eight of whom were taken to the hospital. This morning we learned that a young girl of only eight years old has lost her life in this tragic accident. I extend my deepest condolences to her family and friends in the London community. I also want to extend well wishes to the injured and their families and thank our first responders for being the first people there to support everyone.

I want to take the time to recognize and appreciate the people of London West, who allowed me to take this seat. I will continue to work hard to serve them.

I also want to thank my son Noah, who will likely be very embarrassed by what I have to say. He is my motivation and inspiration to be the woman I am today. I became a mom when I was 18 years old, and I have been dragging him along in my fight for equity and justice in London. Unknowingly, he has been and continues to be the reason I wake up every day to do this. Noah has remained my biggest supporter, a key volunteer who constantly kept the morale of the campaign office high. Even though he is a bandwagon Lakers fan, he keeps a smile on my face and kept a smile on my face throughout my entire campaign.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank my mother for her support while I am here.

Mom, you have always supported me. If you had not chosen to come to Canada from Burundi, who knows where I would be now?

• (1700)

[*English*]

I thank the rest of my family and friends for keeping me sane throughout these past several years of my political life. Their support has been immeasurable.

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I thank so much the volunteers who helped me knock on thousands of doors throughout the campaign. I know it was an interesting campaign full of challenges, but also full of friendships.

I also thank my predecessor Kate Young for her tremendous support. Our weekly calls have really helped me and supported me to navigate this space.

We have to recognize that in London this campaign was not perfect. I know that I do not need to remind the House that during his visit to London, the Prime Minister had gravel thrown at him. The fact that a G7 leader had gravel thrown at him is absolutely unacceptable and abhorrent behaviour. This behaviour continues to show the cracks in our system that have been even further amplified over the last two years. London has not had an easy year when it comes to these sorts of displays of hate. When a terrorist attack happened last summer in my riding, we were shocked and dismayed.

The last two years have highlighted systemic racism and acts of discrimination and hate that have long faced Canada, and this is one of the many reasons I first ran for city council. We must remove these barriers, promote equity and access to services, and support one another. I continue to stand in solidarity with the Muslim community in London and say to them that they belong here. I look forward to working with them as we continue to stand against Islamophobia, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Black and indigenous racism and all forms of hate.

Elections are about ensuring that everyone has a say and giving the people a voice, all people. It does not matter where they come from or what they look like; all Canadians have the right to vote for the future they want. I felt that personally when the Burundi community in London and across Canada came out in support of my campaign, a community that, frankly, has been disengaged in politics recently because they felt their voice was not being heard. To have my community stand with me meant the world to me and I thank them for that. I cannot wait to continue working hard to represent the people of London West, and I thank them again for putting their trust in me.

On the throne speech that laid out the future that Canadians want our government to work toward, I will start by saying that we are still in the midst of a pandemic. In Ontario, 10,000 people have died from COVID-19. With a new variant that has been identified across the world and now in Canada, we know that work remains. Our government is prioritizing, above all else, the health and safety of Canadians while we work to get the COVID-19 pandemic under control and ensure that we have an inclusive and resilient recovery.

That is why we are focusing on vaccination. We have mandated vaccination for federal and federally regulated workers, as well as for everyone travelling within Canada. On top of that, our government has secured more vaccines, boosters and doses for kids aged five to 11. I know that means a lot to parents.

We cannot debate science. The only way we will get through this pandemic is by ensuring that all who can get vaccinated do get vaccinated.

[*Translation*]

Throughout the pandemic, we have witnessed not just the widespread devastation caused by COVID-19, but also the deadly impacts of climate change and the climate crisis that we are currently facing.

Last week, the people of British Columbia dealt with deadly flooding, which has cost lives, displaced families, and disrupted essential imports.

The effects of climate change are real. They are having a greater impact on our society today, which is code red for humanity. We must all act immediately to ensure that future generations, like my son Noah, have a place to live.

[*English*]

Our government is committed to tackling the climate crisis with even bolder climate action than we have been taking about over the past six years. We will move to cap and cut oil and gas sector emissions, while working to accelerate our path to a net-zero electricity future. We will invest more in greener ways of transportation, while increasing the price on pollution and strengthening disaster mitigation. These are much-needed steps and investments in cities, investments that will create more jobs, clean jobs and green jobs.

As we move toward a greener, cleaner and more inclusive future, we can work to ensure that no more lives are lost over these catastrophic and horrifying effects of the climate crisis. As we work to rebuild our economy, we have to focus on a sustainable and inclusive recovery that continues to support everyone who has been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, including women, small businesses, racialized communities and seniors, just to name a few.

Supporting Canadians with important access to accessible and affordable early learning and child care programs will ensure that women and parents are not left behind in our economic recovery. As a mom, I know first-hand the importance of giving a child the best possible start. Prioritizing a Canada-wide early learning and child care system will provide every child with access to affordable early learning and child care. It will help more women get back into the workforce and ease financial burdens that are often placed on families with younger children, especially in the most vulnerable communities.

Last, I want to highlight an issue I spoke about in the House last Wednesday: housing. Tackling the rising costs of living includes ensuring that every Canadian, regardless of how much money they make, has access to a safe and affordable place to call home. Ensuring that Canadians have access to affordable housing is vital as we look toward our economic recovery.

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Committing to making life more affordable by helping families buy their first home sooner with the rent-to-own program and improving the first-time home buyer incentive will be crucial for young Canadians in London West, like myself, who dream of owning their first home. Building more housing across the country will increase the affordability of housing. What that means is that we have to work with everyone at all levels of government and with stakeholders. To put it in plain language, we need more Canadians in homes and end this chronic homelessness, which the national housing strategy is set up to do.

I know that this is only a small section of what our government has committed to do. I wanted to talk about those things because those were the things I heard about at doors in London West. Those are the reasons why many of us are sitting here. We have been sent to the House to fight for a future for Canadians, not to fight among ourselves. Let us unite together to serve all Canadians in building a stronger, greener and more inclusive Canada.

I look forward to expanding on this important work and working across the aisles to ensure this happens for Canadians.

• (1705)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, there has been a lot of discussion about child care in the throne speech and in the speeches about the throne speech. Certainly, it is very important. When I was the chair of the status of women committee, we looked at unpaid work, specifically child care, and we certainly need a variety of options for Canadians.

In 2018, the Liberals had committed to create 40,000 child care spaces and, to my knowledge, that never happened.

What is different about this promise this time?

Mrs. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Speaker, I want to emphasize the fact that we went into an election with a plan to make child care universally accessible and affordable to every family across Canada. In Ontario, we are still waiting. Women are still waiting to hear from their government on how they will be able to get back to work, how they will be able to save more money so they can continue to raise their families. We are talking about what we are doing for Canadians now. We just came out of an election. We are here now to serve Canadians. Let us work together to ensure child care is affordable to all families.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, I too congratulate you on your appointment.

My colleague spoke about the environment. How does she explain the fact that the Liberal government has spent more on fossil fuels than the previous Conservative government? I think that there is no such thing as clean oil and that we must reduce our dependence on oil.

Furthermore, there has been a lot of talk lately about the 80% refusal rate for French-speaking temporary students from Africa. This seems unacceptable, and I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that.

Mrs. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Speaker, I will begin by saying that climate change is real: We experienced it during the election

campaign, when it was really hot, and we saw how urgently we need to act. I have heard a lot of young Canadians say that they want to have a future and live in this country and on this planet. We need to do something today.

Our climate change plan is clear, and that is why the government was re-elected: to continue taking action to address climate change in Canada. It is true that we have a lot of work to do. That is why we are all here. I hope that my colleague will get involved and help us move forward on what we need to do for Canadians.

• (1710)

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is with particular joy that I welcome the member from London West to this place. We ran into each in the corridors earlier and remembered that I had met her when she was a young climate activist in 2010 at the Cancun Conference of the Parties.

I did not intend to ask her this question, but I intend to answer the question from the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton, because I am considerably older than the hon. member for London West. I remember that a Liberal minister named Ken Dryden had signed agreements with every single province and territory to deliver universal child care, which had already been funded in the 2005 budget when Ralph Goodale was finance minister. I am afraid I have a terribly good memory. We lost Kyoto, the Kelowna accord and a universal child care plan when a minority government under Paul Martin was defeated by the Bloc, the Conservatives and the New Democrats. I do not blame them for that now.

I know the cause of making a decision that was so desperately devastating to Kyoto, to child care and to Kelowna. The culprit is our voting system. It is first past the post that creates incentives for good parties to do bad things to get the advantage down the road.

I did not ask my hon. colleague a question. I stand here as something of a relic that remembers things, and I am still angry.

Mrs. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Speaker, I did meet my colleague at COP16 in 2010. I was about 10 years younger than I am today. It is really exciting to see that she is still in the House, still doing the work and still fighting for climate change. I look forward to working with her, her team and everyone else to ensure we deliver on what we promised Canadians we would do.

I want note that our children are watching from home, and they know. I have spoken to children who are Grade 5, Grade 4 and Grade 3, and the number one conversation they want to have with me is around climate change. We have to do more. We have to work together and not kill each other's plans to serve Canadians.

Let us remember that Canadians sent us here to work together to serve them.

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Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the member for Edmonton Griesbach.

I would first like to take a moment to acknowledge that my riding in Nanaimo—Ladysmith is located on the traditional territories of the Stz'uminus, Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As and the Lyackson First Nations.

As my first speech in the chamber, I would like to give heartfelt thanks to the people of Nanaimo—Ladysmith for putting their trust in me. Serving them as their member of Parliament is a true honour. I want to give special thanks to my friends, dedicated campaign team and volunteers who worked tirelessly to get me here today. They really did. I wanted to also thank my NDP colleagues for their endless support, day after day, and the member for Burnaby South, who I watch inspire new generations to get involved in the political process. I endeavour to do the same.

I would also like to thank my predecessor, Paul Manly, who worked hard to represent Nanaimo—Ladysmith prior to my being elected. I am grateful for MLA and minister of mental health and addictions, Sheila Malcolmsen, and my predecessor Jean Crowder, who both paved the way for me to be here today with all members. Most important, I would like to thank my family and especially my two amazing children, Makayla and Wyatt. There are so many more I would like to thank, but with so little time, I will only say that I am here today because of the support of so many, and I want to thank them.

My riding in Nanaimo—Ladysmith is a beautiful island riding located on the west coast of British Columbia. While I am happy to be here today working on behalf of the people of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, the difficulties being faced by my constituents, as for too many Canadians, are immense. There are many critical issues with which Nanaimo—Ladysmith is dealing. With the time I have, I will focus on just a few of these, but over the coming weeks and months, as we are here together, I hope to talk about and act on the many important issues impacting the constituents of Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

People in Nanaimo—Ladysmith are struggling to find a place to call home. I am hearing from young families that have little hope of ever purchasing their first home, hard-working members of my riding who have lost their homes as a result of job insecurity and seniors, living off low income, struggling to pay rent. I see first-hand the impacts of unaffordable and inaccessible housing in my riding. I am often asked by my constituents, “When did we forget that housing is a basic human right, not a financial commodity for investors?”

I think of a constituent in my riding who talked to me about her recent renovation from her home. She was left with two options: rent at double the price or become homeless. This constituent's income remained fixed, while her rent doubled, and she is not alone. Constituents in my riding are asking when the government will live up to its promises to provide safe and truly affordable housing to Canadians in the communities where they live and work.

I hear daily in my riding stories of people unable to make ends meet as a result of the cost of living and housing. Nobody should

have to choose between having food in their fridge or a roof over their heads.

As the costs of housing continue to increase, so does the number of people in my riding experiencing homelessness. In Nanaimo's 2020 point-in-time count, for example, that was completed prior to the COVID lockdown, homelessness had increased almost 150% in the previous four years, and the COVID pandemic has just made this situation worse. Almost one-third of the unhoused population counted identified as being first nations, Métis or of indigenous ancestry. Now more than ever, we need to work alongside indigenous communities to develop housing for indigenous people and with indigenous people.

We know the overrepresentation of indigenous people among Nanaimo—Ladysmith's unhoused population is the result of over 150 years of systemic racism. The ongoing discovery of unmarked graves of indigenous children is but one example of the attempted genocide of indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, acts of racism continue today. Just one example in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith is the continued overrepresentation of indigenous youth and children in the foster care system. A history of stripping indigenous people of their land, culture, language and community has taken its toll, and such racist acts continue today.

• (1715)

Thankfully, there are organizations in my riding doing great work. For example, Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre in my riding is one of them. It has been providing essential services to urban indigenous people for over 50 years, picking up the pieces as a result of federal inaction for too long. The calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission need to be more than just words on paper. Despite the promises made to indigenous people, the government is still taking indigenous children to court and failing to ensure indigenous communities have access to safe drinking water. It has yet to implement the calls for justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

People in Nanaimo—Ladysmith are seeing first-hand the impacts of the climate crisis. Through the summer, British Columbians faced some of the worst drought conditions and hottest days ever recorded in the province's history. From one extreme to the next, British Columbia is now experiencing some of the worst flooding ever seen. Those most impacted by flooding in Nanaimo—Ladysmith are the indigenous nations. The challenges already faced by the first nations in my riding have only been compounded by the rising waters. Homes that were already insufficient in number and in much need of repair now also have significant flood damages.

Inadequate and delayed supports are not what these nations or other British Columbians impacted by the floods need from the government. I am hearing loud and clear from the constituents of Nanaimo—Ladysmith that if we are going to protect the planet, not just for people today but for the next generation, we must act now. We need to do whatever it takes to limit the impacts of the climate crisis, to build more resilient communities and to transition to a clean energy future where workers are not left behind.

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We know the Liberal government spends over \$4.8 billion each year on subsidies to fossil fuel companies. We need to end these subsidies now, and instead invest these billions in just, sustainable, renewable energy sources. We must have the courage to act today to fight the climate crisis. We need our actions to match the scale and urgency of this crisis. Too many young people, including my own children, tell me that they are fearful for their futures. We need to do better; all our futures depend on it.

While constituents in Nanaimo—Ladysmith feel the impacts of the climate crisis and a housing crisis, my riding is also suffering through an opioid crisis. Too many family members, friends and neighbours have tragically lost their lives in the opioid crisis. How many more lives need to be lost before we start taking this opioid crisis seriously? Not only was there no mention of the opioid crisis in the throne speech, but ongoing inaction has resulted in over 1,500 deaths in British Columbia and 39 in Nanaimo alone. Constituents in Nanaimo—Ladysmith want and deserve action on the opioid crisis now.

As a coastal member of Parliament and my party's critic for fisheries and oceans, I am deeply concerned about the wild salmon population and the effect the recent flooding has had on it. The Liberals' speech failed to promise the critical investment and awareness that is desperately needed to save this species, which is in critical shape. I will continue to push the government for this help, and will work with first nations communities, provinces and territories to address this crisis.

Again, while this is by no means an exhaustive list of the issues I have heard on the doorsteps in Nanaimo—Ladysmith, I am committed to working as hard as I can for the people in my communities across Nanaimo—Ladysmith and all communities across Canada. This Parliament should be larger than the sum of its parts, and I want to see us act like it. We are facing such critical challenges and need to work together to overcome them.

• (1720)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is excellent to see you in the chair again.

We have been hearing an awful lot about housing prices and the impacts of various things on housing prices, especially in Vancouver and Toronto. Has the member given any thought to the impact of foreign money coming into the country illegally, perhaps through criminal organizations, that is basically distorting the housing market in metro Vancouver and in other places across Canada?

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, we know that we need to be addressing the price of housing. I speak to constituents day after day, and too many are unable to afford the housing prices and to be able to make ends meet. It is not just about purchasing a home but also renting a home. The options are few and far between. There are so many things that we could be doing, including co-operatives and various styles of housing to make housing available for all. There is a lot of work that needs to be done to move in this direction.

We need to have a strong plan in place. One thing missing from the throne speech was a plan for indigenous people, by indigenous people to develop an indigenous housing strategy. We are seeing so

many indigenous people who are unable to access the homes that they deserve and need.

I thank the member for the question, and I hope we get a chance to work together to solve the problem of housing.

• (1725)

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment. It is great to see you in the chair.

Congratulations to the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith. It is fantastic to hear her comments about working together.

My question relates to housing, which is a big problem in the Bay of Quinte and, of course, the whole country. It is a problem in every single one of our municipalities and every single one of our regions.

On the topic of working together, would the member agree with our plan and working with the Conservatives? The message is that it is a problem of supply right now; it is the biggest problem. We cannot have more cheap cash. We need to make sure that we are working with municipalities, provinces and across all of our regions to ensure that we have more supply built as fast as possible in order to fix this problem once and for all.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, my mind immediately goes to what I am hearing from constituents, which is that we need to be focusing on the affordability of housing and not just keep building houses for the ultrarich who can afford them when we do not have housing options for others.

There are so many who are being left behind. If we continue to supply these houses for only the ultrarich, then we are seeing that those on lower incomes, those looking for co-operative housing options and those looking for rental options are not getting the housing that they need and deserve.

The plan being put forward by the Conservatives, unfortunately, misses the mark as far as the need for housing is concerned. If we are going to be fighting to increase housing for people at all different levels of income, we can continue the conversation, but we do not need more houses for the ultrarich. The ultrarich are already housed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend my NDP colleague who did a great job on her inaugural speech.

The throne speech was rather vague about what the government is actually proposing to do on the indigenous file, despite the minister's claims. For example, it did not set out any proposed investments for first nations housing in Quebec.

My colleague will learn that the Bloc Québécois is not necessarily the troublemaker that it is made out to be. The Bloc Québécois is a party that likes to work co-operatively. We have many worthwhile proposals, which include ways to solve the housing shortage, particularly in first nations communities.

We also propose to work with business owners to bring more indigenous workers into the labour force as a way to help address the labour shortage and create wealth in communities.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on this Bloc Québécois proposal.

[*English*]

Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the acknowledgement of the lack of commitment to follow through with our promises made to indigenous people. I surely hope that we can work together to develop better solutions for our indigenous communities.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I first want to thank my constituents in Edmonton Griesbach. I am truly honoured and so proud to have the opportunity to serve Edmonton Griesbach in this 44th Canadian Parliament and to represent the many communities that make our district great. I will never take this opportunity for granted.

I also want to acknowledge that we are gathered here on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin people. I want to especially thank Shannon Chief of the Algonquin nation who welcomed me during the swearing-in ceremony. It meant a tremendous amount to me to have that relationship with the Algonquin people.

I am honoured to be the first openly two-spirit member of Parliament elected to this chamber. As a young indigenous queer person, I know that representation matters. Since being elected, I have received countless messages from young, indigenous and queer folks in my riding and beyond. Many shared touching stories about their lives and how important seeing my election was for them, to finally see themselves in government and to finally see themselves represented in this body.

I am honoured they shared their stories with me and I hope to bring their voices and perspectives to this chamber, because the truth is that someone like me is not expected to be here. The fact that the residents of Edmonton Griesbach chose a queer brown kid from their streets to send me here still surprises me today. The fact that I survived and am here is a surprise at all in Canada. I am a kid who grew up in the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement, often one of the most forgotten and underserved communities in our country. I am here because of the strength of that community and the proud people who make that community great. I am proud to be bringing their stories here today.

I am also in the chamber as an intergenerational survivor of the horrific residential school system and Canada's sixties scoop policy. To my kokum, my uncles, all the survivors and the many lost children, we remember them. I am here because of my birth mother Brenda, herself a victim of the sixties scoop, made the brave decision to call for support, saving me from the child welfare system, allowing me to grow up in my community with my culture, language, people, but, most importantly, my family, something indige-

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nous people have been deprived of in this country. Not always having much, we always had each other, a gift that so many still today take for granted.

Kinanaskomtinawaw packchi-wanis.

As indigenous people, we need to expect better from our government and our leaders. We must ensure change is made. We must ensure we never allow these kinds of injustices to happen again. I hope my presence in this chamber can help bring us closer on our journey toward reconciliation, though I fear this throne speech does little toward that goal. For a government of over six years that says good words, but does not deliver on those words, that does not show up when it matters, this only breeds cynicism, not reconciliation. This needs to change if we hope to move forward as a country.

Nor does this throne speech do much to support those in my home district of Edmonton Griesbach. It will do little to make the lives better on the ground in my communities. We are a district made up of strong, vibrant communities, a working-class district, a diverse district with one of the largest urban indigenous populations in Canada and home to some of the largest populations of new Canadians, but also a district with struggles. It has seen some of the highest child poverty rates in the country and is home to many of the unhoused in Edmonton, a number growing steadily. In many ways, we are a district in crisis: a housing crisis, an opioid crisis, a district seeing an alarming increase in hate crimes, especially towards hijab-wearing Muslim women, a district still feeling the impacts of the ongoing pandemic.

These are some of the concerns I hear on the doorsteps again and again, yet this throne speech does little to address these issues. On housing there has been much talk by the government, but action is needed. Unhoused populations in Edmonton have doubled. Unhoused residents in my community are struggling, just as they were before, and even more now. The throne speech makes no commitment on "for indigenous, by indigenous" housing, something the Liberals have promised for generations now. I was born in the 1990s and this was promised before then.

● (1730)

It is not solving the housing crisis we face in Edmonton Griesbach or across the country. Winter is here. It is cold, and we must do more now.

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There was no mention of the long-promised pharmacare or of dental care. Over and over on the doorsteps, I heard stories of those who could not afford their medication or who had to choose between food, housing and other needs just to pay their medical bills. Pharmacare is so desperately needed. It would change lives, and it would save lives. We know this. The government knows this. The government's own report shows this.

Canadians support pharmacare. They need it, which is why the Liberals have campaigned on the issue time and again. The fact that we see no action to implement pharmacare, and no mention of it in the throne speech, is simply unacceptable. It is offensive to my constituents who deserve better. The government must do better.

Climate action, good jobs and a just transition for workers are other critical issues ignored by the throne speech. Many in my district are still struggling to find employment. Those who rely on existing employment insurance are frustrated because the throne speech does nothing to help them. Many are worried about what the future might bring as the world continues to transition away from non-renewable resources. They have worked hard. I know that. I am a former oil and gas worker. They want to see a future that is possible for them and one that they are included in. They want to know that there will be good jobs in Alberta and in Edmonton for many years ahead.

The Liberals campaigned on a just transition for workers. They promised to involve them in creating plans, because there can be no justice without involving those impacted by this transition. There can be no successful climate action without involving workers, yet this throne speech does nothing to ensure good jobs or a just transition for workers in my constituency. Again, nice words are not enough. We need to see action. We need to create good jobs.

