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(HANSARD)

Monday, September 19, 2016

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 19, 2016

The House met at 11 a.m.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Prayer

[English]

EXCISE ACT, 2001

• (1100)

[Translation]

VACANCIES

OTTAWA—VANIER, CALGARY HERITAGE

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that vacancies have occurred in the representation in the House of Commons and that the following seats are vacant: the Electoral District of Ottawa—Vanier, in the Province of Ontario, by reason of the death of the Hon. Mauril Bélanger on Tuesday, August 16, 2016; and the Electoral District of Calgary Heritage, in the Province of Alberta, by resignation of the Right Hon. Stephen Harper effective Friday, August 26, 2016.

Pursuant to the Parliament of Canada Act, the Speaker has addressed a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill these vacancies.

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[English]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that for the purposes and under the provisions of article 50 of the Parliament of Canada Act, the following members have been appointed members of the Board of Internal Economy, namely, Ms. Chagger, member for the electoral district of Waterloo, in place of Ms. Foote, member for the electoral district of Bonavista—Burin—Trinity; and Ms. Bergen, member for the electoral district of Portage—Lisgar, in place of Mr. Scheer, member for the electoral district of Regina—Qu'Appelle.

It being 11:04, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

The House resumed from April 22 consideration of the motion that Bill C-232, An Act to amend the Excise Act, 