In addition, this speech does not recognize the long-standing blood donation ban that has stopped countless queer folks, including me, from giving blood. This is something the Liberals made promises on, campaigned on and even raised money on, but we continue to wait for action.

Overall, this throne speech does little and says little. At a mere 24 pages, it is one of the shortest in recent history. There is no mention of the issues that matter most to the people I represent in Edmonton Griesbach. After decades of broken promises, including on affordable child care, I was pleased to finally see this happening in the throne speech; however, much work remains to have this be fully realized. It would do little to make life better for those I represent. People in my district feel left behind.

It makes one wonder why we had an election at all, if the government was going to come back with so little. However, I am here to do a job. I am here to represent my constituents in Edmonton Griesbach and bring their voices to Parliament, and I am proud to be their voice. I will continue to push the government to keep its promises, and I will continue to push it to do better. It is what my constituents expect, and it is what Canadians deserve.

• (1735)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, many believe that in order to achieve the type of pharmacare that Canadians want, we have to have the provinces on board

with it. I am sure the member can appreciate why that is the case, given the jurisdiction and the importance of the issue.

In the September 2020 throne speech, there was a commitment by the federal government to partner with willing provinces. The will is there to move forward. We saw the will to move forward with child care and the take-up. As a result, Canadians are benefiting. The national government provides the leadership and hopefully provinces will come onside to recognize that and work together.

Could the member provide his thoughts on whether he believes it is important that we work with provincial jurisdictions to make some of these possibilities turn into realities?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, it is possible. We have seen governments work across many jurisdictions, including my jurisdiction in Alberta, to bring in something like child care. The very ideologically opposed parties that are represented in this government have actually been able to make a deal on this. I am encouraged by the government's ability to make that happen, but it was long overdue.

Many families lost decades' worth of funding, preventing their children who are now grown from having that opportunity. I simply want to make sure that the government acts quickly so that we do not repeat the mistakes we made in implementing such a delayed child care program. We need to act now on pharmacare. It is a matter of life and death for some people. Coming from a place that works with many reserves, for example, we see the rights to drug coverage for them not going far enough. We need to see some tangible commitments and action on introducing pharmacare and I think there is—

• (1740)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do have to allow for other questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, because he is an indigenous person, I am interested in the member's opinion on something. I have been sitting here since 2015, listening to the government talk about the most important relationship being the nation-to-nation relationship, and how it was going to get rid of boil water advisories and do a murdered and missing aboriginal women thing. The reality is now that Liberals just want to consult for boil water advisories, and there is no action on the murdered and missing aboriginal women.

The Address

There has been very slow progress on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, and then the Prime Minister went off to Tofino on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. I am disappointed and I feel it has hurt our ability to work toward reconciliation with first nations people. Could the member comment on behalf of his constituents?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I believe the member's question is of our time. We as indigenous people have endured a tremendous amount of hardship, and this hardship extends back to the very founding of Canada. We are only now in many ways uncovering these atrocities, and it should change us as people who love this country and as people who are committed to making it better.

However, the actions of the government and the actions of the Prime Minister have largely failed. September 30 was a critically important day for indigenous people to recognize that the remains of thousands of indigenous children are now being found. It was atrocious that he was not there with the Kamloops Indian Band while they mourned and as we all mourned. When we make promises and break them, it strikes back to a historical broken cord of treaty making that was never finished. There is a lot more work to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, we know that there have been massive cuts to health transfers since the 1970s.

At that time, the federal government covered almost 50% of health spending, while today it covers only 22%. Quebec and the provinces are calling for an increase in health transfers to 35%.

I would like my colleague's opinion on respect for the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, health transfers have to increase. This is a must as we continue to battle COVID-19 and the many variants that are now cropping up all over the world. This pandemic is not over. Our provinces need more funding to support that function and to support Canadians across Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Assistant Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. Once again, it is an honour to work with you, as well as with all of the members and my colleagues in the House.

Before I start my remarks, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Steveston—Richmond East in British Columbia. He became a dear friend very shortly after his election in 2021.

I would also like to mention that we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation. We are very grateful to be here and to share the territory with them.

This is my first official speech in the House of Commons, and I am very proud to be able to represent voters and residents of Hull—Aylmer for the third time. I am truly grateful and, to be frank, I am

humbled to know that the people of Hull—Aylmer have entrusted me with a third term. I would therefore like to thank them and to reassure them that I will work very hard and devote all of my efforts to making sure that we can build a stronger, more united and more sustainable Hull—Aylmer, Quebec and Canada.

Before talking about the throne speech, I would like to thank the men and women from all parties who ran for election in 2021 in Hull—Aylmer, those from the Bloc Québécois, the New Democratic Party, the Conservative Party, the Green Party and the others. These women and men had the courage to take part in the democratic process to discuss their ideas and debate in a very respectful manner. I think that the true winners of the election are the residents of Hull—Aylmer, given the quality of the candidates who ran in the last election.

I love Parliament. I love the idea of our constitutional democracy. I think that we, the 338 members of the House, are fortunate to be able to debate ideas and the major issues of our day. As I said, I will devote all of my efforts to the job, but I would like to point out that I am not a perfect man. I will make mistakes. I have made many in the past, but I do my best to get back on track and continue to do the work, which leads me to the throne speech.

The Speech from the Throne is truly an expression of our government's desire to do our best to ensure a better, more sustainable and more prosperous future for all Canadians. I love the fact that the throne speech—I will be the first to admit it—is imperfect. It is not the Gospel, but it is a good plan, even an excellent plan, for Canada and Canadians.

Our top priority reflects the times we are living through and it is putting an end to the pandemic.

• (1745)

We know that when we are on lockdown we cannot enjoy all of our freedoms or do the things we should be doing. That is why we must use all the means at our disposal to put an end to the pandemic and allow all Canadians to thrive, whether by creating social cohesion, fighting climate change or creating a stronger, more sustainable and more prosperous economy.

There is a plan in the throne speech to put an end to the pandemic. Our main goal, right now, is to get the pandemic under control and to complete the vaccination process. In so doing, as I said, we can create real opportunities for all Canadians to shine and thrive.

I am proud of what Canadians have done. Almost 88% of us have been vaccinated. That is an outstanding rate. Canadians decided to accept science and all the good work that our scientists and researchers have done in Canada and around the world. Canadians stood in line to get vaccinated because it was their duty as citizens to do so. I am very pleased to see that most Canadians took part in this remarkable effort.

The Address

As a member from the national capital region, I must also say how proud I am that federal public servants have stepped up and gotten vaccinated. They did their duty to better protect not only their own health, but also that of their colleagues. I know that the member for Ottawa West—Nepean here beside me, who is also a member from the national capital region, is also very proud that 98% of Canadian public servants are vaccinated. That is an extraordinary number, and I commend them for that. As the son of an immigrant, I tend to be dissatisfied with the missing 2%. I wish that we could reach 100%.

Let us move on to other major themes that were addressed in this throne speech. There is one thing that is personal to me, and it relates to my last comment. I am referring to the diversity and inclusion initiatives.

As a member of a visible minority, a Black Canadian and the son of two people who had the courage to leave their home country and settle here in Quebec, Canada, in order to create a better world for their family and contribute to Canadian society, it touches me deeply to find the issue of diversity and inclusion not only in the throne speech, but also in the 2021 budget. In the two previous budgets, there were also initiatives that for the first time specifically addressed issues affecting Black Canadians.

I am very proud that the economic statement includes specific initiatives to fulfill the Government of Canada's solemn declaration to include the talents of all Canadians, no matter where they come from.

I will conclude by saying that the throne speech includes initiatives to end the pandemic, as well as initiatives on diversity and inclusion. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to talk about the existential debate on the environment and all the related measures.

• (1750)

This throne speech is worthy of the support of all members of the House of Commons.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, congratulations on your election as Deputy Speaker of the House. It is always a pleasure to watch you overseeing the debates here.

My colleague from Hull—Aylmer expressed his support for everything having to do with diversity and inclusion. I would like his thoughts on another aspect of the matter, and that is the immigration of African francophones who are being rejected at a rate of more than 80%. It is unbelievable. The government is discriminating against those people. I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

What does he think about that and what does he think his government should do to make sure this does not keep happening?

• (1755)

Mr. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques on his re-election and thank him for his question. I know he supports diversity.

It is very simple. First, I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister for having the courage to admit that unconscious discrimi-

nation, systemic racism, exists in all institutions, whether in government, the private sector or NGOs. It is also a federal concern.

There is an easy way to fix this problem. The governments of Quebec and Canada need to work together on immigration, especially when it comes to foreign students. If we want to have more students from francophone African countries, we can perhaps make it easier for international students to manage the tuition fees they have to pay and help them make the transition from student life to citizenship so they can become good citizens of Quebec and Canada.

[English]

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, one thing the throne speech makes note of is the importance of reconciliation. Of course, in the Kenora riding and across northern Ontario, that is a very important issue. A big aspect of it regards boil water advisories on reserve. The government, despite some very positive progress, failed to meet the timelines it set in, I believe, the 2015 election. The Minister of Indigenous Services has now said that it will not set a new target date for ending all long-term boil water advisories.

I am wondering if the member agrees with this approach of not setting a target date when so many communities need help. They need access to clean drinking water right now.

[Translation]

Mr. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Kenora on his re-election. I have had the pleasure of visiting his riding a number of times.

I am particularly proud of our record on reconciliation. When we were elected in 2015, there were 105 boil water advisories on reserves. By 2021, this problem has been addressed in more than 110 of these communities. My colleagues are probably wondering how we addressed more cases than the number announced in 2015, but that is because new cases came up during that time.

The government continues to work on addressing these problems and ensuring that reserves have access to clean drinking water, as all Canadians and human beings should.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing I am really concerned about, which I found oddly lacking in the throne speech, is a strong commitment to protecting the oceans surrounding this country.

I think of my riding, where we just had an incident involving over 100 lost sea containers that were floating around in the ocean. Some of them have come ashore. It was a terrible situation.

The Address

When will the government take the need to protect our oceans seriously? When these incidents happen, we need a coordinated approach. The government will not commit to that. When will it commit?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the member for North Island—Powell River on her re-election.

In answer to her interesting question about oceans, I would say that I am proud to be part of a government that has its own oceans protection plan.

When we took office, very few of the oceans around Canada were protected. However, we have already managed to protect 20%, and we have a target of 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030. Not only is that a good record, but it is also a great goal.

• (1800)

[*English*]

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, congratulations on your appointment to the chair.

Before I begin, I would like to recognize that I come from the unceded traditional territory of the Coast Salish, Musqueam and Tsawwassen first nations.

As we have all seen, my home province of British Columbia is experiencing yet another atmospheric river rain event. I want to thank all the residents, organizations and gurdwara societies for always stepping up in a time of need. Once again they have done that.

I also want to thank our Prime Minister, the emergency preparedness minister and the Minister of National Defence for acting quickly to provide the necessary supports in our province.

This is my first opportunity to speak in this House. As we all know, it takes a lot of people to get us here. I want to congratulate all my colleagues who are here, elected and re-elected, in this House on their successful elections.

I want to take some time to thank all the friends and family members responsible for helping me to get here. It is truly an honour to be able to represent the great people of Steveston—Richmond East. I am very grateful to them for putting their trust in me.

I want to thank my wife for putting up with everything I do and for being the great mom that she is. I want to thank my parents, Daljit and Gunwant Bains, for their guidance and support, and for teaching me the importance of community and education. I want to thank my sister Nav. I have the best big sister in the world. She knocked on doors on the rainiest of the west coast days, and she has always been there for me. I thank my extended family, cousins, nephews, nieces and childhood friends. I also want to thank the sign team and all my volunteers once again.

My daughter Hasina was recently selected to her high school basketball team. I am looking forward to seeing her play.

This is the first time in 40 years that I am not either playing or coaching soccer, so I will miss coaching my son Daya while I am

here and away from the beautiful game. I will have to take solace in the fact that the field in this theatre of dreams is at least green.

Before I discuss my topic with respect to the throne speech, I also want to recognize two childhood friends who passed away during my election campaign, Sanjay Johal and Vernon City councillor Dalvir Nahal. They were two of my biggest supporters, and I dedicate my maiden speech to them.

My topic or theme regarding the throne speech today is with respect to housing. We have all heard a lot about housing in the last few days and weeks in the House, but it is a topic I have become extremely passionate about. In Richmond, the city I grew up in, housing has become very unattainable for working professionals and many families. Friends I grew up with have left the city to chase that home with a back yard in other jurisdictions. This has been happening for years now, and it is one of the main reasons I entered public life. I was always looking for ways and solutions to create more affordable housing options. I tried to work with the municipality on these issues to look for different options that do not exist, the missing middle options.

• (1805)

I believe every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home, and that is exactly why I am extremely excited to work with this government's plan. Huge investments have already been made in the national housing strategy, the first of its kind, to help ensure Canadians get the housing they need. More homes ultimately will bring more families, which will build healthier communities.

These investments have helped over a million families get the housing they need, and we are not stopping there. Budget 2021 already invested in construction to repair thousands of affordable housing units, and ours is the only party that has taken action to create more affordable housing.

The \$70 billion in the national housing strategy includes programs like the rapid housing initiative and the rental construction financing initiative. We brought in the first-time homebuyers incentive and the Canada housing benefit. All of this will help families, young people, low-income Canadians, people experiencing homelessness, and women and children fleeing violence to find a safe and affordable place to call home.

This is a long-term plan for a fast-growing Canadian economy, and it must include housing that is affordable for working Canadians, especially young families. Stable housing is critical, as I mentioned, for communities and for a strong middle class. The government is also introducing Canada's first national tax on vacant or underused residential property owned by foreign non-residents, which will come into effect in January of next year.

The Address

Since coming into office, we have helped over one million families get the housing they need, but we know there is more work to do. This week's throne speech outlines the government's continued commitment to make housing more affordable, including bringing in a housing accelerator fund, ending chronic homelessness, and introducing a more flexible first-time homebuyers incentive and a rent-to-own program to help renters become owners.

As I said, there is more progress to be made, but these are some measures that we will take to ensure that every Canadian has a safe and affordable place to call home, and I look forward to working with everyone in this House on these measures.

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his speech.

Clearly, for people in York—Simcoe, the throne speech just did not live up to the moment. I say that because we were looking for a vision in the speech, especially for our farmers. I have always said that we can move a General Motors plant but we cannot move a farm. We in York—Simcoe were looking for some vision for farmers.

There was no mention of growth and productivity. There was no mention of small businesses. I wonder if my colleague could comment on those issues.

Mr. Parm Bains: Madam Speaker, there are a tremendous number of measures in the throne speech to help the agricultural sector and small businesses. As well, during this very trying time for Canadians throughout the pandemic, this government was the only one that not only allowed for businesses to keep their doors open, but also made the investments to ensure that there is growth for businesses.

• (1810)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I too would like to congratulate you on your re-election. As a woman, I will say it is always nice to see women serving as Chair.

My colleague briefly touched on the issue of violence against women when he spoke about housing. Yes, having more housing is critical to breaking the cycle of violence against women, but I would like to come back to one aspect that he did not bring up.

In the throne speech, there is a 10-year plan to study violence against women. Ten years is far too long when there is already a national action plan. If the Liberals do not know what to do with the money to help women who are victims of violence, they should transfer it to Quebec, which knows what to do with it in its health care system. We already have a lot of expertise in Quebec. Furthermore, we have a multi-party committee that has proposed measures to help women and break the cycle of domestic violence.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about how important it is to transfer these funds to Quebec, which knows what to do with them and will not need to do more studies and wait another 10 years.

[*English*]

Mr. Parm Bains: Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to continue the work they are doing in Quebec, and I look forward to

working with the member to share ideas and make sure we can stop violence against women. We will work together toward rooting out any type of violence toward women.

In terms of the length of the program, it has to be an ongoing effort and we have to ensure that those supports are always there.

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Speaker, congratulations on being in the chair.

It is an honour and privilege for me to be standing in the House for the first time, and I want to thank Calgary Skyview residents for supporting me and giving me the opportunity to represent them here. I want to thank my wife, Aman, and my kids, Amita, Noor and Liv. They put a tremendous amount of effort and have sacrificed a lot of time and energy to support me in this endeavour. I also thank everybody who volunteered and worked extremely hard and all the candidates who put their names forward to run in the last election across Canada.

The hon. member for Steveston—Richmond East talked a lot about housing, and I want to thank him for bringing up housing and the importance of affordable housing to Canadians. In my constituency and in the work of city council, affordable housing is really important, and the government supported Skyview residents with seniors housing and opportunities for the rapid housing initiative. Its seniors project is one prime example.

I am wondering if the member could provide any examples of housing that the government supported in his constituency.

I offer my congratulations to the member as well.

Mr. Parm Bains: Madam Speaker, congratulations to the member for Calgary Skyview for his election as well. It is an honour to serve with him here.

With respect to projects in my riding, I am happy to say that as part of the Canadian national housing strategy, community partners like Habitat for Humanity have partnered in Richmond, and on Ash Street in my riding we have built purpose-built homes for eight families. It is a completed project and I am looking forward to doing more similar projects to those. It is just one simple example of a program that is working.

• (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 6:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question necessary to dispose of the subamendment now before the House. The question is on the motion.

[*Translation*]

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

The hon. member for Montarville.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded division.

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

• (1845)

[English]

And the bells having rung:

The Speaker: Order, please. As this is the first hybrid vote of the 44th Parliament, I want to briefly outline the steps that will be followed for this type of vote.

Before I read the question, I will ask the Table to produce the list of members participating virtually, and who will later be called to vote one at a time. I will then read the question.

• (1850)

[Translation]

I will first ask those physically present in the House who are in favour of the motion to rise. I will then ask those physically present who oppose the motion to do the same. This is the normal procedure we are all familiar with.

Afterward, the table officer will call the names of those participating virtually by party in alphabetical order, starting with the party with the largest number of seats in the House, and continuing with all the other recognized parties and then independent members.

[English]

Members are reminded that it is essential that their camera be turned on for the duration of the vote. This allows the authentication of members, which is required by the House motion and is essential to the integrity of the decision-making process.

Once your name is called by the Table, you must turn on your microphone and indicate how you intend to vote by clearly stating either “I vote for the motion” or “I vote against the motion”.

[Translation]

In French, you should clearly say “Je vote pour la motion” or “Je vote contre la motion”. Members must use only these phrases.

I repeat, members must use only these phrases.

[English]

Please do not turn on your microphone in advance. It can result in your image appearing in place of the member currently voting. Once you have voted, please mute your microphone.

Members must remain connected to the sitting until the results of the vote are announced. If your name has not been called by the table officer when the members of your party are being recognized to vote, please wait until all the members have been called. At that point I will invite members who were not named but who heard the question to identify themselves. They can do so by using the “raise hand” function of the video conference application. I will then name each member who raised their hand to allow their vote to be recorded.

The Address

[Translation]

If at any moment during a vote, or when trying to join a sitting virtually, members experience technical difficulties, they should please contact the IT ambassadors at the number indicated in the invitation. The IT ambassadors will provide regular updates to the table.

Before proceeding with the vote, to make it easier for the table officers, I would ask members to lower their mask after they have risen and put it back on once the officer has called their name.

I thank the members for their attention. We will now take the vote.

• (1915)

[English]

And the Clerk having announced the results of the vote:

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I did not get a registration of my vote.

The Speaker: The hon. member's vote was not counted. We did not hear from her.

Mr. Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, I too rise on a point of order. I have been having technical difficulties. It will not change the end result, but I would like my vote to be recorded as a nay.

The Speaker: We cannot allow the votes without unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent to allow the two members to vote?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 4)

YEAS

Members

Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Bérubé
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Boulerice
Brunelle-Duceppe	Chabot
Champoux	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Fortin	Garon
Gaudreau	Julian
Larouche	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Michaud	Morrice
Normandin	Pauzé
Plamondon	Savard-Tremblay
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Ste-Marie	Thériault
Therrien	Trudel
Vignola	Villemure— 34

NAYS

Members

Aitchison	Albas
Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Allison
Anand	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin

The Address

Bachrach	Badawey	Lightbound	Lloyd
Bains	Baker	Lobb	Long
Baldinelli	Barlow	Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Barrett	Barron	MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Battiste	Beech	MacGregor	MacKenzie
Bendayan	Bennett	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Benzen	Bergen	Maloney	Martel
Berthold	Bezan	Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Bibeau	Bittle	Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
Blair	Block	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Blois	Boissonnault	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Bradford	Bragdon	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Brassard	Brière	McLean	McLeod
Brock	Calkins	McPherson	Melillo
Cannings	Caputo	Mendès	Mendicino
Carr	Carrie	Miao	Miller
Casey	Chagger	Moore	Morantz
Chahal	Chambers	Morrison	Morrissey
Champagne	Chatel	Motz	Murray
Chen	Chiang	Muys	Naqvi
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Nater	Noormohamed
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper	O'Connell	Oliphant
Cormier	Coteau	O'Regan	O'Toole
Dabrusin	Dalton	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Damoff	Davidson	Perkins	Petitpas Taylor
Davies	Deltell	Poillievre	Powlowski
d'Entremont	Desjarlais	Qualtrough	Rayes
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Redekopp	Reid
Diab	Dong	Rempel Garner	Richards
Dowdall	Dreeshen	Roberts	Robillard
Drouin	Dubourg	Rodriguez	Rogers
Duclos	Duguid	Romanado	Rood
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Ruff	Sahota
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Sajjan	Saks
El-Khoury	Ellis	Samson	Sarai
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Schiefke	Schmale
Fast	Fergus	Seeback	Serré
Ferreri	Fillmore	Sgro	Shanahan
Findlay	Fisher	Sheehan	Shields
Fonseca	Fortier	Shiple	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Fragiskatos	Freeland	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh
Fry	Gaheer	Small	Sorbara
Gallant	Garrison	Soroka	Spengemann
Gazan	Généreux	Steinley	Stewart
Gerretsen	Gladu	St-Onge	Strahl
Godin	Goodridge	Stubbs	Sudds
Gould	Gourde	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Gray	Green	Thomas	Thompson
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Tochor	Tolmie
Hallan	Hanley	Trudeau	Turnbull
Hardie	Hepfner	Uppal	Valdez
Holland	Housefather	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Hughes	Hussen	Van Popta	Vandal
Hutchings	Iacono	Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Idlout	Ien	Vidal	Vien
Jaczek	Jeneroux	Viersen	Virani
Johns	Jones	Vis	Vuong
Jowhari	Kayabaga	Wagantall	Warkentin
Kelloway	Kelly	Waugh	Webber
Khalid	Khera	Weiler	Wilkinson
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Williams	Williamson
Kram	Kramp-Neuman	Yip	Zahid
Kurek	Kusie	Zarrillo	Zimmer
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Zuberi— 289	
Lake	Lalonde		
Lambropoulos	Lametti		
Lamoureux	Lantsman		
Lapointe	Lattanzio		
Lauzon	Lawrence		
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier		
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)		
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert		

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made Tuesday, November 30, 2021, I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole to study the softwood lumber dispute with the United States.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

The Speaker: Before we begin this evening's debate, I would like to remind hon. members of how proceedings will unfold.

[English]

Each member will be allotted 10 minutes for debate, followed by 10 minutes for questions and comments. The debate will end after four hours or when no member rises to speak. Pursuant to the order made Tuesday, November 30, 2021, members may divide their time with another member and the Chair will receive no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent.

[Translation]

We will now begin tonight's take-note debate.

* * *

[English]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER DISPUTE WITH THE UNITED STATES

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 2, Mr. Anthony Rota in the chair)

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That this committee take note of the softwood lumber dispute with the United States.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to share some thoughts on a very important issue. It does not matter what side of the House one sits on; we all recognize that Canada leads the world in many different industries. One of those industries is our softwood lumber industry. We have, I believe, an incredible history of providing not only the United States but also other countries a first-class product. That is recognized.

I give a great deal of thought, and express appreciation and thanks, to those who have been there over the years to protect and foster growth within that industry. It employs thousands of people. It contributes billions of dollars to our GDP. It is a major force in our economy. Whether it is its direct jobs or indirect jobs, it should matter to all of us. We as a government, and the Prime Minister himself, have expressed concern, whether it is to the President of the United States or to others. This is an industry that Canada, and in particular our government, will be there to protect.

I believe an appropriate way to start my comments would be to read what the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance stated the other day on this very important industry. The minister said:

Mr. Speaker, the softwood lumber industry is a source of jobs and pride for Canadians across our country. We are extremely disappointed by the unfair and un-

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warranted decision of the United States to increase the duties it imposes on softwood lumber. This issue was raised, of course, by the Prime Minister at his meeting with President Biden. I have raised it with Secretary Yellen, as have all of our colleagues, and we have pointed out that these duties are adding to the inflation tax American consumers are paying.

This is not a new issue. We can talk about what we would argue on this side of the House are unfair practices taking place in the United States at times, and they are targeted at one of Canada's most valuable industries. This is not the first time. We have seen it on several occasions in the past. As a government, it is important that we speak as one voice, that we do not capitulate and that we recognize our voice is stronger if we unite in saying what is happening is not right.

In terms of free trade and the U.S., the relationship that Canada has with the U.S., the emphasis that we put on being a good neighbour and the economic ties between provinces and states, one needs to look at groups like our interparliamentary associations. We understand the dynamic. They have industry leaders within the United States, a significant, relatively wealthy group of people who are very effective at lobbying.

Because that is the case, we once again have duties and the U.S. has taken action that not only hurts us here in Canada but hurts Americans too. The U.S., from what I understand, does not have the ability to meet the demands of its market when it comes to softwood production. Canada, over the decades, has supplemented that supply.

● (1920)

As I indicated earlier, we have a first-grade product that is in high demand in the United States. However, the wealthy American mill owners and other stakeholders have been effectively lobbying to get these penalties put into place.

As a government, we have approached the very top political level: the President. We will turn to the free trade agreement that we ratified not that long ago, which includes Mexico. We will take it to the World Trade Organization as a government. I know the minister is on top of this file and recognizes the importance of it. We will do whatever we can to protect that industry, which is well represented in a number of regions including British Columbia, which has been hit very hard recently with rains. The province of Quebec and my home province of Manitoba have important lumber industries also.

Regarding jobs, indigenous communities often take the lead in providing the workforce. This industry supports so many communities in rural Canada. In many ways it is incredible.

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The government, the Prime Minister the Deputy Prime Minister and the minister responsible are very much aware of the issue. To individuals who are following the issue, in particular those who are working in the industry and the owners who are trying to ensure that we can maintain our market share, the Government of Canada has their backs. We will continue to work with different stakeholders and appeal to members on all sides of the House to add value to the debate we are having tonight. It should not necessarily be a finger-pointing exercise. It should be recognizing that this has gone on now for many years. It predates this government.

That is why we have trade agreements. That is why we have the World Trade Organization. That is why we build the relationships that we have. There is no doubt in my mind that Canada will ultimately prevail, as we have prevailed in the past, because we are on the right side of this issue. We might not necessarily be able to prevent it from happening, although I sure wish that we could, but we can ensure at the end of the day that the industry not only survives but thrives into the future.

We have seen growth in export markets, whether to China, Europe or others, because it is important. The minister will tell us that we look at ways in which we can expand our export markets. That is why we have progressive, aggressive trade going on with agreements. We have signed more trade agreements than any other government. We have, that is a fact. It speaks volumes in terms of how this government recognizes the value of our exports because we see that in the actions we take every day.

• (1925)

In particular, workers can rest assured that we will be there to support them in the coming days, weeks or however long it takes to resolve this, and we will prevail on this issue.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate a lot of the sentiments that the member for Winnipeg North shared. Of course, those in the riding of Kenora and across northern Ontario are looking for more than that. They are looking for results and they are looking for action.

A question had been posed to the minister, a couple of times I believe, and she has not been able to answer. I wonder if the member could answer this for us. Does the member know how many negotiations and how many meetings have transpired between this government and the U.S. trade representative?

• (1930)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am unable to give a hard number, but I believe these are the types of discussions and dialogue that occur on an ongoing basis. Today, I would suggest that there is a larger interest in the subject matter because of actions that have taken place in the U.S., and there has been more engagement as a direct result.

Let us not try to politicize the issue. This is an issue that was there in the past. It is not just one government that has had to deal with this. What is important is that whoever is in government at the time takes whatever measures are necessary to ensure that we are protecting the industry. As I said, I truly believe that the Government of Canada will resolve this positively. Unfortunately, it will take time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I can understand my colleague from Winnipeg North wanting to depoliticize the debate because what both the Conservatives and Liberals have done for the forestry industry is pathetic.

Earlier, I was listening to my colleague say that it was powerful U.S. lobbyists who managed to get the tariffs imposed. He said that members of the House should not be pointing fingers at one another. He is saying that because the current government and the successive governments have done absolutely nothing for the forestry industry. Lobbyists in Canada are oil industry lobbyists.

The forestry industry is a natural resources sector that is underestimated. Ask anyone in the industry. There is no federal program available to help diversify the forestry industry. That is the problem. We depend on the United States and now this industry, which is the economic base of many regions in Quebec, is becoming more vulnerable. That is the problem.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, that is just not true. Not only has the government been there to support the industry in times of need, but we have been there consistently since 2015. We have seen growth in exports beyond the United States over the last four or five years. We continue to look for other economic opportunities and other export opportunities, which is one of the reasons why we have had a very aggressive approach to getting trade agreements.

We are not scared of standing up to the United States. I think what is important is that there is a process in place. That process will, as it has in the past, allow for Canada and our industry to not only survive but thrive. It does make it difficult, which is why the government needs to be there for the industry. We have been there, and we will continue to be.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we knew that the Biden government was sending clear messages of protectionism, and we know that the softwood lumber issue is continually affected by the American trade lobbyists in Washington. The Prime Minister's team went to Washington on November 17, and this was to be the big rapprochement. Seven days later, we got hammered with an 18% tariff duty.

My question is this: Were there discussions in Washington about the softwood issue? What was said, and why was it that within seven days of meeting the Canadian delegation the U.S. hit us with the hardest penalties they have thrown at us? What went wrong in Washington?

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would not want to read too much into a coincidence. I believe the last time we had this issue before the House was in the late fall. There might be a timing issue. I am not as familiar with the issue in depth, in terms of why it has arisen over the past few weeks, but I do know that this issue periodically surfaces, unfortunately, and the driving force for it to surface is not necessarily a government. It is the lobbying that takes place among very wealthy lumber owners from the United States.

That is my understanding of it, and we have a responsibility to use the tools we have as a government to protect our industry. That is exactly what we are going to do here in Canada. We will prevail.

• (1935)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. friend and colleague has pointed out, this is not the first time we have been challenged in this way, and with determination and perseverance each and every time we have prevailed.

I wonder if the member could offer us a few reflections on the CUSMA negotiations, the recent free trade agreement, and just how important it is to speak as one voice as a country. Opposition members, government-side members and all Canadians need to stand together. Does he agree with that and have some reflections?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, Canada is a trading nation. We need to be able to trade with the world.

By expanding our export markets we are able to improve the lifestyles of all Canadians. Export markets create jobs for our middle class. They create and contribute to our GDP. As I say, the forest industry alone contributes billions of dollars to our GDP every year.

When we can sign off on trade agreements that enable our producers and exporters to get more to markets around the world, we are better off as a nation. That is why we made it a priority. Today our emphasis has to be using the tools we have before us to protect an industry that is respected and worth the fight. This government is prepared to step up to the plate and ensure that we prevail and protect this industry.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me give some context. In my riding, the Merritt Tolko mill has closed, and Tolko has closed in the Kelowna—Lake Country riding. The company is not leaving forestry. It is leaving British Columbia, and opening up in places like Louisiana. The member says they should be able to open up other places.

On May 29, 2021, in a story by Lance Lambert in *Fortune* magazine, headlined “Biden administration could double Canadian lumber tariffs even as wood and construction costs soar”, the U.S. commerce department proposed doubling the tariff on Canadian lumber from 9% to 18%, a prospect that dismayed home builders. That was on May 29, 2021. The current government should have known. It should have been acting. It should have been engaging, and the minister cannot even tell us how many times she has met with the trade representative.

What does the member have to say about a government that just does not seem to care about the Merritts and the Kelownas of the world, where those jobs are not coming back?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, whether in the member's constituency or my constituency, depending on the industries that are there, we recognize the jobs of all Canadians in industries that continue to make our nation prosper. We continue to support them in the very best way that we can, and at times there is a need for us to come forward in a larger way by looking at what sorts of options we can use, such as I made reference to: trade agreements, and having discussions and more dialogue with local politicians.

Remember, this policy coming from the States is also hurting American consumers. We know how important this issue is, and we will continue to have dialogue and push Canada's file and as we say, as governments from the past have done, we will prevail. It is just something that has taken place, and it is not just this government. That is why I say I do not think we do a just cause by trying to say it is all this government's fault, because that is not the case.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by saying that I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Nose Hill.

I would like to provide the counterpoint to what we have just heard from the Liberal side, because we have to distinguish fiction from fact. The truth is, there is a long history to this dispute, going way back to at least 1982. It was a Liberal government under Paul Martin that finally tried to bring peace to the woods. This was called the war of the woods because we had ongoing battles between the United States and Canada on the softwood lumber issue. Unfortunately, Paul Martin failed to get a deal done, to get peace in the woods. His trade minister, Jim Peterson, failed to get an agreement for Canadians.

Then we had an election in 2006. Stephen Harper was elected prime minister of our country and he did something remarkable. He reached across the aisle and asked David Emerson to cross the floor and join his cabinet. He had one main task, and that was to resolve the lumber dispute. David Emerson had deep roots in the softwood lumber industry. He knew it well. Stephen Harper knew that David Emerson could get the deal done, and guess what? He did it successfully.

In fact, he was remarkably successful. He negotiated a seven-year softwood lumber agreement and bought peace for seven years. He also negotiated a potential two-year extension. On top of that, he negotiated a \$4.5-billion U.S. repayment to Canada that went back to the softwood lumber producers in Canada. It was a big win for Canada. It was a big win for the Conservative government under Stephen Harper because it brought us that peace we needed in the woods.

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That softwood lumber agreement needed to be ratified in the House through a ways and means motion, and guess what? The Liberals voted against it in 2006. Only one Liberal voted in favour of it: Joe Comuzzi. He boldly stood up against the duplicity of the Liberals at the time. We later ended up renewing that agreement, so we had a total of nine years of peace between Canada and the United States.

• (1940)

Today we find ourselves in a situation. For the last six years, the Liberal government, the finance minister and the Prime Minister have been continually promising to resolve this dispute.

In fact, I have here a CBC article going back to March 12, 2016. The headline is “[Canada’s trade minister] heralds ‘real breakthrough’ on softwood lumber negotiations”. That was six years ago. That trade minister was quoted as saying, “We have now managed to get the Americans to the table, we have managed to raise attention to this issue at the very highest levels.” She went on to say, “I don’t want to downplay to anyone the complexity—the fiendish complexity—of the softwood lumber issue [but] this was a real breakthrough.” That was six years ago. What happened to that breakthrough?

Time after time, when we ask questions in the House about how those negotiations are going, we are told we are going to get a deal, yet it has been six years. That, by any definition, is failure, especially when we compare it to the standard the Harper government set in negotiating nine years of peace in the woods. For six years we have had a war in the woods and that war continues. In fact, today we are in a situation where the U.S. has doubled tariffs on softwood lumber exports from Canada.

Shame on the government. Shame on the Prime Minister. Shame on the finance minister, who was trade minister when she made those bold statements. I know we can do better and Canadians deserve better.

• (1945)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will make the suggestion that maybe prior to the defeat of Paul Martin and his government, there was a softening within the industry, which ultimately led to Harper getting his first agreement.

Having said that, let us go back to 2015 when there was an election. If he was so great, why did Stephen Harper not have a new deal in place when the deal was just about to expire and there was a change in government? I do not quite understand that connection. Could the member expand on how many meetings Stephen Harper had in the months leading up to the 2015 election, when the agreement actually expired?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, it is very easy to answer that. The softwood agreement expired shortly before the election. It was in October 2015 that it expired. In fact, our Liberal friends across the way were making all kinds of promises about how they would extend and renew the agreement. They said they had a much better relationship with the United States. Today we know that was all bunkum. It was all a fabrication. The Liberals had no relationship with the United States.

Today we know our relationship with the United States is a failed relationship under the current Liberal government. It is sad to see when we think that under Stephen Harper we had such a strong relationship. Now, under three successive presidents of the United States, the Prime Minister has been unable to achieve anything on the bilateral trade front.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I found it rather surprising that my colleague is patting himself on the back for the agreement reached in 2006. For the people in my region, the 2006 deal was a disaster.

The Conservatives never brought in a liquidity program for people in the forestry sector, so they were struggling and were eventually forced to accept a sellout agreement.

What my colleague failed to mention is that, in 2006, the forestry industry left \$1 billion on the table. That \$1 billion can never be recovered.

Now that agreement gets held up as an example of what not to do. We are asking the government to bring in a liquidity program and, above all, to never negotiate a sellout agreement again, as was done in 2006. My colleague should know that.

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member recalls that back when the softwood lumber agreement was negotiated and settled under a previous Conservative government, every softwood lumber province across the country had agreed with it. All producers across the country were onside. Industry was onside. Governments were onside. This was a big win for Canada.

Can members imagine \$4.5 billion U.S.? The equivalent of that today is \$6 billion and it came back to our producers. Instead of the government keeping that money, which I am sure the Liberals would have done, we as the Conservatives said that the rightful owners of that refund were the producers themselves. The member should be celebrating that victory rather than scolding us.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about that further. There was \$1 billion: \$500 million went to the lumber producers and \$500 million went to the Bush administration. The B.C. business council described it as a raw deal. I think it is therefore erroneous to suggest that it set us up for some type of utopian experience with softwood lumber. In fact, article 1905 was harshly criticized because it limited our responses after that.

I think it is important to recognize that this deal left \$1 billion of Canadian money at the table. I do not think the member should paint it as the glorious result that is being suggested in this debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The interpreter just indicated that the sound quality is very poor. That needs to be corrected to allow the interpreters to do their job properly.

• (1950)

The Speaker: Okay.

[*English*]

I will ask the hon. member for Windsor West to ask his question again. We had trouble with interpretation and we want to make sure that everyone gets a chance to hear what is said in the chamber.

The hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I do not know what happened there.

At any rate, the point I was making is that the previous agreement that was referred to left \$1 billion of collected duties: \$500 million went to the Bush administration and another \$500 million went to U.S. producers. Also, article 1905 restricted our responses in future agreements.

Lastly, I think it is erroneous to suggest that this is the utopian position that Canada wants to get at the end of the day, because it had so many problems. Even businesses in British Columbia described it as a raw deal. Even though the provinces accepted it, they accepted a raw deal.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I think the member is rewriting history. I was there, as he was, but I was on the government side. I have reviewed that agreement very carefully, and I was responsible for renegotiating or extending it for two years when it expired.

First, the lumber industry across Canada embraced this agreement. It saw it as the best outcome it could hope for given U.S. intransigence. Second, on the \$1 billion, again, the member does not recall this quite correctly. Half of the money went to the American industry and the other half went into a shared fund that was used jointly by Canada and the United States to promote the lumber industry. It was \$500 million for that jointly administered fund, and then another \$4.5 billion for Canadian producers. I see that as a good-news story.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are participating in a take-note debate tonight, which is designed to allow members to give their opinion on policy development on a matter of urgency. Today, the government has taken a delegation to Washington, D.C. ostensibly to talk about the softwood lumber dispute. I want to briefly, in the time I have, outline what the problem is and two ways to fix it.

We have to start by laying out the fact. The fact is that the American government has become more protectionist, particularly in its policies with Canada, under the tenure of the current government. My colleague from Timmins—James Bay outlined some of the issues, but it is everything from some of the policies around dairy; the EV tax credits that my colleague from Markham—Thornhill raised in the House during question period today; and the failure of the Americans to really respond to pleas on the Line 5 issue, and I know that the government was silent on KXL but certainly provin-

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cial governments were active on that. I could name many issues, but the doubling of the softwood tariffs suggests that something is very wrong with Canada's relationship with the United States. The question is, why? That is a question everybody in this place should ask, in a very sober tone.

The world has changed and it benefits all of us to have a strong relationship with the Americans, some continental economic unity and some continental integrated defence and immigration policies. It makes sense because the world has changed. When we look at supply chains and at trade, we need to be working with partners that are like-minded. Therefore, the question is this: Why has this relationship deteriorated?

I think it is Occam's razor in this situation. I actually think that the relationship is just left fallow and the Americans do not care. I am sure they do care. I know there is one American who certainly cares about me. He might even be watching right now, and my condolences to him. However, I will say this: The American trade balance of Canada is such a small portion, about 2% of their export value, compared to ours that without the relationships that existed in the past and that do not exist right now, I just do not think the Americans are listening.

It has been very disappointing to watch the government allow infrastructure that was set up around the negotiation of CUSMA, like city-to-city relationships, the first ministers to state-level meetings, the business leader relationships and all that infrastructure that was developed, kind of be dismantled by the current government. I do not know whether that was through malfeasance or just atrophy, but without those relationships the government is not going to care. The first rule of foreign policy is they need to be able to pick up the phone to somebody that they have broken bread with and say, "I understand where there are commonalities and differences; let us work together on this." I just do not think that has happened. Again, we are a rounding error to the Americans in a lot of ways. We have to make them care. That would be my suggestion for the government, humbly: Rebuild those relationships.

The last thing I will say is this. Knowing one American fairly well, I know that if he does not care about something I can either build the relationship with him or I can make him pay attention. Sometimes we have to make a trading partner pay attention and that, unfortunately, does come through retaliatory measures.

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We do have measures to litigate, under CUSMA, that we have raised in the House this week. The government should be expressing plans for that to Canadian industry and should be putting its American partners on notice, but I would like to think that we can actually build that relationship again. There has been a lot of atrophy, but the government cannot say Donald Trump is in office anymore, so there has to be a purposeful building up of a relationship under Global Affairs, which has seen several ministers in a very short period of time.

There needs to be political leadership, a clear direction and an imperative from the government to make that relationship work at every level, not just at the ministerial level but state to province, municipality to municipality and industry leader to industry leader. If we are not talking to each other, really it is other actors around the world that benefit from the fact that we have not integrated our supply chains, that we are not working together and that we are fighting these silly trade wars with each other instead of uniting as a continent on certain values while retaining our sovereignty and our sovereign right to our economy.

• (1955)

That is what I humbly submit, out of respect, in this take-note debate tonight: Build the relationship and make them pay attention.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be interested in the member's thoughts in regard to American consumers. I have heard the Canadian supply of softwood lumber, in terms of the American market, could be as high as 30%. Please do not quote me on that. I believe it is somewhere around that. That is a lot of softwood lumber. American consumers will have to pay more for their lumber.

Would the member not agree that that would garner a great deal of attention through public awareness? It is an important point that does need to be emphasized that Americans also are disadvantaged by the recent actions of this trade bill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, exactly. The point I am trying to make in my intervention tonight is that it benefits both Canadians and Americans for us to have strong relationships so that we are not going through escalating trade wars, but that is the job of the government.

We have had five foreign ministers in six years, I think, and four international trade ministers. How can there be a continuity of relationship even at the department level if department officials are not getting political will or a mandate that this is a priority? A lot of the infrastructure for those relationships to happen was dismantled after CUSMA.

Yes, of course we benefit. Both countries benefit from having strong trade that happens under a respectful rule of law. That is not happening right now and the onus is on the government to fix it.

• (2000)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I look forward to working with her on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

My colleague spoke a lot about the relationship with the United States. This relationship is a big part of the issue we are discussing tonight. However, we cannot ignore one of the major issues for the forestry industry, which is that there is no support for secondary and tertiary processing.

The forestry industry is a great industry to combat climate change, but the federal government's programs are pathetic. This industry accounts for \$20 billion in exports for Quebec, but it receives just 0.2% in financial support from the federal government. Furthermore, 75% of that support comes in the form of loans. That is beyond pathetic; it is dreadful.

Does my colleague agree that the federal government's support for the forestry sector is extremely lacking?

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I very much look forward to working with my colleague on natural resources because I understand how important that sector is to his riding. I think we actually have a lot of commonality on what we can work on together.

I very much agree with him that the federal government should be doing more to support value-added processing of forestry products. At the same time, it has to make sure that our relationships with major export markets are secure. It should be able to do both. What we have seen through the government is an atrophy on both fronts.

I certainly hope that we can work together on the natural resources committee to hold the government to account, in the best interests of all Canadians.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the one thing we know about the Americans is that they fight for their workers.

Joe Biden went to COP26. He talked about a trillion-dollar investment in a clean energy economy that was going to be tied to good union jobs. I have never heard our Prime Minister say that. Our Prime Minister went to COP26 and he announced an emissions cap. The people I know in the sector understand an emissions cap is coming. The world is expecting it but we got no details, no plan, no talk about a financial investment for the 140,000 energy workers who are getting ready for a transformation that is coming. Why is it that we have never heard our Prime Minister stand up and say that the plan for creating a clean energy economy will be tied to major investments, major opportunities and the good union jobs that Joe Biden is promising?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, it seems like unanimity is breaking out in the opposition ranks. I also look forward to working with my colleague from Timmins—James Bay on this matter because he is right. We should be ensuring that we are not offshoring jobs in natural resources and we are not being priced out of competitiveness because of our failed relationship with the Americans that has happened under the government.

This is exactly what the Liberals need to be held to account on. It is exactly why the natural resources committee needs to be reconvened immediately. I look forward to working with him and my colleague from the Bloc Québécois as well on the fact that we have lost jobs, we have lost opportunity and we have lost that ability to transition to a clean energy economy.

Very briefly, I would also like to wish a very happy birthday to the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since I just returned yesterday from an observation mission in Colombia, this is my first speech in the House since the last election—not counting the small point of order that I made earlier, of course.

I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank the electors of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for their renewed trust. I will do everything in my power to live up to this second term that I had the honour of being entrusted with.

Rather than engage in petty games by passing the buck and throwing accusations at either the Liberals or the Conservatives, I will try to bring the debate to another level, even if I do think that both are to blame. Focusing the debate on something else will only elevate the discussion.

First, let us quickly review the facts. Last week the U.S. administration announced that, starting in 2022, countervailing duties on Canadian softwood lumber will double from 9% to 18%, on average. Of all the companies affected, the primary victim is Quebec's Resolute Forest Products, which will be slapped with a combined tax of 29.66%. That is why the Bloc Québécois wanted to have this take-note debate tonight, in which I am participating as my party's international trade critic.

The trade war over softwood lumber is an old and never-ending issue. It has been said before, and it needs to be said again: There have been countless missed opportunities to resolve this problem.

The forestry industry accounts for 11% of Quebec's exports. Our forests are a source of economic development, jobs, and tax revenue, and they have great ecological value. That must also be said. The forestry industry presents immense carbon sequestration and storage capacity, and it inspires many innovative Quebec SMEs to produce bioenergy and bioproducts. Some issues require international co-operation. The environment, the fight against climate change, and green trade are among them, and our wood can play a key role.

The new tariff war will hurt almost everyone. It will certainly hurt us because it could result in a large increase in the price of lumber and serious consequences for our businesses and the 25,000

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direct Canadian jobs tied to the sale of softwood lumber to the United States. Things will not necessarily be any better in the United States either. The cost of housing will increase, which will further restrict Americans' access to housing, even though the Biden administration is claiming that access to housing is one of its priorities. Who will win in the end? The U.S. lumber lobby and a few politicians who see that the mid-term elections are quickly approaching.

Let us review the facts of this matter. Year after year, the United States accuses the Canadian forestry industry of benefiting from public subsidies that hurt the American sector. The American decision is based on what could be called a structural dynamic. This happens a lot. This is not the first softwood lumber crisis. There have been four rounds of trade conflicts: in 1982-83, in 1986, from 1991 to 1996 and from 2001 to 2006. We are now at the start of a fifth conflict.

It makes no sense. Canada has turned to the World Trade Organization and North American Free Trade Agreement dispute resolution bodies for help several times.

Canada has won all of its cases. In May 2020, the WTO even said that Washington had not been objective or fair and that its tariffs were unlawful.

Free trade agreements generally set time limits on disputes to prevent them from dragging on. The Americans knew that they would lose their case, though, so they did what they always do. They used every trick in the book to stall the arbitration tribunal, for example, by filing petitions to take up the tribunal's time or by blocking the appointment of arbitrators. The longer this goes on, the worse things get for our forestry industry.

● (2005)

The Americans' strategy is therefore clear: Set tariffs that they know will be found to be wrong and take advantage of the years they are in effect to bankrupt, or at least undermine, the Canadian industry. This will allow the United States to further develop their industry in the meantime, modernize it, improve its competitiveness, and therefore get a head start.

That is what is behind the push for a trade war. Is this not precisely what can easily be described as unfair competition? It seems to me that it is. Still, there have been many missed opportunities to address this.

The Canada-United States-Mexico agreement, or CUSMA, passed in the House in March 2020, represents a very large missed opportunity in this regard. CUSMA needs to be amended. The government could have taken the opportunity to close these loopholes when renegotiating North American free trade over the past few years to ensure that the litigation process is much better regulated so that we could avoid overly long delays when time is not on our side.

Government Orders

There is also another item that needs to be amended in CUSMA. It should provide for a permanent softwood lumber advisory board. I tried to introduce a similar amendment in the House in March 2020, but unfortunately it was rejected by the Chair.

This brings me to another urgent matter, that of getting the Quebec system recognized.

Since 2013, Quebec's forestry regime has been fully compliant with the free trade framework and requirements, which should save it from vagaries like the ones we are experiencing right now. The regime is simple to explain. One quarter of the timber from the public forest is sold at auction, where anyone can bid. The price obtained is then applied to all the timber from public forests. This system is very similar to the one used in the United States. The price of timber is set by the market, not by the government. It is not subsidized, which passes the free trade test 100%. It was actually designed specifically for that purpose.

In contrast, that is not how B.C.'s stumpage system works. In that case, it is set by the government. Recognizing the specificity of the Quebec system would save us a lot of trouble.

I will make an aside to talk about one of the reasons I am in politics. When people ask me why I am a sovereigntist, I tell them that it is so we can have the power to sign our own agreements and treaties, which sounds a bit abstract and seems quite theoretical. However, here we have the perfect example, and it is a fairly typical case: we want to be able to negotiate on our own behalf, in our own interests, instead of letting a government that does not see us as a priority do it for us.

Of course, in the short term, the government urgently needs to support the industry with a loan and loan guarantee program, to match the amounts being withheld by Washington. It is the only way to get through the crisis.

Ottawa could also argue for an exemption for timber from private forests. Although the vast majority, or 90%, of the timber harvest in Quebec comes from public forests, certain private forests are quite large and have real value in some regions, and therefore deserve our attention. The point to be made is quite simple. The Americans wag their finger at public forests, saying they do not respect the free market system and they benefit from hidden subsidies. Why, then, is timber from private forests, which I would point out is not subject to the Quebec regime, also subject to these new tariffs? This should be a very simple argument for our friends in government. It seems to me that it should be pretty easy to argue that.

Since the new duties do not apply to processed products, as my colleague from Jonquière mentioned earlier, this is a great opportunity to develop a value chain to promote the processing of forestry products. I think this presents a great opportunity for secondary and tertiary processing.

What does the government do? It tells us it is working very hard for all Canadians and that softwood lumber is a priority that it is, and I quote, “vigorously” defending.

Two weeks ago, the Prime Minister took part in the first three amigos trilateral summit in many, many years. Barely one week lat-

er, new softwood lumber tariffs were announced. Make of that what you will, but there is still a problem here. Tomorrow, the Minister of International Trade will be in Washington. Let us hope for better results.

● (2010)

Will the government take a firmer tone? Will it retaliate with measures on U.S. goods?

We will have to wait and see. We have yet to hear any real announcements. Empty buzzwords like “priority” and “vigour” have run their course. Now, a major industry—

The Chair: Order. The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Chair, I would like to congratulate the member for his speech.

When the Liberal government was elected in 2015, there were a lot of problems with the mandate letters that the government released.

[*English*]

In fact, I remember asking the government to prioritize softwood lumber in the mandate letters in 2015. It was the first thing I said when this chamber came back after the election.

Would the member agree that the government needs to prioritize this issue at a much higher level so his workers know their government is actively working on this? As I said earlier, the government only talks about softwood lumber when we talk about it in an emergency.

● (2015)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Chair, we are hearing a lot of empty words like “priority” and “vigour” while workers and industries are struggling.

We have had enough of these empty words. They are like buzzwords. They need to be tweaked to say that it is important to the rest of us. Enough buzzwords. People are waiting.

This should indeed be a key priority. However, I am curious, and I have to wonder. President Biden holds the first three amigos summit in several years, bringing together the three North American heads of state, and a week later, new tariffs are announced. If that is not a diplomatic triumph, I do not know what is. I hope my colleagues caught my sarcasm.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am interested in my colleague's thoughts on expanding export markets beyond the United States.

Government Orders

We can talk about the diversification of the industry into secondary markets such as furniture or whatever else might be a wood product, but one of the biggest things the government can do is look at ways in which industry can increase the number of markets for the products we have, whether it is in Quebec, B.C. or my home province of Manitoba.

Could the member provide his thoughts on whether there are countries the Bloc believes we should be pursuing to expand those markets? I would like to hear what he has to say on that issue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Chair, first I would like to know what to think. I have not heard any intentions. What I mean is that I have heard the intention, but I have not seen anything of substance.

I would really like to be the first to say that I have seen the proposed policy and that it makes sense, or that this or that element should be improved. However, right now, there is nothing. There is absolutely nothing, just wind. Once again, there are just empty words.

My colleague asked me if I support processing and market diversification. I have spoken about that. Now, when are they going to put their money where their mouth is?

We are not in government. It is up to the Liberals to answer that question.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Chair, the softwood lumber dispute is having huge repercussions for forest communities in northern Ontario. However, it has also led to the transformation of the industry, especially in terms of efficiency and the use of natural resources in the north.

My question is as follows. Where is the federal government's plan to work with the forestry industry and the northern regions? How does it plan on developing new markets to harness the transformation of the industry and create new opportunities for it in Canada?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his question, but I have no answer for him.

My colleague asked where the plan is. Had I seen it, I could have definitely answered him. Unfortunately, I am very saddened to come to the conclusion that it does not exist.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Chair, first I would like to congratulate my brilliant colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot on his speech.

The forestry industry is a major player in our region. It accounts for nearly 20% of the Lower St. Lawrence economy and nearly 40% of the region's manufacturing jobs.

History tends to repeat itself. My colleague put it very well. We have already seen this bad movie before. In 2006, the industries had to leave on the table nearly \$1 billion of the \$5 billion that was imposed as countervailing tariffs.

I would ask my colleague what is the solution that will prevent Quebec from suffering the repercussions of the tariffs being imposed on softwood lumber by the Americans.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Chair, my heart goes out to the workers in my colleague's region who have been affected by these various shocks and who may still be affected in 2022, if this continues.

My colleague mentioned the 2006 agreement. When it expired in 2015, there was some lofty rhetoric, but there was no new agreement afterwards. Nothing concrete was announced. To answer his question about how to prevent this from happening, I would say that Ottawa needs to acknowledge that Quebec has a genuine system. The real solution is obviously for Quebec to negotiate its own agreements directly as a free and independent republic.

• (2020)

[*English*]

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Chair, the hon. member and I sat on the trade committee earlier this year. The minister attended a committee meeting back in June, and we were asking questions on the notification of the duties that were coming. What were the member's thoughts on that meeting and was the minister reassuring in her comments?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Chair, I commend my colleague and former peer from the Standing Committee on International Trade. We had a lot of fun working together. We had a very good rapport.

Usually a visit from the Minister of Trade is spent with her eating up the time for questions. When we ask a solid question that calls for a short and solid answer, we get a response that begins with a long preamble involving thank yous, kowtowing and that sort of thing just to eat up time. Then we are told that they are working hard for Canadians, that this is a priority, that they are working vigorously on this and so on, yet we never get an answer from the minister. In fact, we have never gotten one from most of the ministers in this government.

I do not feel reassured. Even if I did, I would be wrong to feel that way. It would be naive of me. We got the answer a week ago.

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Chair, I appreciate that the member mentioned the environmental benefits of forestry, especially Canadian forestry. We have one of the greenest, most environmentally friendly industry in the world. I wonder if he would comment further on the benefit of supporting Canadian forestry from the perspective of fighting climate change.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his question and the opportunity to provide some details.

Government Orders

With respect to the benefits of forestry, we have seen some extremely innovative businesses. They are developing derivatives, wood-based bioproducts, rather than relying on yesterday's energy sources. I think that is one way forward along with other energy sources of the future.

We are a nationalist party. We are not against economic nationalism. There are issues we have to deal with on a continental and global basis, and the environment is one of them.

It took centuries for trees to develop. It is almost miraculous. All kinds of studies on trees show that their benefits are legion, ranging from oxygen to well-being. Some studies show that they improve well-being and create cool islands. Trees are all pro, no con. They supply us with extremely high-quality wood.

There is no doubt that the forestry industry has not always been up to snuff. I recall a film that made an impression in Quebec. It was called *Forest Alert* and was produced by Richard Desjardins, a great Quebec artist who is popular with all my Bloc Québécois colleagues.

Fortunately, things have changed, and this is a sign that social movements must continue to mobilize. Today, we have a great industry. We have a great sector that can always do better, of course, as long as it has the support of the public and a strategy, and political priorities are put in place.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Chair, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment. I have heard great things about your wisdom, and I look forward to working with you.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Windsor West.

This is my first speech since being re-elected, and I want to thank the people of Timmins—James Bay. It is very moving to me that, in the first speech I give, I am speaking about an issue that is impacting our communities. I am thinking of the incredible community of Elk Lake and the mill workers there. The EACOM mill in Timmins has been taken over by Interfor. They are people with an open-door policy and they welcome me to the mill. I have visited with the workers and seen the production lines.

One of the things we learned from the long crisis with softwood lumber is that we lost so many mills in the north, along with the collapse of the paper industry: the loss of Smooth Rock Falls, the loss in Kirkland Lake and the huge loss of the Abitibi mill. However, the mills that survived became very efficient. Just this spring I was talking to representatives from EACOM, who said they were finally having a good year. They were finally starting to reinvest, and then they got hit with this. This is an issue that we have to address.

I am not going to attack my good friends over on the Conservative side, but their sense of history is, I find, a little strange. Yes, Stephen Harper signed a softwood lumber agreement, but he came in and threw out every WTO win that we had. We had won at the WTO time and time again, but then the agreement was that we would take a billion dollars' worth of subsidies that our industry had to pay, which should have come back to us, and give \$500 mil-

lion to competitive mills in the United States. Do members not think those mills thought that was a great idea, and that as soon as the softwood lumber agreement ended, they thought they would hit up Canadian companies for more money? The fact that our industries had to subsidize American competition shows how wrong this is. That is the history of this.

In six years, the current government has not negotiated the softwood agreement, and it has an effect. It has been a ticking time bomb. When the Biden administration came in, we knew it was going to take a hard line on job protection, and I do not hold that against it. I do not hold it against Joe Biden that he is standing up and saying he is going to fight for good union jobs. I have never heard the Prime Minister say that. I wish he would.

What worries me about the Prime Minister is that he is like the last of the Davos free traders. He believes that he and the Deputy Prime Minister can go to Davos and talk about this great international order where all the trading partners make agreements, but that is not what is happening. Around the world, countries are defending their own financial interests, and we have been left out in the cold. We saw it with the inability of our country to make PPE when we were hit with the pandemic, and our inability to make sure our people were safe with no investments in vaccines. Well, Brian Mulroney sold off our vaccine capacity, but the Prime Minister was going to trust in the international market. The Americans were investing in massive amounts of medical research during the pandemic so they would never be in that situation again. We were hoping for the best, and that is what we have been hoping for with softwood. We are hoping for the best, that everything will work out.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of International Trade went to Washington on November 17. This was going to be the big hug. The Prime Minister was going to do the schmooze charm. Seven days later, the Americans hammered us. What did the Prime Minister say that pissed them off so badly that within seven days, they doubled the tariffs on us? I am not sure the trade minister even mentioned softwood. We never heard any talk about it, but within seven days of their being there, we got hammered.

We know how the Americans are going to operate. We know where they stand, and we know how they will bend to their lobbyists and their vested interests in Washington. That is not news to us. The question is what we are going to do to stand up for our industry, our workers, the union jobs we need to defend in forestry and the auto sector, and the massive transformation we need to make in the energy markets. We have not heard that from the Prime Minister.

● (2025)

Now the Liberals are telling us it is complex. "Trust us. Trust us," they say. The workers in Elk Lake, the workers in Timmins, the workers in Cochrane and the workers in Kapuskasing, in my region, are not going to trust. They want to see action.

Government Orders

• (2030)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Chair, it is a real pleasure to stand this evening and talk about timber, to talk about softwood lumber and the impact it is having across rural Canada. I appreciate the member for Timmins—James Bay raising the plight of workers. In my riding, workers have lost their jobs. They have lost their livelihoods and the ability to provide for their families because of government policy and government inaction in not reaching a softwood lumber agreement.

Could the member explain what benefits we could see from the forestry industry if the government actually took it seriously and followed through on its commitment in 2016, when it said it had almost reached a deal? Close to six years later we are still waiting for that to come to fruition.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, we have to stand up and not be afraid to say that our industry, which took it on the chin year after year, is extremely efficient. Our workers do the best job possible and American consumers look for Canadian wood products because they know they are top-notch products, yet with all that on our side, we cannot get down to Washington and make that case. There is something wrong there.

The impact is in our communities. People who go to work and feed their families by the work of their hands, whether they are in the mines, in forestry or in agriculture, need to know that their lives matter here, where the lobbyists and the insiders and the rich folk hang out. Their voices are rarely heard in the House, and we have to be their voice. It is a shame on us that we would allow these jobs to disappear because we do not have a Prime Minister who will stand up for the working class in this country. We have to do better and we have to fight for these jobs, and that will mean trade retaliation. It has to happen. We have to say there's a line in the sand and we will fight.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague from Timmins—James Bay for his speech. We will be working together on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

He ended his speech by asking what we were going to do for workers in the industry. I would like to tell him that what we can do has a lot to do with secondary and tertiary processing. Unfortunately, industry stakeholders are telling us that the federal government does not have a meaningful program to develop this value chain.

I would like to offer my colleague a potential solution. Would he agree that there is no meaningful program because the federal government decided to put all of its eggs in the oil basket? We are now saddled with a massive deficit, and it is time to invest in more worthwhile energy resources or environmental sectors, such as the forestry industry.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, I encourage my colleague to participate at the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. It is a significant opportunity to implement practical alternatives so that the government can give the natural resources sector the development help it needs and so that we can develop Canada's regional economy.

There is a lot of potential in the forestry industry, and this potential has evolved thanks to the efficiency of the industry and the vision of workers across the country. The Government of Canada must implement an investment plan to help this economy develop.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Chair, I appreciate my colleague's speech and I quickly want to give a shout-out to the hard-working men and women of the steelworkers union in my riding, who work very hard in the mills in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford to provide for their families.

In British Columbia we are developing designs for a lot of mass timber structures, which of course have a much lower carbon footprint than buildings made out of steel and cement. I am wondering if my colleague could talk about these emerging technologies and how we do need to stand up for Canadian workers but also to make a concerted push to U.S. industries, because of course they are going to suffer from the tariffs on these. The U.S. homebuilders are the ones who are going to suffer, but there are some amazing technologies coming and we really need to see the Canadian government stand up for that abroad.

• (2035)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Chair, we have to be looking at all our sectors at the federal level in terms of the climate crisis and the climate change opportunity. Certainly, the issues of cement are huge. With the ability to use forest products to transform and lower carbon impacts, Canada can be a leader, but we cannot be a leader if we do not have a government that is willing to come to the table. Industry is talking about it; workers are talking about it and people have a vision. What we do not have is a government that is willing to stand up and work with us to make these transformations that will save the planet.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Chair, as this is the first time I have been able to rise for a speech, I want to thank the residents of Windsor West, and I could not think of a more appropriate way to start this engagement.

My riding represents 40% of the daily trade that goes to the United States, between 30,000 vehicles and 10,000 trucks pre-COVID. It is returning to that level. As well, we date back to the underground railroad by which slaves escaped to our community of Windsor, across from Detroit. We were there for the War of 1812. We were there for times when Detroit came over to fight fires in Windsor, and during 9/11 we sent our firefighters there, so we are very much ingrained with U.S. culture and the U.S. economy. In fact, during COVID-19, around 2,000 health care professionals have gone over daily as essential workers to the United States, to serve in their hospitals as doctors, nurses and other health care professionals.

Government Orders

At the end of the day, we have a broken relationship with the United States. This is a part of the problems we are facing with softwood right now. Ironically, this June it will be 20 years since I first attended my original lobby as an MP with Pierre Pettigrew, the then minister of international trade. Down at the Canadian embassy we lobbied against softwood lumber tariffs for this country and this nation. Many times I have been down there as part of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group, in a non-partisan fashion, to continue to push the issue.

However, the reality is that what we have seen over the last several years is a breaking down of that relationship, and it really is at the feet of the current government right now. It is going to take a conscious effort to reverse that course. We look at the situation with the USMCA, the CUSMA, the new NAFTA or whatever we want to call it, and the fact of the matter is that Canada was outnegotiated and outmanoeuvred even by Mexico in signing that agreement. The progressive forces, senators and congresspeople who I am very familiar with in the United States took note that Canada originally wanted an agreement that did not include the environment or labour. It was Mexico and the United States that added that component, and later on Canada had to come back to the table to ratify that change.

I can tell members there is a two-way breakdown here that is very succinct. A good example, though it might seem like a small one, is that Canada is negligent on our fisheries commission contribution, which is around seven to nine million dollars, to fight lamprays in the Great Lakes. We refuse to pay the bill.

We have ourselves wanted to build a nuclear waste facility off the Great Lakes, where the United States did not do it because Canada, under Joe Clark, asked that they not do that on the American side. We have a series of different issues that have emerged, and they were front and centre when, most recently, the government went down to the United States to push on EV vehicles. In fact, when we signed the original NAFTA, it hammered communities like mine, which actually lost the auto industry compared to what it used to have, because in the new NAFTA we lost the auto pact, a favourable trading position that was negotiated by previous governments.

They went down there, and when they came back I had never seen anything like that. As the member for Timmins—James Bay noted, they actually got another repercussion, which previously was not even in their rear-view mirror, from what they could see or what they would admit. This is equivalent to rubbing the dog's nose in it. That is what took place. It is very significant and shows the breakdown we have, which has become more significant.

However, I do not want to stop without saying that with these tariffs we have to remember that they are jobs, families and value-added work that men and women have done. I know my whip just recently lost another plant in her riding, another mill that was closed. As New Democrats we have called for sectorial strategies for auto, the lumber industry, oil and gas and a series of different industries, so we are not dependent upon rip and ship. The negotiation tactics we have to push back against are buy America and other protectionist policies that are in the United States. They are part of their culture, and only if we develop our sectorial strategies will we have weight at the table to push back against this protectionism.

• (2040)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Chair, I would love to ask the member about Crown copyright, but that is a discussion for another day.

We are seeing more and more investment shifting southward. That is bad for workers who want to put their skills to use and who want to put food on the table for their families. It is bad for those communities, specifically for those communities that rely extensively on forestry for that employment.

We have seen the government plod along, not paying attention to this file. In fact, my very first words in the opening of Parliament in 2015 were whether the government would put in its mandate letter a specific reference to getting a softwood lumber arrangement. The Liberal government continues with the status quo. When members of Parliament, like this member and members from British Columbia, ask questions of the government, it seems it has no plan to deal with it.

Would the member agree that the government needs to start to get serious on this file and actually engage with the Americans? What other things need to be done to get this job done?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Chair, we will follow up on Crown copyright. It is really important. This sets an example of how immature we really still are as a nation. Other countries, including the United States, have sectorial strategies for aerospace. The United States, with its electric vehicles, is a good example. Now it is softwood lumber. We saw this coming, quite frankly.

When we see what is happening with regard to mineral deposits in Canada, right now we do not even have a plan on how to make this into a robust development strategy for our electric vehicles. That is why the government was upset in having to scramble at the last minute to go down there. We already had a national auto strategy. We used to be number three in the world in manufacturing. We are now down to number 10.

Sectorial strategies, where we protect workers but also invest in their future like other countries do, is how we push back and have integrated supply lines that mean something at the negotiating and bargaining table.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Chair, given the urgency and the speeches in this evening's debate, it is apparent that the softwood lumber issue could affect several areas, especially in our regions in Quebec. I am naturally thinking about Abitibi and Lac-Saint-Jean, but I have to say that even back home in the eastern townships, there are mills that will be affected. This has an impact on our overall land use. This is a major industry. The Bloc Qu b cois has a good idea for developing tertiary processing. When I was campaigning, I met some forestry producers. It is a major part of our regional economy. We have to do more.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts about the importance of protecting these forestry producers.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Chair, here is where we can take advantage of our current situation. There is no reason why we could not use this in the interim as we go through for a robust housing strategy across the country.

There will be a supply issue that will create a moment, if we keep some of these facilities in operation as we deal with the unfair trading process, to set some national objectives and national goals. That is why I think a unified Canadian component with regard to the industry was so successful in the past on pushing things back.

Again, a strategy, a plan with guidelines, timetables and follow through with a directive by people is how we get something done, and it will be respected in the United States. It means something when they have something in front of them that way.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Chair, a paper mill was permanently curtailed in Powell River, and I know that will have huge impacts. Hundreds of people are going to be impacted in this area. One of the most frightening things is we have a federal government that does not seem to take these things seriously and does not understand the huge impact that these kinds of events have on our small rural communities across the country.

I wonder if the member could explain for the government the action that needs to happen, so these communities are not left so far behind.

• (2045)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Chair, one of the most important things is to have that type of long-term commitment for a sectoral strategy. There is no doubt that the products that are being produced are worthwhile. They are being affected by other things outside in the world. Those workers and communities are worth it. They cannot just go and find another job. We used to have that vision. We need to return to it. That is what other countries are doing. We did it strong before, we can do it strong again, but it takes a commitment, a long-term commitment, from the government. That is the protection we need and the support workers are expecting.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

I want to thank all hon. members gathered here this evening to discuss yet another unfair trade action against an industry that deserves much better from our American neighbours.

The softwood lumber industry is one of Canada's largest employers and has been throughout our history. It is woven in the sinews of our nation and a source of pride for Canadians. Many of the thousands of jobs are challenging and involve tough work in remote places, but the work is rewarding and contributes to the strength of Canada's middle class. It is especially vital to indigenous communities, whose relationship with our forests dates back centuries. Therefore, it is disheartening for these workers and their communities to face increased duty rates as part of the continuing, unfair and unwarranted U.S. trade action.

Our government is deeply disappointed and we have expressed our frustration to our American counterparts at the highest levels. I hope all members will work through interparliamentary forums and use any and all contacts we all have, whether through business, family or friendships, to make clear our position across the border. It is imperative that we take a team Canada approach. Our shared message today is that these are unfair duties that are bad for workers on both sides of the border and they have always led to higher U.S. housing construction costs, something that no economy in the world needs right now.

I can assure my colleagues that we have and will continue to vigorously defend our industry and its workers, and we are confident of success. Why? Because over decades, regardless of which party was in power, Canada has fought similar actions. These legal battles are expensive, lengthy and painful for vulnerable communities, yet trade tribunals have ruled consistently in our favour. While we are confident in our legal position, we must also do everything we can to help impacted communities, and our track record is strong.

During the height of the 2017 dispute, our federal government launched a task force with our provincial colleagues right across the country to consult on ways to defend the industry and its workers, and their respective communities as well. We followed that up with the \$867 million softwood lumber action plan. It included market and product diversification initiatives and programs to assist affected workers. We have continued to invest in this industry.

In 2019, we renewed the forest sector competitiveness programs, an investment of \$251 million over three years. These programs support market access and encourage innovation in order to create new opportunities for the sector. We have had numerous success stories, including many that have also advanced our federal government's robust plan to reach our 2030 and 2050 climate goals.

Government Orders

We are seeing tall buildings go up in B.C. and Quebec, built principally from wood fibre rather than steel and cement. Car part components made of wood are also making vehicles lighter and more fuel efficient. We believe Canada can capitalize on an emerging global bio-economy expected to reach \$5 trillion annually by the end of the decade.

We have also made major investments to confront infestations of the mountain pine beetle, the spruce budworm and the emerald ash borer.

There are many other examples to illustrate how our government has defended this industry and its workers, and that should give all members and all Canadians the confidence that we will do so again.

● (2050)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Chair, the hon. member spoke at length about defending Canada and how her party, the government, was going to defend Canadian values when it came to trade and when it came to softwood lumber. She talked about defending it, but with respect, this is essentially a WHL team playing against an NHL team when it comes to defending. Just because the government wishes to defend Canadian values does not mean, with respect, that it is in the same league. What we have seen is precisely that. Six days after a meeting, the President elevated those tariffs, shutting down trade.

When did the Prime Minister know this was coming? If he knew it was coming, why did he not do anything to prevent it?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Chair, I would like to believe that on this issue we are all on the same team. I think that we all have the same outcome in mind when we say we want this issue resolved. We are very disappointed by the results of the administrative review. We are very disappointed that the softwood duties have increased. We know that in a relationship that is as large as the one between Canada and the U.S. there are bound to be issues, but I can assure the member and all members of the House, as well as all Canadians who are listening, that we have, from the very beginning, indicated our issue with the increase of the duties with the Americans. We have stood up for Canadian businesses and workers. We have talked to President Biden. We have talked to Ambassador Tai. We have talked to Secretary Raimondo. We will continue to stand up for our forestry sector. I look forward to continuing what I want to say with the next question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Chair, the forestry and lumber industry is critically important to my region and to Quebec. If we look around, we are surrounded by wood. Everything I touch here is made of wood.

If wood is so important to the Liberal government, can my colleague explain why the federal strategy for oil and gas from 2018 to 2020 was allocated \$14 billion a year, but the federal strategy for Quebec's forestry industry only got \$71 million?

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Chair, as I mentioned earlier, in a relationship that is as large as the one between Canada and the U.S. there are bound to be issues. Given the fact that we have \$614.9 billion in two-way trade between our two nations, largely things are

going really well between our two countries. This is one of the irritants that we have had, and it has been in place since 1982. It has escalated in recent weeks. I am really pleased to hear that Minister Ng is leading a team Canada group, including members from all sides of the House, to Washington to continue our government's advocacy and to stand up for Canadian interests. We will not stop until we resolve this issue. We will always stand up for Canadian businesses and workers.

The Chair: I would just remind the member not to use the last name of one of the ministers.

Questions and comments. I will have to choose the birthday boy, the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Chair, I certainly do appreciate the member for Davenport, but, realistically, she said that things were going well with the United States. We have issues with electric car batteries. We have buy-American provisions. We have softwood lumber issues. This is all going horribly wrong. We all may be on team Canada, but when the manager is not doing a good job of managing the team, the manager gets replaced. This has been a terrible thing. I quoted earlier how *Fortune* magazine said in May that the Biden administration was looking to double softwood lumber tariffs, yet here we are near the end of the year and the government acts like this is something new.

People are asking about their communities. What about the forestry workers and the communities that rely on forestry and are being left to deal with these things by themselves? What does the member have to say about the fact that the government knew in May that these tariffs were coming?

● (2055)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Chair, I want to wish the hon. member a very happy birthday. I also want to assure him and everyone else in the House that we are interested in finding an outcome and a solution that is acceptable for industry and workers. We have consistently said that these tariffs are unfair and unwarranted, whether at the CUSMA panel or at the WTO, and we are going to continue to stand up for workers and the forestry sector.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak about the actions that the government has been taking to support Canada's interests in the softwood lumber dispute with the United States.

First, as this is the first time I have risen in this 44th Parliament and, in fact, ever, I would like to start by thanking the constituents of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill for sending me here and for putting their trust in me.

Government Orders

Despite some accusations to the contrary, I can assure members that we are continuously engaging with the Government of the United States to convey the importance of a successful resolution to this dispute. We have been very clear that Canada believes a negotiated agreement with the United States is in both countries' best interests. However, we will only accept a deal that is in the best interests of our softwood lumber industry, our workers and our communities. A deal that protects Canadian jobs is a priority.

The United States has always relied on imports of Canadian lumber to fill the gap between its domestic production capacity and the demand for lumber. Imports from Canada have historically met about one-third of U.S. demand. U.S. consumers need our lumber to build homes and other projects. It is clear that imposing unjustified duties on such a large portion of U.S. consumption is counterproductive in combatting rising inflation and housing costs.

The U.S. National Association of Home Builders has highlighted that duties on Canadian lumber exacerbate already high lumber prices and directly increase costs to consumers. This is in direct contradiction to the United States' goal of increasing housing affordability. The association is able to see a solution to this problem that evidently the United States government has not yet realized.

A negotiated settlement that brings stability and predictability to the softwood lumber industry is the best outcome for everyone involved. Unfortunately, the U.S. lumber industry encourages the U.S. administration to refrain from engaging meaningfully in negotiations, preferring the continued disruption to lumber supply caused by these duties, to the detriment of U.S. consumers and our workers. Nevertheless, our government has been persistent in encouraging the United States to return to the negotiating table to find a mutually acceptable agreement.

The entire government is involved in this effort. The Prime Minister has personally raised Canada's concerns with President Biden on many occasions. The Minister of Foreign Affairs recently raised the issue with U.S. Secretary of State, and senior Canadian officials, including our ambassador to the United States, are in constant contact with our U.S. counterparts.

The Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development has taken a strong lead on these efforts. Earlier this week, she spoke with her counterpart, the U.S. trade representative, to discuss softwood lumber among many other important trade issues. The Minister of International Trade is actually in Washington, D.C., as we speak, where she will again work to advocate for Canadians and build partnerships with like-minded Americans.

As with all Canada-U.S. trade irritants, we fundamentally believe that a win-win solution is possible. It serves neither Canadians nor Americans to put up unjustifiable trade barriers that harm our mutual prosperity. At the same time, the government will continue to vigorously defend Canada's softwood lumber industry and will stand up for our forestry workers and communities in every way possible.

• (2100)

The Chair: Before we get to the next question, I want to ask everybody to tighten up their questions and answers. I am trying to allow everyone to get them in. We have gone over a couple of times.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the new member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill for probably one of her first speeches.

Right now, forestry workers in my riding do not want to hear rhetoric about a win-win because this has already been a loss-loss. They have already lost the jobs, the mills are already closing and forestry companies in B.C. like West Fraser are looking to go south of the border. Frankly, the government has had since 2016, when it started talking about signing a new deal, to get things done, but it has not.

The other day I asked the minister in the House of Commons during an adjournment debate what positive steps she was going to take. I agree that she took a positive step today; she went to Washington, D.C. However, we have not outlined for industry a transparent process that it can look to for any type of certainty.

Could the member please comment on whether she agrees that it has been way too long and the government has not acted quickly enough to support the workers in my riding and across British Columbia who are impacted the most by the lack of government action?

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Chair, we all share my hon. colleague's concerns. Whether these jobs are defecting from our ridings or not, they are Canadian jobs and they are good Canadian jobs. We all agree this evening that we want to protect these workers and this industry, but this issue has been going on for decades, and the current round of irritants in this trade dispute has to do with American protectionism, quite frankly.

We want to assure members that we are interested in outcomes that are acceptable for industry workers. Canadians elected us to work together, and I think we all agree that these are the outcomes we want. We are going to keep standing up for the workers and the forestry sector. Our government has consistently stood up for Canadian businesses and workers, and we are always going to fight for the best interests of all Canadians.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Chair, I would like to know what my colleague thinks of the liquidity program. In order to qualify, producers practically have to declare technical bankruptcy. Forestry workers in my region would like to access this program before reaching bankruptcy, in order to cover the tariffs. Does my colleague think that her government would be prepared to make this program accessible to workers?

[English]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Chair, of course no one wants to see any of these industries fail or these businesses shut down. Our government has always fought for workers and industries in Canada. I know we will do whatever it takes to keep these industries open and working and to keep these workers employed.

• (2105)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Chair, as this is a take-note debate, I want to ask about a gender lens on these negotiations. However, before I do that, I will recognize the skills of the Quebec forestry and mill workers who came to my riding in the early 1900s to start the Fraser mill, which is no longer in place. I definitely want to recognize them, as well as the skilled forestry workers, the Sikh and Chinese immigrants who came to my community in the early 1900s.

This year, the gender equality in forestry national action plan wrapped up. I am wondering if there was or can be a presentation of this work in the U.S. negotiations so the Americans understand how important this diversity work is in this sector.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Chair, I believe that the lens on gender equity is very important. The government will be making its appeals and presentations with that in mind. Our government is a feminist government committed to making sure there is gender equality, and I know this is very important to all ministers and all parties involved.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake.

While I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today, it is unfortunate that we are here late tonight having this take-note debate on softwood lumber as a result of the Liberal government's continued mismanagement of our relationship with the United States.

Softwood lumber is a critical industry across the country, particularly in my home province of British Columbia and in the Okanagan. Workers in this sector have been looking for certainty and stability through the finalization of a new softwood lumber agreement. The last softwood agreement, negotiated and signed by a previous Conservative government, expired in October 2015.

Despite the Liberal Prime Minister pledging to negotiate a new agreement after the Liberals formed government, six years, four trade ministers and three different U.S. administrations later we are still waiting. The Liberals also failed to negotiate softwood into CUSMA.

Last February, because of my role at the time as shadow minister for international trade, I led, on behalf of our Conservative caucus, the forming of a special committee on Canada-U.S. economic relations, as there were so many serious issues the Liberals were mismanaging. The softwood lumber sector had seen thousands of people lose their jobs.

Despite the Prime Minister touting his relationship with the U.S. administration and President Biden, that same administration has now formally announced a doubling of tariffs for our softwood lumber sector. Our relationship is strained, and instead of moving softwood lumber issues forward, they have gone backward.

The trade minister's inaction on getting a new softwood agreement with the U.S. is devastating for small businesses and workers in forestry. My community has seen this first-hand. Kelowna-Lake Country used to have a thriving forestry sector, with good jobs and many in the community relying on its success. However, uncertainty and poor market conditions led to over 200 people in my community losing their good jobs at the mill over the course of two years, and the final blow was the mill closure in 2020, a mill which had operated and supported families for over 80 years.

Close to 10,000 businesses, large and small, provide services across the value chain for the forestry sector in British Columbia. They rely on the sector thriving to make their payrolls, employ workers and reinvest in their communities.

Despite the U.S. announcing its plans to increase countervailing duties on softwood lumber last May, we have seen no concrete evidence that the Liberals made any effort in that time to convince the U.S. that these duties are unjust. The Liberals had five months to act, and what we saw in that time is they were prioritizing an unnecessary election instead of acting for Canadian forestry workers this summer. On top of this, our supply chains with the U.S. are integrated, and this uncertainty has led to higher pricing, which ultimately leads to higher construction costs.

The Conservatives have pressed the Liberals to act time and time again. Last spring, when the U.S. announced its intent to double softwood tariffs, my Conservative colleagues and I called an emergency meeting of the international trade committee to hear what actions the trade minister had taken and was planning to take to stop these countervailing duties from happening. What we got instead was the trade minister unable to tell us of any action she had taken, not even whether she had met with U.S. counterparts following the countervailing duty announcement or whether she had discussed it with the ambassador to the U.S.

When I asked the trade minister last spring why she was not acting on U.S. plans to double softwood duties, she said she was disappointed that the U.S. was doing this. These are comments she has made again. In a readout of a meeting the trade minister had with her U.S. counterpart yesterday, she once again said that she voiced her disappointment.

Being disappointed is not equivalent to taking action. If I were to tell a B.C. forestry worker not to worry as the minister has expressed her disappointment to the U.S. administration on softwood duties, I highly doubt they would find that overly reassuring. Being disappointed will not magically resolve the softwood dispute.

We need to see concrete action from the trade minister and the Liberal government to get a new softwood agreement. Our forestry sector depends on this, and it is time the Liberal government takes this seriously, as it is part of our country's economic recovery.

• (2110)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Chair, my colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country mentioned how important the industry is to British Columbia, and the local impact. An aspect we cannot stress enough is that these are jobs, these are livelihoods. It is more than just the overall economy that is at stake here.

I am wondering if she can expand more on the local concerns, some of the things she has either heard from those in B.C. or heard from her colleagues on what is happening on the ground in their ridings.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Mr. Chair, as I mentioned, we have seen job losses in my community. There were people who had worked at the mill for 15, 20, 25, 30 or 35 years and all of a sudden they are out of work. This was their profession. There are not a lot of other options available for them.

We do know as well that, when we look at production in North America, production still exists. What we have seen, though, is loss happening in Canada and increases going to the U.S., so we are losing business to the U.S. What this is doing is causing so much uncertainty in the industry. There is not a lot of confidence to invest here in Canada and to keep those jobs here. This is why a softwood lumber agreement would be so important.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Chair, what is happening is not right and it is not fair. Unfortunately, and sadly, this is not the first time this has happened. It has happened on several occasions where the wealthy elite within the industry, stakeholders and lobbyists in the United States are successful.

Canada has been successful in terms of getting the matter resolved and being there for our industry. Once again, unfortunately, the Canadian government does have to step in, get involved and break down the barriers to take it wherever it needs to be taken. I am hoping that the members on all sides of the House will concur that, at the end of the day, this House will unite and ensure that Canada prevails on this very important issue.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Chair, we have to remember that we have not had a softwood lumber agreement now since 2015. As I mentioned in my speech questioning the minister, there were very few talks, negotiations or communications going on. That is what happens when there is a breakdown in a relationship.

Government Orders

The current president in the U.S., President Biden, was the vice-president back when we had an agreement, which the Conservatives had extended, so it is absolutely achievable. It has not been a focus of the government at all, and it is a real failure.

• (2115)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): You know, businesses in our regions are coping with losses, job shortages, and administrative costs. Some are on the verge of bankruptcy; some are already gone.

The forestry sector in my region, Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, is huge. You know, the Prime Minister went to Washington, there was talk about the return of the three amigos, but we all know what happened next.

The minister is in Washington right now. Do you think we will be getting good news or more bad news?

The Deputy Chair: I would remind the member to address the Chair, not the members directly.

The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

[*English*]

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Chair, I am sure we are all hopeful there will be some solutions that come out of this. The last time there were highly publicized conversations between the trade minister, the Prime Minister and their counterparts, it was announced shortly after that these countervailing measures might be coming.

We have seen the trend here. We are certainly hopeful that there will be some resolution. That is what we all want. Everyone in this House wants a resolution so we can give the industry certainty and stability.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Madam Chair, the U.S. and Canada share the world's longest international border and have been allies for more than 150 years. This past year, the Prime Minister has been concerned with cross-border relations. He has been concerned with electric vehicle production and border carbon adjustments. He has been concerned with climate change in his own country, and he has not been very concerned with the softwood timber dispute.

President Biden does not have much respect for our Prime Minister because former prime minister Brian Mulroney got deals done. Liberal prime ministers after him got deals done, and former prime minister Stephen Harper was actually managing to get exemptions for Atlantic Canada. Under the current Liberal government, New Brunswick, Atlantic Canada and all of Canada are facing more than double the tariffs that we were already struggling with.

Government Orders

The Obama administration sent the Department of Commerce into a deep dive to determine how the United States could get something they wanted and how the country of Canada could not get something it wanted. The basic rules of friendship are to respect each other. This is an over 150-year relationship. We are two nations that have always managed to get something that is in the best interests of their nations.

Right now the United States has no respect for our country because our Prime Minister is weak on the international stage. This is part of the problem we are facing right now. The Clintons gave the Prime Minister a nice endorsement at election time knowing how easy it would be for the Americans and their buy America campaign. Everyone worried about President Trump and talked about how bad Republicans were. This started under President Obama, and it has been doubled twice, now again under President Biden. This is actually a liberal agenda stemming from the United States, which our Liberal government here has no impact to counter.

The forestry sector is crucial in New Brunswick, as it employs thousands of New Brunswickers. The government must stand by lumber producers for our communities. It has not been able to do it. The evidence is very clear. I have three or four mills in my constituency and many communities benefit. My father was a logger. My grandfather was a contractor. The forestry industry runs deep in my blood. There are a total of 24,000 jobs and the sawmill sector alone in New Brunswick is the foundation of those jobs.

Tonight, I heard Liberal members across the floor standing up in total hypocrisy talking about how they are going to prevail. Where have they been when right now the evidence is that they have failed not once, but twice? Now we are expected to believe they are going to prevail. They are not going to be able to prevail because the Prime Minister is failing on the international stage. This one is affecting all of Canada.

I would like to say to the people of New Brunswick and the people of Miramichi—Grand Lake that Conservatives are going to keep the government accountable because right now Liberals are unable to do any damage across the border. When we have a 150-year relationship, we should be able to say what is good for them, and what is good for us, and then make a few deals. They are the basic rules of trading. There has to be something that we are exporting to the United States that they depend on our country for. There has to be something more important than electric vehicles.

The government across the floor has no interest in fixing this issue right now. Canadians were promised a renewed relationship by the Prime Minister and, instead, what do we get? An EV tax credit that threatens Canadian auto manufacturing, stringent buy America policies, measures targeting agricultural exports and actions against energy pipelines, which are contributing to skyrocketing energy prices, just like the inflation on everything else in this country.

Now the United States is at it again, doubling tariffs on Canadian softwood. What is going to be done about it? The hypocrisy from across the floor is that they will prevail. That sounds great. On behalf of the people of Miramichi—Grand Lake, I ask how they will prevail.

Tonight I am proud to speak for New Brunswick and New Brunswick companies. We need a government that will put them first on softwood timber.

● (2120)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Chair, I disagree wholeheartedly with what the member is saying.

The Government of Canada will in fact prevail, as we have done in the past on this issue. If we take a look at the origins of the debate, we are not going to do what Stephen Harper did and concede hundreds of millions of dollars to the Americas over this issue. No government in the history of Canada has achieved as many formal free trade agreements as this Liberal government has in the last six years. To say that we do not have that international relationship is bogus.

Would the member not recognize that, at the end of the day, the industry needs to be supported, and this Liberal government will continue to support the industry here? We will fight the battle that needs to be fought so that Canadians and Canada will in fact prevail on this very important issue.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Chair, when former prime minister Stephen Harper signed the first deal in 2006, the esteemed member across the floor, in his prevailing ways, comparable to sunny ways, actually voted against it.

How shameful is it to stand in this House after failing every softwood lumber company in the country and talk about something when the Liberals failed in 2006? The Liberals are going back all these years on something they have failed on. That is total hypocrisy in the House of Commons.

The Prime Minister has to show leadership here, and he has not done it. He has not been able to do it. Obama started it off. He could not build a relationship with Trump. Now Biden, and no pun intended, has taken the Prime Minister to the wood shed, and every softwood lumber company in our country is feeling the effects of that right now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Chair, several factors are playing into this. One is definitely the diplomatic fiasco I talked about earlier, and another is a kind of bad faith on the Americans' part. That is undeniable.

Generally speaking, Quebec did its part to implement a system that complies with the free trade rules. Unfortunately, the system is undermined by other provinces' stumpage fees. That is the conclusion we came to.

Does my colleague think Quebec's unique system should be recognized as such during future negotiations?

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[English]

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Chair, I am sure the member has a valid point in terms of his own province, and I would dare say the member knows more about his own province than I do. However, every province in Canada is suffering because of the Prime Minister's inability to forge a relationship with the country that is supposed to be our very best friend.

If the United States is our best friend, our country should be able to forge that relationship, whether we are Liberal or Conservative or Bloc or anything else. That should not matter. Right now, we have seriously been taken to the wood shed by the United States, and the Prime Minister has done nothing but talk about the climate crisis and electric vehicles.

Now everybody is suffering because of that.

● (2125)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Chair, this has been very instructive. Tonight I got to meet the Liberal softwood caucus, with the representatives from downtown Toronto and suburban Toronto and suburban Ottawa.

They told us they were going prevail. They told us to call all our relatives and friends in the United States to say how unfair this is. We know we are in really bad shape on a trade deal when the Liberal softwood caucus is telling us to call our relatives and friends in the United States to say we are being picked on. That is not going to restore the jobs in my region or protect the mills that I have across northern Ontario.

What I do not see from the government is any real commitment to the working class in forestry communities in this country.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Chair, I could not agree with the member more.

Right now I have mills in my riding, the same as the member opposite. I agree with him. We need leadership from the Prime Minister. It has to supersede politics and political parties. We need real leadership. There is an inability by the Liberal government to provide it.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

As this is my first opportunity to speak in this House during this Parliament, traditionally we all thank our voters, I will thank them, but also pledge to do my very best to uphold both their interests and their dreams for Canada.

Their interests do extend to softwood lumber and this issue. I know that causes some amusement, but we actually believe that an injury to one is an injury to all, and we can actually all be engaged in this issue equally and care. It may be that people in my riding use those products or they have a corporate interest in those mills doing well, but nonetheless, they care about this issue deeply and profoundly.

I would also add that personally, I actually care about it a lot, having grown up as the son of a professional forester who worked in northeastern Ontario for some 40 years, providing softwood lum-

ber for mills in northern Ontario. The fact that my education was paid for, at least in part, by my father's work in the forest industry means that I am committed to this issue personally and passionately. Because I live in an urban centre now does not make me any less committed to the working class, the people who build this country, in every sector, whether it is the extractive industries, the softwood lumber industry or other industries, including agriculture.

The softwood lumber industry has been unjustifiably targeted by these U.S. duties once again. The softwood lumber dispute is not a new trade irritant between our countries; it is an ongoing one that flares up consistently and constantly. I will agree with every member in the House that it is not fair. It is unfortunate that our largest trading partner fails to see the harm that it is causing on both sides of the border.

Our countries have a highly integrated forestry sector. It relies on predictability and stability to maintain the supply of lumber and meet the demand, which is incredibly high in the United States right now, and that is to make sure we have prosperous economies in both our countries. As a trading nation, Canada has rested and will always rest itself into the international rules-based order, and that trading system, which is dependent upon people playing fairly. We will try to ensure that Canada and Canadians receive fair treatment in the global market at all times.

In a relationship as large and as important as the one we have with the United States, there are bound to be trade irritants. That is normal. Relationship building at all levels, respect for the rules-based trading system and enforceable trade dispute settlement mechanisms are the keys to resolving these irritants.

I would say that this is not a partisan issue. I think in the House we all need to agree that we need to work together. The reason we were able to keep the trade dispute mechanism in the new NAFTA, in CUSMA is that Conservatives, NDP, Bloc Québécois and Liberals worked together with industry partners to ensure that we got the best trade deal possible. In fact, we improved upon the old NAFTA. We were able to keep that trade dispute mechanism alive, because we worked together.

There is no failure of leadership here. There needs to be an engagement co-operatively with the imagination that I am hoping all members of the House will bring to this issue. We need to be working together on this. The Minister of International Trade has said very clearly that she wants help, she wants ideas and she wants to engage with every member of the House to ensure that happens. That means engaging with people we know who are legislators in the United States, so they hear the story of Canada and are reminded that their interests, as well as our interests, are bound together in this.

Government Orders

They need our wood, as simply put as that. They need it. We have it. We will supply it well, and our industry needs to be effectively protected by the international rules-based order. We will do it. Our Prime Minister is committed to it. We are committed to it. I know the House is committed to it, and I look forward to working with members and their creative solutions that can only improve our approach on this issue.

● (2130)

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Chair, I agree with the hon. member across the way that we have to work together, because the government has just failed to make this negotiation. We had so much time in the last six years to make this happen. President Biden said in his presidential run that he did not want the U.S. to continue the Trump tariffs on their allies.

The U.S. Lumber Coalition last June said that it had not seen Canada come to the table. It said that it wanted to make a deal, but that Canada was not bringing it a deal.

We have had all the time. The biggest thing we have in the negotiation is that we have the wood and the U.S. does not. It does not have enough domestic supply to supply its own nation. We have the negotiation tactics.

Will the government go back with some harder negotiations to make the deal done for our Canadian softwood industry?

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Madam Chair, with all due respect, that is not the way international trade disputes work.

The fact is that we will steadily and carefully take our case to the places where trade dispute mechanisms actually exist.

I remind members of the House we have consistently won. This is because we are clear, we know where Canada stands on these issues, we listen to our industry partners, we are able to look at this issue in a holistic way and understand those mechanisms will work.

I received criticism at one point from one of my colleagues because in a question in the last Parliament, I said that we will win. I used the definitive “we will win” in this dispute, and we did, and we will again because we will be careful, clear and consistent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Chair, I listened carefully to my colleague from Don Valley West's speech, and I strongly disagree.

He claims there was no failure of leadership, but there was. The United States said it was planning to double the duties long ago, in May. That was six months ago. What did the government do? It did not respond.

Once again, we are in the same situation we have been experiencing year after year. They say we must go through the mechanisms. How many times has Canada sought recourse before the World Trade Organization? Its decisions are not binding. We have to raise our voice when our neighbours disrespect us.

I will ask my colleague: What is the silver bullet?

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Madam Chair, I will simply repeat that we will not use bully tactics. We will use steady, careful negotiating tactics using the laws at hand, whether it is the WTO mechanisms, the CUSMA mechanisms or other trade mechanisms that are in place to ensure we have fair disputes.

This is not a new situation. Whether it is in Canada, the United States or any of our trading partners, we are a trading nation and we understand domestic politics play in every country. We will continue to make our case politically as well as legally, and we will win once again.

● (2135)

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Madam Chair, I asked in question period the other day whether we could expect, for the first nations-owned lumber mill in my riding, to have the \$20 million that have been withheld in tariffs returned to it through this process.

The hon. member speaks of the process and playing it through to the end in an appropriate manner. Can this lumber mill in Saskatchewan that has \$20 million tied up, which is not being used for first nations to provide social housing and other benefits to its communities, expect to get its \$20 million back, and when it might happen?

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Madam Chair, the member will know very clearly I am not privy to that information. I do not know the facts of this particular mill. I am interested in it, though. I am interested in anything where the entrepreneurial spirit of indigenous communities of Canada can be unleashed and work.

This government has been more committed than any government to ensuring indigenous companies, corporations and investment and employment opportunities receive not only fair treatment but the best treatment possible. I am happy to hear more about this. I am happy to take that to our own government to ensure we find a solution to it.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Chair, although this is not the first time I have risen in the House since we returned, I should take a moment to thank everybody in Fleetwood—Port Kells for sending me back here for a third time. I do not know if they just wanted me out town or if they really like the work that we have been doing, but I presume it is the latter.

I am pleased to join my colleagues in defending our forest industry, and referring to the comment from my colleague for Don Valley West, this is what we are all here to do. We are all here to defend the sector, its workers and the suppliers, and a huge contributor to our economy across the country.

We are dealing with the latest set of unfair and unwarranted duties by the United States. I think we can assure Canadians that we do have means at our disposal to defend the workers and communities that depend on the work that they do, which includes, by the way, indigenous people who, in many places, rely on this vital part of our economy. Canada will use all the methods at our disposal to combat unfair trade actions by the United States as we have at every stage of this dispute over the years. This includes legal recourse available under our bilateral trade agreements in the World Trade Organization. Time and time again, we have won. Panels in these venues have consistently ruled against U.S. duties.

Our government will do whatever else we can to defend workers and communities, just as we did in 2017 when we came up with the \$867 million softwood lumber action plan. That was a plan that focused on expanding markets and diversifying products, and on assisting workers, including those transitioning to other parts of the economy.

In the long run, we have an advantage. We have a vast, healthy and unusually resilient forest ecosystem, with parts of B.C. this year being an unfortunate exception. We have an ecosystem that absorbs carbon pollution. In fact, there is no path to net-zero emissions that does not involve our forests. Our government has underscored this reality with a plan to plant two billion additional trees over the next 10 years. This is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 12 megatonnes annually by 2050.

Canada is also taking global leadership in reversing tropical forest loss and land degradation. It makes sense that we are out in front in this area, because our strong system of forest laws, monitoring and enforcement ensures sustainable forest management practices across the country. Canada is home to 9% of the world's forest, but we have 36% of the world's sustainably managed forests.

Canada's forests are monitored closely. Each year, the Government of Canada publishes "The State of Canada's Forests" annual report. It tracks a number of indicators pertaining to sustainability. The government will continue to work with industry, provinces and territories to protect and sustainably manage our forests, because that is our long-term advantage, but as today's debate highlights, we need to invest in order to encourage this industry's transformation.

One example is the investments in the forest industry transformation program. It supported innovation for more than a decade and, to date, it has successfully funded 43 capital investment projects. These initiatives have secured approximately 6,600 forest-sector jobs and another 450 innovation-related jobs. The program supports forest-reliant communities and improves the environment and performance of the sector. These projects help diversify the forest product market through high-value bioproducts, such as bioenergy, biomaterials, biochemicals and next-generation building products.

Budget 2021 recognized the program's success by injecting up to \$54.8 million over two years starting this fiscal year to increase

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its capacity. We also recognize, as I said, how important this sector is to many indigenous communities, which is why we are investing to create forest-sector jobs as well as increased knowledge and economic opportunities.

Normally when we are in a negotiation with somebody, we expect to deal with somebody who is rational. However, we have seen over the last number of years any number of irrational decisions made in the United States or by Americans. These are interesting and difficult times, but as my colleagues have suggested, we have the means at our disposal, the patience and the talent to get this over the line successfully.

● (2140)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Chair, I appreciate the speech from the member opposite.

I just want to bring this back to the workers, those on the ground whose lives are impacted by this, because this is something we have seen in the Kenora riding throughout the course of this dispute. Just a couple of years ago, Kenora Forest Products had to lay off over 100 workers when its parent company filed for bankruptcy, citing the ongoing softwood lumber dispute.

I mean this question in the most collegial way possible. What would the member want to say to those workers who have lost their jobs and their families who are looking for action from this government?

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Chair, I have lived in many communities where forestry is a big industry, including in our riding where we have the Teal-Jones mill, which is a very large operation. Throughout Canada we have had these dislocations on the paper side and the lumber side, etc. There is no doubt that our industries are going through a transformation, and it is support through the transformation to new technologies, new innovations or perhaps simply new jobs in other sectors that would make a difference for these workers. That is what the federal government should and will be doing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Chair, since my colleague is from British Columbia, if I am not mistaken, I would like to hear what he has to say about the stumpage system in his province. The stumpage system in British Columbia is set by the government, as opposed to the Quebec system, where prices are set by the market. That seems to be the sticking point for the U.S. How would my colleague defend British Columbia's system under free trade rules?

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Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Chair, I know that in past softwood disputes the Government of Quebec attempted to make changes that would more closely harmonize with New Brunswick, especially, in order to escape some of the impacts of American retaliation. That has not worked. In British Columbia, we have taken the brunt simply because our forest tenure system and access to Crown land is significantly lower in cost than it is in the United States.

I want to add one thing. I was close to some of the people working on the softwood lumber agreement that was struck in 2006, including David Emerson. This is an anecdote from when they were talking to a forest operator in Georgia who was very critical of the Canadian system. He said that Canadians were spending all this money to become more efficient, and all he needed to do was take a couple of hundred thousand dollars to Washington in a suitcase and he could get what he wanted.

• (2145)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Chair, I want to say that six years ago it was this member to whom I asked my first question in the House of Commons the first time I spoke, so it has come a bit full circle.

I would ask him this. To get away from this dependence on the United States, is there anything more we could be doing to expand our markets, both here and abroad, as well as to value or monetize our forests in ways other than just for fibre and two-by-fours?

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Chair, that is a tricky question simply because a lot of other factors have come into play that have robbed us of our opportunity to do value-added in the forestry sector. The era of Reaganomics, Margaret Thatcher and some of the other neo-Liberal policies back in the seventies stripped a lot of manufacturing from Canada and sent it overseas. That is where the value-added activities are happening. British Columbia has continuously increased shipments of raw logs, because we cannot compete with the low-wage sectors in Asia for those value-added products, so it is difficult.

I think in the bigger picture we need to think about reshoring a lot of the things that we have lost over the last 50 years, and bringing those industries back. Right now Canada has a housing shortage. We have a lot of lumber. Let us get that together and make something happen here.

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Madam Chair, I will be splitting my time tonight with the member for Kenora.

As this is the first time I have risen in this 44th Parliament, I would like to take a minute to thank the constituents of Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River for re-electing me and sending me back to Ottawa to be their representative. It is a privilege and a responsibility that I do not take for granted. I would also like to thank my entire team for their time, their effort and their professionalism during the campaign. Without an awesome team, none of this is possible.

Last, I would like to thank my family, and especially my wife Lori, for continued support on this journey. For many of us, I know

the support of our spouses makes it possible for us to do this important job.

The debate tonight has a direct impact and far-reaching consequences for the people of Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River. The forest industry in northern Saskatchewan is an economic driver that provides direct and indirect employment to approximately 8,000 people. Forest product sales are worth over \$1 billion every year, and 30% of the timber supply in northern Saskatchewan is allocated to indigenous businesses. This is the highest of any province in Canada, and indigenous people make up roughly 30% of the forestry workforce, which again is the highest of any province in the country.

These stats only look at the current situation. With long-term growth in the sector having the potential to generate over \$2 billion in annual sales and well over 12,000 jobs, this vital renewable resource industry is in a growth phase and is proving to have the ability to bring Saskatchewan residents together to solve many of the socio-economic problems in our communities.

Just yesterday, there was a major announcement made between Paper Excellence, the company that is restarting the pulp mill north of Prince Albert, and One Sky Forest Products, which is building a new oriented strand board mill. These two companies are moving together on a co-location partnership. They are sharing log storage areas and existing infrastructure, including electrical, natural gas and rail lines. The shared purpose in this collaboration should be celebrated as an example of navigating problems through mutual coordination and respectful dialogue. This is something that the Liberal government could learn in its dealings with the United States administration.

The development of these large forest-product manufacturing facilities is one of the many reasons why northern Saskatchewan, in September, was in the top 10 across the entire country for job growth. It is a statistic worth emphasizing. I point out that when the government, in this case the provincial Government of Saskatchewan, creates the framework for economic opportunity for all, it is the people who win.

Speaking of opportunity for all, I want to highlight a unique company in my riding. NorSask Forest Products is the largest 100% first nations owned and operated sawmill in Canada. As I stated recently in question period, NorSask currently has paid around \$20 million in tariffs. The announcement of softwood lumber tariffs doubling will add to the damage that is being caused by these punitive actions. NorSask's profits are shared among the nine first nations of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. These communities now have to deal with the shortfall in revenue. This means millions of dollars not being utilized for education, for health care including mental health and addictions programs, for housing, for youth and elder activities, etc.

This is not just an economic and international failure, it is another failure in reconciliation. First nations communities that have worked tirelessly to provide jobs for their people and created own-source revenues to help invest in the social issues they are facing deserve a federal government that works equally as hard at fighting for them to get back what is rightfully theirs.

In conclusion, as was so aptly described by the member for Abbotsford earlier tonight, from 2006 to 2015 under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper and presidents Bush and Obama, Canada and the United States had a softwood lumber agreement. Since being elected in 2015, the current government has seen three different U.S. administrations, and still we have no deal.

As the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development is leading a delegation to Washington today, I implore her, on behalf of the residents of Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River not to come home empty-handed. The people of northern Saskatchewan deserve better. Canadians deserve better.

• (2150)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Chair, the member made reference to the 2006 deal with Stephen Harper, and I would suggest that getting no deal is better than getting a bad deal. The deal that Harper achieved saw us surrender literally hundreds of millions of dollars to the United States at the cost of the industry here.

What is important for us to recognize is that we are on the right side of this. We know that if we continue to proceed through the apparatus that is set up and established, whether through the World Trade Organization or even our trade agreements, and have the negotiations that are so critically important, we will prevail.

Would the member agree that it is better for us to push, and push hard, and be patient in order to protect the interests of the tens of thousands of jobs and the hundreds of communities that will directly benefit if we get this right and make sure that Canada does prevail on this important issue?

Mr. Gary Vidal: Madam Chair, I actually have the press release from September 12, 2006, on that announced agreement, and that press release talks about the \$4.3 billion that was to be returned to the importers of record at the time. One of those importers of record was NorSask Forest Products in northern Saskatchewan. I can tell members from a meeting I had with the company in the last couple of weeks that it remembers very clearly the return of its share of that \$4.3 billion.

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In the last two years that I have been raising this issue, the amount of tariffs that have been held from one first nations-owned company in northern Saskatchewan has increased from \$14 billion to \$20 billion. They do not have an eternity to solve this issue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Chair, my colleague spoke of great missed opportunities. The Bloc would support two amendments to CUSMA.

The first would be to regulate these infamous disputes, which are dragging on while our industry is going bankrupt. The Americans are using all kinds of smoke and mirrors to slow down the processes.

The other would be to create a standing advisory committee on softwood lumber through CUSMA. I introduced an amendment to that effect in the House in March 2020.

Could we count on the Conservatives to work with us on this issue?

• (2155)

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Vidal: Madam Chair, Canada has an obligation to involve indigenous softwood lumber producers in the discussions regarding any softwood lumber agreement. In 2016, the parliamentary Standing Committee on International Trade made a recommendation:

That the Government of Canada ensure that its consultations regarding the negotiations for a new softwood lumber agreement with the United States include stakeholders that may have been overlooked in the past, especially Aboriginal stakeholders and small producers.

To my colleague's question, I believe there is an obligation to have many stakeholders at the table to solve the issues facing many Canadians across the country.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Chair, sometimes the benefit of sitting in the House is being able to learn about industries such as those in northern Saskatchewan.

I think we can all agree as parliamentarians that this is a challenging time for the forestry sector. The member opposite mentioned that there is a delegation going to Washington right now. My question is about innovation in the forestry sector, which I suspect is already happening in Saskatchewan.

Can the member talk about mass timber? I know it is very prevalent in British Columbia. There are conversations in Atlantic Canada right now about whether the wood species in Saskatchewan could be beneficial for mass timber and whether to include it in Canada's building code. Are those the measures we should be working on to help drive forestry innovation in his province?

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Mr. Gary Vidal: Madam Chair, the member talked about innovation, and I can assure him that NorSask Forest Products is one of the most modern, technological companies in the country. It has advanced its technology at incredible speeds.

My challenge is that the \$20 billion is not there to pay dividends to the first nations communities, and it is also not there to invest in new and better technologies at the same time. That money can be used for capital investment and for dividends. When we do not have either, we have a problem.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Chair, it is a pleasure to join the debate tonight on such an important topic. It is fitting that my first speech of the 44th Parliament is on a topic that is so dearly important to people in the Kenora riding and right across northern Ontario.

The forestry industry is so important to Canada as a whole, and to Canada's economy. This sector contributes nearly \$24 billion annually to our GDP and makes up roughly 6% of total exports. The industry employs hundreds of thousands of people, many indigenous people, many in northern Canada and, as I mentioned, many in my riding as well. These families rely on the well-paying union jobs that the forestry industry provides.

However, we are here today because the industry is in crisis. In northern Ontario and across the country dozens of mills have closed in the last few years, impacting thousands of workers. Additionally, these closures are having impacts down the line on indirect jobs such as in trucking and throughout the supply chain.

Earlier in the debate I mentioned Kenora Forest Products, a mill that had to lay off over 100 workers a couple years ago when its parent company filed for bankruptcy, citing the ongoing softwood lumber dispute as a major factor of that. The lack of an agreement continues to threaten jobs in Kenora, in Ear Falls and right across all of northern Ontario.

We know the U.S. is Canada's largest trading partner, but these protectionist policies have limited our access to its markets. Now the forestry industry has suffered another blow less than a week after the Prime Minister flew to Washington to meet with President Biden. The U.S., of course, has announced plans to double tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber products.

When I raised this issue in question period last week, the Minister of International Trade replied, saying that the government was pursuing litigation under CUSMA, and I am glad to see we are. Canada has historically been very successful in challenging U.S. actions through channels like this, but while we wait for this ruling, the Canadian industry continues to suffer. Industry and workers in the Kenora riding continue to be left behind.

The status quo we seem to have of our largest trading partner imposing aggressive and unreasonable tariffs and Canadians working to challenge them only to win temporary victories until the cycle repeats itself really is not working. It is not working for our national economy, it is straining the relationship with our allies and, most important, it is failing the families that rely on these jobs and this industry to put food on their table and a roof over their heads.

What our forestry industry needs is stability. We need a softwood lumber agreement with the United States. We need a prime minister who will fight for our workers and ensure they are treated fairly. We need a prime minister who can work effectively with our international allies to advance Canadian interests. It is clear from the discussion we are having today that, for whatever reason, President Biden does not seem to be taking our Prime Minister seriously, and that is very concerning to all of us and to many people in my riding.

As I close, I would like to note that in response to questions in the House, the Minister of International Trade has been unable to tell us how many negotiations the government has had with the U.S. trade representative. She has not been able to tell us what retaliatory measures, if any, the government is planning to take or, more broadly, what its plan is to deal with this crisis. Workers in the Kenora riding and across northern Ontario need the government to succeed on this. All Canadians need the government to succeed on this. I hope government members can give Canadians some hope during this debate tonight.

• (2200)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Chair, as the member opposite mentioned, I know that for the riding of Kenora the forestry industry is extremely important. We have heard in this debate tonight from all members. Regardless on what side of the House they sit, this is a concern, and that is the reality. Right now the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development is on her way to Washington to try to ensure there is a resolution for our Canadian forestry industry.

This question is genuine. I have heard the member opposite speak tonight and he certainly seems to be genuine in the questions he has asked. Has the member opposite had engagements with the forestry stakeholders in his riding and can he articulate to the House some of the concerns they might have about the economic impact in Kenora and otherwise? We all share this concern, but I would be more interested in hearing more specifics, if he has them.

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Chair, I am very pleased to see that the minister is travelling to Washington. I am also pleased to see that our shadow minister on the file is on his way as well. It is great to see that we have members from all across the aisle wanting to work together on this to get to a resolution.

I have had the opportunity to meet with many stakeholders in my riding and across northern Ontario to talk about this. I probably need time for another speech to mention all the concerns they have raised. It is the uncertainty more than anything that I hear time and time again, the uncertainty of not knowing what will come next and whether this dispute is going to have a solution or not.

Again, I would encourage the government to do what it can to ensure it finally puts an end to this dispute.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Chair, I wonder if my colleague shares my reading of the situation. I find one thing fascinating. We are in a take-note debate, and yet the government has very few solutions to offer. We have an industry and workers who are suffering, and all we are getting is a mishmash of empty rhetoric. No concrete action is being taken.

In concrete terms, what measures, what policies does my colleague have to propose given that the government clearly does not have any?

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Chair, it is an important question. The most tangible measure we need is a result. We need an end to the dispute, and we need the minister to come back from Washington with some good news for this House and for all Canadians. That is the bottom line.

I know the government has talked a lot about its strategy, of how it wants to do it and how it does not want to push too hard. The government has asked the House of Commons to endorse this strategy, but it has not yielded results yet. At the end of the day, what we need is results for the people of the Kenora riding, for the people of northern Ontario and, I am sure, the people in Quebec who are impacted by this as well.

● (2205)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Chair, whenever we talk about softwood lumber and the disagreement between Canada and the United States, one of the things to realize is that we are comparing apples to oranges.

In Canada, the person who cuts down the tree is responsible for building the road that brings the person to that tree, for ensuring that all of the environmental regulations around cutting that tree down are abided by, and for the replanting of that tree and ensuring that it grows to maturity.

In the United States, with most of the trees that are cut down, the forestry company comes in and cuts down the tree, and somebody else is responsible for building the road and so on. The folks who buy the tree buy the tree and nothing else, whereas in Canada, those who cut down a tree are responsible for getting to the tree and replanting the tree.

It is apples and oranges. That is what we are talking about. What we want to know on this side of the House is, what is the government prepared to do with all the money that is sitting in the bank account and has been collected with the tariffs? I wonder if my hon.

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colleague has any idea what the government's plans are for that money that has been collected in tariffs and is just sitting.

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Chair, the brief answer is no, I do not, because I am not on the government side. It is a very important question.

I would just say, to the comment the member made about the responsibility Canadian forestry producers have, that it speaks to how strong our industry is from the environmental side and the social side, and why we need to continue to support our Canadian industry.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Calgary Skyview.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Chair, on a point of order, before this Liberal member gets up to speak, I think it is important. He is being investigated by the Calgary police—

The Deputy Chair: I am sorry. That is not a point of order.

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Chair, on a point of order, I would just ask the hon. member to explain why he thinks he should be able to take his place—

The Deputy Chair: Again, I just ruled on that. That is not a point of order. The hon. member has been sworn in. He is in the House.

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Chair, the softwood lumber issue remains a top priority for the government. The softwood lumber industry employs thousands of workers across Canada. It is an important part of the Canadian economy and a key component of our highly integrated forestry sector. The United States remains the largest market for Canadian softwood lumber—

The Deputy Chair: I would ask the member for Calgary Shepard to allow the hon. member to speak and give him that respect. I have already given him my decision on that, therefore I would ask that there be no heckling while the member has the floor.

The hon. member for Calgary Skyview.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Chair, I have a point of order. I think that the issue brought up in the previous two points of order speaks to the integrity of our democratic system.

When there are serious questions about the legitimacy of somebody being able to take their place in the House, it calls into question—

The Deputy Chair: Again, I will end the discussion there. It is not up to the House at this point.

This is a matter that has already been raised in the House. It is a matter that the previous Speaker has already addressed in the House. I would ask that no more interruptions on this particular matter be raised.

The hon. member for Calgary Skyview.

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Mr. George Chahal: Madam Chair, the United States remains the largest market for Canadian softwood lumber. U.S. consumers have greatly benefited from high-quality Canadian softwood lumber products for decades. It is truly unfortunate that the government of the United States continues to impose unwarranted duties that bring harm and increase prices on both sides of the border. Undoubtedly these past few years have been challenging times for the Canadian softwood lumber industry. This is why we continue to support and engage with Canadian softwood lumber stakeholders at every opportunity. When the United States imposed its unwarranted and unjustified duties on Canadian softwood lumber products, we listened and responded with a softwood lumber action plan. When the pandemic arrived, we listened and responded with a COVID-19 economic response plan.

This past summer, Canada's Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry met with softwood lumber industry leaders to provide the latest developments on the softwood lumber file and to hear directly from them on how the government could best support them in this dispute. These meetings were very informative, and the ministers took careful note of the industry's views.

The government will continue to engage with Canadian softwood lumber stakeholders at every step of the way to ensure that all voices are heard. This includes provincial and territorial governments, softwood lumber companies, industry representatives, labour groups and indigenous communities: as such, a large and important part of Canada's economy with diverse viewpoints across the country. We believe this collaborative team Canada approach will ensure the best possible support and defence of our softwood lumber industry. Through countless direct communications with companies, we have demonstrated to Canadian softwood lumber stakeholders that this government has their best interests in mind.

The federal government knows that the Canadian industry does not want just any softwood lumber deal with the United States. Our industry needs a deal that brings predictability and stability, and that most notably protects Canadians jobs. Let me be clear. A deal that harms our industry is not a deal that this government is willing to accept. It is extremely disappointing that the United States continues to impose these unfair tariffs. Canadians rightfully expect a fair trading relationship.

Canada has always been willing to explore ideas that allow for a return to predictable cross-border trade in softwood lumber, but Canada will only strike a deal that is in the best interests of Canadian forestry workers and is good for forestry firms. We will not take just any deal, like the Conservatives would. Let me remind the House that while this government continues to stand up and defend the interests of Canadian workers, the Conservative Party of Canada would have us capitulate to the United States. In the interim, we will continue to challenge U.S. duties on softwood lumber under chapter 19 of NAFTA, under chapter 10 of CUSMA and through the WTO dispute settlement system. Canada believes that the U.S. softwood lumber duties are unwarranted, unjustified and inconsistent with U.S. law and the international trade obligations of the United States—

• (2210)

The Deputy Chair: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I have been trying to give him a signal, telling him that his time is running out. It is only a five-minute intervention, but I am sure he will be able to use any additional information through the questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to ask a question that speaks very much to the relevance of the debate. That member has admitted to conduct that is unbecoming—

The Deputy Chair: Again, I do not know that I need a point of order at this point. I do want to remind the member that his question has to be on the topic we are talking about, and any discussion or any reference to what I have already ruled on will not be acceptable and I will go to the next question and comment.

Again, the question has to be directed to the softwood lumber issue.

• (2215)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Chair, the question is very simple. Does the member believe that a political party that condones his activities can in good faith—

The Deputy Chair: I will rule that out of order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Chair, we must be serious and continue the debate. I absolutely agree with you.

We know that the pulp and paper industry is struggling. I want to thank my colleague from Calgary Skyview, because I heard that during the last election campaign, he had a lot of paper flyers produced for both the Liberals and the Conservatives.

What do the Liberals propose as a concrete solution to help the pulp and paper industry, aside from producing political flyers?

[*English*]

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Chair, this is an important industry that employs 100,000 forestry workers and provides over \$13 billion into the B.C. economy. We are going to work closely with our communities and workers. Our government remains closely committed to working with all stakeholders to find the best approach moving forward.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Chair, it is great to see such strong representation from Calgary Skyview and another member of our Alberta caucus on the governing side of the House.

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The member has talked about the work the government is doing, the team Canada approach that we are all taking as parliamentarians. Part of the challenge I see as a parliamentarian is that the United States has a deficit or not necessarily enough domestic softwood to meet its housing and lumber needs.

I know the member opposite has a business background. Perhaps he can opine on what I think is a problematic approach with the U.S. in the sense that it does not even have enough domestic demand. Would he agree with me that this is just a wrong-headed policy that is going to create economic challenges on both sides of the border?

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Chair, these tariffs are unwarranted, and it is extremely important that we have a good and strong trading relationship with the United States and that we resolve these issues. We want a positive outcome to this dispute.

I have worked in the construction industry. Many of my constituents run businesses that are impacted by this dispute and many of the tradespeople and workers also are impacted. I have many friends and family members who are employed in this industry and their livelihoods and businesses are impacted. It is really important that we find solutions and work together across the aisle, a team Canada approach, to ensure we get a positive resolution to this matter.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Madam Chair, in the last six years, the Liberal government has failed on this issue twice in a row, which has affected softwood lumber in every province. Judging by his business background and the ability to clearly go the distance to win under a lot of different situations, what will he do to win this one?

The Deputy Chair: I want to remind the member that he cannot say indirectly what he cannot say directly.

Does the hon. member for Calgary Skyview want to respond to the softwood lumber part of the question?

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Chair, this is an important issue, which is why we sent a team Canada delegation from this House to Washington. We will work together with members across the aisle, all parties, to get ideas and bring forward solutions that improve opportunities for Canadian businesses, but, most importantly, protect Canadian jobs.

That is a priority for me and many of my colleagues, and I know everybody in the House stands with me to protect Canadian jobs and workers.

• (2220)

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would like to thank the member for Calgary Skyview for sharing his time with me and also, as a fellow Calgarian, on his election as a Liberal for Calgary Skyview.

[*Translation*]

Canada's forestry sector—

[*English*]

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot has a point of order.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Chair, I rise on a point of order. It is interesting that the member is obviously referencing the same point you had called out earlier concerning not being able to speak to the allegations that the member is currently facing. She is doing indirectly what you said explicitly could not be done directly.

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member knows full well that the hon. member for Ottawa West—Nepean made reference to the member because he just gave a speech and shared his time with her. She was not doing indirectly what she cannot do directly.

The hon. member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

Mr. Damien Kurek: She is going to keep that up—

The Deputy Chair: I will ask the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot to leave the chamber.

[*And the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot having withdrawn.*]

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Madam Chair, Canada's forestry sector is a crucial part of the economy from coast to coast. The forestry industry contributes to the economic vitality of thousands of communities.

This week, the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development is in Washington to meet with U.S. congressional leaders and other stakeholders. The minister will advocate for Canadian interests and raise issues of concern around softwood lumber.

On November 18, the Prime Minister discussed this matter with the President of the United States of America, Joe Biden. On November 12, the Minister of Foreign Affairs also raised the softwood lumber issue during her meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken. Other Canadian government officials are also reiterating the same message at every opportunity when meeting with their American counterparts.

Canada is very disappointed that the United States decided to raise duties on most Canadian softwood lumber producers. These unfair duties harm Canadian communities, businesses and workers.

Canada is calling on the United States to cease imposing these harmful duties on Canadian softwood lumber products. At this point in time, the United States has shown no interest in a serious conversation to find a mutually acceptable solution to this dispute.

The Government of Canada will continue to vigorously defend our softwood lumber industry and the workers and communities it supports, including through litigation under NAFTA's chapter 19 as well as CUSMA's chapter 10, and at the WTO.

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In the past, those mechanisms have consistently ruled that Canada is a fair trading partner, and we expect similar results in the current challenges. From the moment these unfair duties were imposed in 2017, Canada has responded forcefully. We have launched challenges under chapter 19 of NAFTA and asked WTO panels to review these decisions. We have already obtained positive rulings from the WTO panels, which have confirmed that the U.S. duties are not consistent with the United States' WTO obligations.

These wins will be useful for Canada in our arguments before the NAFTA chapter 19 panels, which are also assessing the validity of the decisions made by the U.S. in 2017.

Canada is also challenging the final results of the United States' first administrative reviews, issued in 2020. Those decisions will be reviewed by panels established under CUSMA's chapter 10.

With respect to the most recent decision by the United States to almost double the duties on the majority of the industry, we are currently in talks with the Canadian stakeholders to look at available options, such as additional challenges under CUSMA's chapter 10, and to determine the best way forward together.

At the same time, we will continue to press our U.S. counterparts to rescind this unfair and unwarranted trade action. We remain confident that a negotiated settlement is not only possible but in the best interests of both countries. Workers in the forestry sector can rest assured that we will always be there to defend their interests, their families and their communities.

● (2225)

[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Chair, I take issue with something that was said by the member for Timmins—James Bay earlier. He was critical of the notion that we contact people we know in the United States to talk to them about the importance of Canada's softwood lumber supply to that country.

Was that not precisely the strategy we used to get CUSMA across the finish line and to deal with the steel and aluminum tariffs? We mobilized the louder and more reasonable voices in the United States to support our position.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Madam Chair, I absolutely agree with my hon. colleague. This is something that all parties agree on. It is a team Canada approach.

Speaking of team Canada, the minister is in Washington right now with a group of members of Parliament from all parties to make sure that we are vigorously defending the interests of our communities, our industry and our businesses. This is something we have to do all together.

My hon. colleague mentioned CUSMA. We were the ones who absolutely fought successfully to keep the dispute resolution mechanism in chapter 10, which we are now able to use to defend our interests.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Chair, again, I have a question for my colleague across the way.

Would the government, the Liberal Party, be prepared to consider an amendment to CUSMA? She gave some examples from CUSMA regarding recourse, potential dispute settlement mechanisms, but would the government be prepared to improve the issue of disputes so as not to unduly drag out these disputes when time is against us, and also to include a permanent advisory committee on the softwood lumber issue?

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Madam Chair, our government recognizes the importance of the forestry and softwood lumber industry for Quebec. We will continue to defend the resiliency and innovation of Quebec's forestry industry, which exports more than \$10 billion in forestry products per year and employs more than 60,000 workers in the province.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Chair, in response to a question, my colleague referenced why we need to use CUSMA, NAFTA and whatever mechanisms we can. She also said that CUSMA was negotiated in a normal way. Well, why was softwood lumber not included in it? To me it seems that this is such an intractable problem that logic and fairness have nothing to do with it.

What are we up against here and how are we going to get around this? We could have put it in CUSMA if logic and fairness had something to do with this dispute.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Madam Chair, this is exactly why we fought very hard, and successfully, to keep the dispute resolution mechanism within CUSMA, and that is something we will continue to do. In fact, the WTO, under NAFTA and CUSMA, has consistently ruled in Canada's favour that Canada is a fair trading partner. There is no reason to believe that it would be different this time.

● (2230)

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Chair, I listened to this evening's debate. The Prime Minister boasted that Canada was back on the international stage. However, I am once again struck by the fact that we are realizing that this is not true, and that when we sign international agreements, the sectors that are important to Quebec's economy are the ones that get sacrificed.

The investments in lumber are not the same as the investments in oil. Why can the government not invest more money in lumber, when it can invest so much money in western Canada's oil industry?

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Madam Chair, we continue to vigorously defend all industries in Quebec and Canada.

Mr. Jo el Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Chair, I will take this opportunity to thank my constituents for voting for me to represent Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier in the House of Commons for a third time.

I want to thank the many volunteers who worked hard to get out the vote and ensure that people voted for me. It was an extraordinary success, and I received 51.6% of the vote, which was more than I had hoped or aimed for. I am very pleased with that, and I appreciate it very much.

I want to thank some volunteers in particular: my association president, Serge Henry, and his wife, H  l  ne Naud; the secretary-treasurer, Alain Pouliot; and the vice-president, Mario Paquet. Finally, as we all do in this place, I obviously want to thank my family: my wife, Isabelle, and my children, Charles-Antoine and Ann-Fr  d  rique.

I am taking this opportunity to thank everyone as this is my first time rising after giving my speech as a candidate for Speaker, which, like you, Madam Chair, I did not win. These are some of the disappointments we must contend with in politics.

Before I get into the debate on softwood lumber, I want to share with the House that I was just at the Westin Hotel, which is hosting the big tourism awards. Once again, Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier was a standout, with its ice hotel winning the top Canadian tourism award. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to congratulate those people. I invite everyone in Canada to come to Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier to discover this extraordinary, unique, ephemeral attraction that is built anew every year.

Now to the substance of the debate. If we look at the lineup—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I believe the member might be sharing his time with someone else.

Mr. Jo  l Godin: Madam Chair, thank you for reminding me. It is very important. I wish to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, an extraordinary member from British Columbia.

To continue, the topic we are debating tonight is an important sector of the Canadian economy. It is important in British Columbia, Quebec and other provinces in Canada.

Quebec is not yet a country. That is not what the Conservative Party is working towards, but we will protect Quebec.

I mentioned the ice hotel, which is just outside Quebec City. I am participating in tonight's debate because part of the riding I represent is more rural and is home to sawmills and lumber mills. In contrast, if we look at the list of all the Liberals who have spoken tonight, we see that they represent office towers and parking lots rather than rural areas that have sawmills and lumber mills.

I think we need to take this seriously. The government that has been in power for the last six years is trivializing the economy, as if it were not important, and is pushing the problem down the road. It is not offering any solutions. It is sad.

We are at the beginning of an economic recovery. I think it is important, at the beginning of an economic recovery, to get ahead of the game. We need to have the tools to attack. We need to have the workforce. If we look at the news, we see that the labour shortage is all around us.

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Since I have little time remaining, I will simply say that we could complain about what the Liberals are doing. However, instead of complaining, I will propose a solution. I think it is important to work on resolving this problem. I think if we roll up our sleeves here in Canada and tell the Americans that we are no longer sending them our softwood lumber, that they are cut off for the next six months, then it is the U.S. citizens who will be asking their state governors to do what it takes to speed up the process.

Our Prime Minister is unable to exert any pressure. He does not have any leverage to force the U.S. government to do anything. The U.S. market is huge. I think we have to support this industry by cutting off exports to the U.S. and subsidizing the industry to ensure that the businesses can absorb the revenue losses. In six months, everything will go back to normal. I think we have to work on that. That could be a solution. I think we need to find solutions so that we can reopen our economy and be part of the recovery.

• (2235)

[*English*]

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Chair, I want to tell the member opposite that although I represent Thunder Bay, I also represent everywhere between Thunder Bay and the Manitoba border, which includes quite a few trees, so I am certainly not just from the big city.

I remember that when I was in law school, I read a case with a WTO panel decision on softwood lumber tariffs imposed by the United States against Canada. That was 25 years ago and not a whole lot seems to have changed since then.

I know the opposition wants to think we are the enemies, but I would suggest that perhaps we are not. The enemy is forces in the United States that are not only protectionist but self-serving. Perhaps it is a bit of a stretch to suggest that we have any control over those protectionist forces, just as we have no control over the weather in Florida.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jo  l Godin: Madam Chair, my colleague is probably an exception to the rule tonight because he is one of the only Liberals who represents a riding that includes rural areas.

I am not saying conflict is entirely avoidable, but what keeps me up at night as an MP is the Liberal government's failure to act and the fact that it is not holding the cards or negotiating from a position of strength. I would like to talk about factors that are important in a negotiation. I want to be constructive and share some negotiation tips.

Number one, make the first move. In this case, President Biden beat us to it. Two, know what you want. When the Prime Minister showed up at the White House, did he know what he wanted? Did he talk about softwood lumber? I wonder about that.

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Next, come up with best-case scenarios and avoid compromise. Make sure there is room to manoeuvre. Do not be intimidated. Avoid dead ends. Think win-win, not win-lose. Find solutions. Create a relationship with the person or country you are negotiating with. It does not seem to me that the current government has that kind of relationship with our biggest client, the United States.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Chair, my colleague mentioned that he ran for the position of Speaker of the House. I thank him for taking the time to call me about that. I do, however, sense a bit of relief on his part that he is not in the Speaker's chair, so he can continue to defend his constituents.

I get the impression that he wants us to show some backbone. Now how do we do that? What actions should we take? My colleague and I want the same thing, we are looking for the same results, but how should we proceed at this point?

• (2240)

Mr. Joël Godin: Madam Chair, I thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, who was very open and engaged in our conversation when I tried to convince him to vote for me to become Speaker. I obviously was not elected, and I acknowledge that, since politics involves dealing with disappointment. That is what I did last week, and I am finally starting to accept it.

As for the member's question about solutions, I would say that the focus should always be on finding some leverage. It seems like right now, Canada is on its knees in front of the United States. Canada is not in a position to negotiate. It is still trying to beg for help from the international community, which is embarrassing. Earlier, a Bloc Québécois colleague said that Canada was back, but Canada keeps going backwards instead of forwards. That is what is disquieting.

Earlier there was talk of a partnership with other countries. The Conservative government is the one that put all that in place, and the incoming Liberal government just had to wrap it up. The Conservative government developed the model, though. That is a good thing, and I thank the Liberal government for following through, because it is important, economically speaking, to have customers and a good network.

We must find the solution. I do not know everything, but I suggested a possible way forward. I want to work with all parliamentarians in the interests of the Canadian economy.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Chair, I would like to thank the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for sharing his time with me tonight.

Actions speak louder than words, and that is a theme I am going to get to. The lack of a softwood lumber agreement has affected my riding greatly. We are in northern B.C., where lumber and forestry are what we do. I want to take us to the time of Obama and the Prime Minister, back in 2015, when there was a 100-day promise. Let me read from an article from *The Globe and Mail* in March 2015:

Two-thirds of the way through the 100-day countdown set in March by [the Prime Minister] and President Barack Obama to agree on the parameters of a new

bilateral softwood lumber deal, time is fast running out to reach an agreement before U.S. election fever overwhelms the negotiations.

The Canadian lumber industry is still hoping that talks at the bureaucratic level will have advanced far enough that Mr. Obama and [the Prime Minister] can iron out what differences remain when they meet at the North American Leaders' Summit in late June.... The last [softwood lumber agreement] ended in October 2015 [I might note] with the expiry of a 2006 deal that instituted managed trade between the two countries that are supposedly the world's biggest champions of free trade...

Here we are, with a bunch of promises from many members across the way that this is going to get done. They are saying, "Just relax, we need more time." That promise was made six years ago, and we still have not seen that delivered. That is why this discussion is happening tonight, and I am glad for the opportunity we have.

It even escalated. We saw the President of the United States, and I was about 20 feet away from him when he came to Ottawa to speak, and there were actually expectations. The Conservatives had lost the election, and we were thinking this was maybe a silver-lining moment for us: At least we were going to get a good trade deal across the line. President Obama gave a great speech in Centre Block, right in front of the Speaker, and we expected the deal to get signed that afternoon. There was nothing. All we saw was Air Force One leaving Ottawa with no new softwood lumber agreement.

Fast-forward to 2021, and where has the softwood lumber agreement gone? I was a member of the natural resources committee and the international trade minister was there. She had just met with the new Biden administration. They had met in a bilateral meeting. My obvious question to her was whether she had discussed softwood lumber in their meeting. She was very vague. When somebody is very vague about these things that are very specific and very important billion-dollar deals, I start to get a little suspicious.

It became obvious in an article in *Politico*. This is from Katherine Tai, the U.S. trade representative. This is after she promised that she had been discussing this with the trade negotiator and that they were actually working on a softwood lumber agreement. This is what the trade representative from the U.S. said:

In order to have an agreement and in order to have a negotiation, you need to have a partner. And thus far, the Canadians have not expressed interest in engaging.

It is pretty serious when the U.S. trade rep is saying they want to do this, but so far the international trade minister has not even reached out. Therefore, those promises ring hollow and again it goes to my theme: Actions speak louder than words. What are the Liberals really doing? They cannot try to infer that they want a softwood lumber agreement. They have to be very firm about these things.

I might add that a previous Conservative government got the first one done in 2006. We renewed it in 2013, and it expired in October 2015. Some are saying over there that they cannot get it done. We got it done twice, so we can get it done and it is proof that, if the intention is really there, the current government could get it done too.

I will finish with this. This is a statement from the minister from her own Global Affairs website, on October 6, 2021, in Ottawa, Ontario. It states:

Today, the Honourable...Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, met with Katherine Tai, United States Trade Representative, on the margins of the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting in Paris, France....

[The Minister of International Trade] reiterated her concerns about Buy America provisions, U.S. tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber and solar products,....

● (2245)

That was October 6, 2021, when negotiations were supposed to be happening all along. Actions speak louder than words. We want some action on softwood lumber from the government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Chair, let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment as Assistant Deputy Speaker.

[*English*]

To the member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, I want to mention it is the home to the Prince George Cougars, I believe is the junior hockey team there. As a former athlete, I certainly appreciate their good demeanour on the ice.

A couple of different things have been suggested on this side of the House during the debate. One of them is that our government has not been there in challenging and working with the United States. I think back to 2017, when I was not in this House. I was a lawyer in Halifax at the time. It was our government that stood and made sure we were there to protect Canadian interests from a United States president who, frankly, was willing to rip up NAFTA and start it over.

Will the member opposite at least recognize two things? The first is that the Minister of International Trade and the member opposite's colleague are on their way to Washington right now as part of a team Canada approach. The second is that this government, particularly in the 42nd Parliament, has been there to protect Canadian interests. Will he recognize these things?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, I will commend the minister and our member as well. Our member from Saskatchewan has been working on the U.S. file for many years. I will give credit where credit is due. At least it is happening now. We hope some good things can happen, but I will remind the member that we had great fanfare when we had a sitting president and a prime minister who shook hands. In the first hundred days of the softwood lumber agreement, what happened? They had the ability to pull it off then, with two willing partners, yet all we see right now is a doubling of tariffs recently after this similar meeting happened between the Prime Minister and President Biden.

Frankly, I do not have much faith that they are going to get it across the line. I hope they do for the sake of our people in the lumber industry. Again, actions speak louder than words, and up until now, six years of non-action does not speak very loudly to me.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Chair, everyone knows that I am a fair-minded person, and I am not going to bug my colleague, with whom I shared a lot of good times at the Stand-

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ing Committee on Natural Resources. However, he talked about the Conservatives' 2006 softwood lumber agreement and said that we need to be firm. I would simply tell him that the people in the forestry sector think that the 2006 agreement was a bad deal. They lost \$1 billion. The people in the forestry sector are now saying that they never want to have that kind of sellout agreement ever again.

What the people in the forestry sector want is for the government to be prepared to give them a liquidity program to help them weather the storm and for the U.S. to never again impose tariffs intended to wear the sector down into accepting a sellout agreement.

I would like my colleague to say whether he realizes that the deal signed in 2006 was a sellout agreement.

● (2250)

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, I respect the member from Quebec, who is my former colleague on the natural resources committee. All I would say is that the industry originally wanted an agreement back in 2006. They wanted it in 2015 as well. Much of our industry, as the member well knows, and mills from my area, Mackenzie, are moving south. Good Canadian companies are moving their mills south of the border because of this lack of a softwood lumber agreement. It simply does not make financial sense for them to stay on the Canadian side of the border anymore.

We need a softwood lumber agreement to bring stability to the forestry sector, straight up. The forestry sector is attached to many people and homes, people who are not going to have Christmas dinner because their dad or mom lost their job at the mill. We need to care about those people, who have lost jobs because of the lack of a softwood lumber agreement. That is who we need to care about tonight and who the government should care about in getting that deal done.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Chair, I would like to thank my colleague from Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies for his speech. I was on the natural resources committee with him as well, like the other member who just spoke.

The member talked about the mills that have moved south. We now have big companies in British Columbia that own sawmills. They have more mills in the United States than they have in Canada. Does the member know of a trade legal way whereby we can take the tariffs that have already been charged to those companies and have the government return that funding to them in the form of loans, as a kind of down payment on what the government is promising about solving this problem?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Chair, I would do one better than that, just like what similarly happened when we had the agreement before and \$4 billion was returned to Canadians as a result of that deal. My hope would be that those tariffs that have been collected in the past get returned to Canadians in this deal, which will be inked hopefully very soon.

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Am I confident that is going to happen? Not very. I am hopeful, yes. Again, actions speak louder than words and we need to see some action from the Minister of International Trade.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with the very hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

It is an honour to rise here tonight. It is a challenge, with five minutes, to try to dig into this issue, which combines two of my practically lifelong interests and passions: protecting Canada's forests and dealing with trade agreements that tend to be unfair.

On this issue, we can all agree in this House, and I do hope we can adopt a team Canada approach, that the recent imposition by the U.S. of countervailing duties and anti-dumping rules that double the tariffs for Canadian softwood lumber are completely unfair and unjustified.

Where do we go from there? I would like to suggest a novel approach, but first I want to say what we should be doing as Canadians to help the forest sector. As many members here have said, workers are losing out, communities are losing out and businesses are losing out. We should be able to do something about it domestically without the risk of creating more arguments that Canada is subsidizing its forest products.

What could we do? We could try to ban, and I think we can ban, the export of raw logs so we can get logs to our mills for value added and keep people employed for use of the products not just in Canada or the United States but for export.

If we look at the way the Swedish forest industry created itself, it created itself for maximum value added and high value export of smaller amounts of timber, whereas Canada organized it for massive amounts of volume for low value export and very little value added. We could flip that around and try to create more jobs and protect the workforce.

We should look at doing more with mass timber wood construction of buildings. The bill that was put forward by the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay is now before the Senate. We supported it in this place and should continue to support it and get it done.

We also need to be doing whatever we can to find ways to let forest communities know, after the devastation in our province from pine beetle, which caused a lot of loss of jobs at mills, that we will fight for them.

This is where it gets more complicated, and I want to dive into it. The trade agreements are intractable. I remember when Art Eggleton, back in 1995, bought five years of peace in a softwood lumber agreement that lasted until 2000. I do not know how many will remember that. We had these stops and starts.

I agree with trade lawyer Larry Herman on this. We need a long-term commitment and a deal that lasts long term, which will take political will from both Washington and Ottawa.

However, the bigger picture here, which is new, is that the multi-lateral trading system is broken. We know it was Donald Trump who broke it, and for some reason, U.S. President Joe Biden has

continued to keep it broken. When Canada wins, as we did in the summer of 2020 at the World Trade Organization when it was determined that our approach to forests was not unfair under the trade rules, the U.S. does not like it. It did not like the ruling, everyone complained about it and it appealed it. Guess what? It also said that this was further evidence that the WTO itself is not fair. It said that it kept losing, therefore it was not going to put judges on the WTO appellate bodies. There is a void, a broken system.

How do we unstick a broken system? We used to be challenged by the U.S. because it said it was our stumpage rates that created a subsidy. This time around it is saying that a renewable energy program to encourage the forest industry in New Brunswick to produce renewable energy is a subsidy.

Now, that gets interesting. We have the trade regimes all around the world interfering with climate action. We have rulings against India for doing solar energy. We have to make sure the trade regime stays out of measures to protect our climate. Maybe, just maybe, the hon. minister for trade and the hon. minister for environment and climate change might get the U.S. administration's attention by suggesting a new approach to really try to unstick the World Trade Organization and make it something that does not fight climate action but ensures that trade rules do not block climate action.

We are way overdue for a rethink of our global trading regime. Forgive the word "logjam" in this context, but there is a logjam at WTO created by the U.S. administration that broke the system under Donald Trump and wants it to stay broken under President Biden. It may just be possible, and I do not know how likely it is, to maybe get the Biden administration's attention, through John Kerry and others, to rethink the way these rules are being used, to put judges on the appellate body and to have a long-term vision that includes the climate sequestration benefits of forests.

● (2255)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Chair, I appreciated the speech from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Something that has been talked about this evening, and I believe the member for Winnipeg North mentioned it, is that, as the government is dealing with this softwood lumber issue, it is concurrently looking at new markets for Canadian softwood lumber. I wonder if the member has any thoughts or comments on that approach.

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Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, there is a limited market when what we are selling are two-by-fours. If we were to do more in the value-added area, we could certainly imagine selling more of our wood products to Europe and Japan. Japan, in housing construction, has led the way in a lot of the wood construction housing.

I think we have to be creative and expand our markets, but we also have to do more with wood within Canada. Through COVID we have learned a lot about supply chains. Let us do more locally.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Chair, I always enjoy listening to my Green Party colleague.

I would just like to ask her if she believes, as I do, that part of the solution for the forestry industry is to further develop what is known today as the bioeconomy, which significantly reduces the carbon footprint of many sectors of activity. I do not know what she thinks of that.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, I thank my colleague from Jonquière.

I completely agree with him that there are benefits to using our forests with the green vision of the bioeconomy. There are several other forestry products that protect the climate and forests, which sequester carbon. It is vital that we consider the value of forests. These forests are worth more than what is earned by clear-cutting them.

• (2300)

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Madam Chair, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has been around here a lot longer than me and has seen this issue go back and forth so many times.

The softwood lumber dispute will sort of feel as though we have solved it, then all of a sudden, we are back into it again. I wonder if the member might give some thought to a more longer-term solution to this problem, so we are not constantly battling with our neighbour.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, not only have I been around here a long time, I have been around forest policy long enough to remember back to 1982 and shakes and shingles, which sound like something really bad we could get if we did not have a vaccine.

We have been perennially dealing with what really boils down to U.S. protectionism, and the U.S. lumber industry has a lot of political clout. However, we have made changes. I mean, we used to be held up on the stumpage issue, and it was not wrong that there was an element of subsidy there, but that has changed dramatically. B.C., Quebec and the Maritimes have changed the stumpage policies to eliminate that notion of subsidy, but the U.S. is still able to play this game, even though it needs our lumber too.

A long-term vision is based on fair rules to protect a good bilateral trading regime that helps both countries. We should be able to get to that. So much of it is U.S. politics. Looking at what is happening right now, we hear commentators say that it is likely not to get sorted out until maybe 2023 because of the U.S. mid-terms.

That has nothing to do with our forest policy, and we cannot really blame the current administration as much as one likes to blame it for things. This is perennial, and it has bedevilled Conservative and Liberal governments, and provincial NDP governments, for decades. Finding a solution would be wonderful, but I think we need to open it up at a really high level to get action.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Chair, I am happy to speak tonight on softwood lumber.

As people have been saying throughout the evening, this comes back and back again. If we look up the softwood lumber dispute on Wikipedia, it goes on and on, with “Lumber II”, “Lumber III” and “Lumber IV”. It is like world wars or Super Bowls. I think even Wikipedia has given up on where we are now, because it stops at “IV” and I think we are at “V” or “VI” by now.

It is an intractable problem, and I agree with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands that it is driven by protectionism, not logic or fairness. The Americans know that we depend on them for our lumber market, and they know if they put enough barriers in place, put down these unfair tariffs, clog up the courts for years and years and stop putting people on the WTO appellate bodies so that system does not work, mills will go out of business before we can get a fair ruling.

I think what we have to do is find a new strategy that will gradually move us away from the United States. The United States depends on us, and I think at some point they will realize they are hurting. I have been to Washington and have talked to senators and congressmen about this, and some of them get it.

Our forests are changing. We have had devastating fires in British Columbia. We have had beetle pandemics. The weather is changing too. I just talked to my wife, and in my hometown of Penticton it was 22.5°C today. That is a new Canadian record for December. That is perfect pine beetle weather; they love that kind of winter weather. Who knows where we are going to end up next year with our forests?

I am not the first to say this and I will not be the last, but we have to find ways of driving more economic value out of every tree we cut down. We all know that we have cut down a lot of trees and we are running out of our old-growth forests. We have heard that time and again.

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Whenever we cut down a tree, we have to get the maximum value out of it, and I think one thing we can do, as the member just mentioned, is use mass timber. Canada leads this technology in North America. We have Structurlam in my hometown of Penticton, Chantiers Chibougamau in Quebec and Kalesnikoff Lumber in Castlegar, on the other side of my riding. These are three world-leading plants that make mass timber.

We can have sawmills around Canada producing two-by-fours and two-by-sixes and selling them to mass timber plants to create building materials to build more of our buildings out of wood and build larger buildings out of wood. This is how the big buildings of the future will be built. As already mentioned, I have a private member's bill about using that sort of wood or any material that will help us in our climate action and bring down the greenhouse gas emissions in our buildings. That bill is in the Senate now, and I hope it will come back to us in the spring and receive a good welcome here.

We also have to do something that will increase our markets domestically. We tried to increase our markets in Asia, particularly in China, and that worked for a while. However, to put it mildly, I think that has hit a bit of a headwind. I do not know if we can go much further in China at the moment, but we have the opportunity to build a much larger domestic market that would take the pressure off our sawmills.

We could sell mass timber in the United States without tariffs. It does not qualify for the softwood lumber tariffs we are talking about. That is one solution we should be looking at. We would have to educate our architects, change our building codes and educate our builders, but we should really look to that solution to get more value out of our forests. We should also monetize our forests for means other than fibre: for the water they protect, for the flood protection they provide and for the carbon they sequester.

I will leave it there.

● (2305)

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Madam Chair, I wonder how my hon. friend feels about the fact that in this take-note debate tonight, which is a very important debate, not a single cabinet minister from the government has participated in it. It is crucially important and I wonder how he feels about that.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Chair, this is an important debate. The forestry industry in Canada is hugely important. We have heard of the forest workers who are affected. In British Columbia, we hear a lot about energy and oil workers losing their jobs in Alberta and Saskatchewan. British Columbia lost a similar number of those workers back in the early 2000s in one of the iterations of the softwood lumber dispute. Tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs.

As I say, this is an ongoing problem. The softwood lumber dispute is just one of the problems the forest industry faces now. For the last year, mills had been doing fine just because prices were ridiculously high, but those prices have come back to earth and now things are hurting again.

It is disappointing, but we have to ensure we put all our minds toward this. I really do think we need to have a long-term solution.

In 1982, my kids were not even born and they now have kids of their own. We have to come up with a different way of looking at this.

● (2310)

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Chair, 1982 is the year I was born, so this has obviously been languishing for a while.

I had the opportunity to be a parliamentary assistant for a member of Parliament who was named one of the first green architects in Canada and who advocated for green architecture and the use of high-quality wood in buildings, including federal buildings. I was able to work on this project from 2006 to 2011, and that project is languishing as well.

Could the member tell us why this issue has been languishing for so long? Is it because Canada has not been able to build credibility on this issue with the United States? Again, this issue is very important for Quebec, which is why it is so important that the government sign good international agreements.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Chair, it has been dragging on because it works for the United States. It works for this group of protectionist business people, especially those who own many mills. They have found out that this works. If they get Congress to put illegal and unfair tariffs on Canadian lumber, Canada will fight back.

Several years ago, we had a similar debate in the House. I remember counting how many times we had won and it was something like 24 battles in a row, but it takes time. In the early 2000s, as I said, while those court battles were dragging on in NAFTA panels and the WTO, many mills across the country, certainly in British Columbia, went out of business. I think that is what those American interests were looking for, so they are not afraid of trying it again.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Chair, I appreciate the comments of the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay on how this has impacted his region and his province. I know he did not have a lot of time in the debate tonight and I want to give him the opportunity to add any points he may have missed, because it is such an important discussion. I want to ensure he is able to get his points across.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Chair, the part that I glossed over at the end, because I was running out of time, is that we really have to look at a different way of managing our forests. For instance, in British Columbia, every fall we burn all the slash that is produced. All the wood that is not used is burned. It produces as much carbon in the atmosphere as all the cars in British Columbia put together. We could change forestry quite easily so that sector could help us meet our climate targets, but we could also value forests for other things. We could monetize the carbon sequestration. We have seen the floods in British Columbia—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Now the time really is up.

[*Translation*]

Resuming debate.

The member for Jonquière has around five minutes for his speech.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Chair, I will be frank. In the House, I often hear the phrase “team Canada” and the idea that we should be working as team Canada. I am not particularly interested in team Canada, and I will tell you why.

Canada has two main economic sectors: the oil industry and the automotive industry. The federal government is totally absent when it comes to softwood lumber.

Today we have heard about negotiating international treaties and about our relationship with the United States. That is one of the problems, but there has never been any serious negotiating, and I have some simple proof of that.

Quebec once again had some issues with the federal government during CUSMA negotiations because the aluminum industry was not protected. Canada's chief negotiator appeared before the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and I asked him a question about the forestry industry. He replied that the forestry industry was not a priority for him at that time.

In 2006, I heard a bunch of people bragging about a deal that had been signed. However, if we talk to people in the industry about that, they are furious because, in 2006, they lost \$1 billion. It was a sellout deal. That is one of the problems in the forestry sector. We are too dependent on the United States and, unfortunately, we do not have a government that is prepared to do economic battle with the United States, which means that the sector is left out. That has been proven tonight, over and over again.

The other big issue is the secondary and tertiary processing sector. There are some federal programs to support it. We have the notorious IFIT, for example, a program that aims to transform the forestry industry. As we all know, we no longer consume as much

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paper, and the pulp and paper industry needs to pivot somehow. Year after year, there are more applications to IFIT than the program can provide in capital. People in the sector have come to me and said that they no longer even bother applying to IFIT because they know they will be turned down.

The funding power that the federal government is putting into supporting the transformation of the sector is pitiful. Anyone in the sector can tell us that.

There is another program that supports softwood lumber exports. Quebec is the largest player in Canada's forestry sector, yet 80% of the budget is earmarked for British Columbia. Members will understand why talk of Team Canada leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

Here is another basic fact. As we know, many sawmills in Quebec are coming to the end of their useful life. Given today's labour shortage, sawmills that are not automated are unable to survive. If these people applied for help from Canada Economic Development, they would get nothing. Why?

It is because Canada Economic Development refers them to Global Affairs Canada, which would tell them that it unfortunately cannot support them because that would go against international trade treaties.

Once again, this activity sector is receiving absolutely nothing from the federal government. To add insult to injury, the forestry sector is probably the most promising sector when it comes to tackling climate change.

The investment in the forestry industry in Quebec is just \$71 million a year. However, 75% of that is provided in the form of loans, which means that around \$17 million is actually invested in the forestry industry.

My region of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean brings in \$81 million a year for the federal government. What is even more insulting is that year after year, the oil and gas industry is given around \$14 billion. That is something to be pissed off about, as my father would say.

● (2315)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: It being 11:18 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 53(1), the committee will now rise.

(Government Business No. 2 reported)

[*English*]

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

(The House adjourned at 11:18 p.m.)

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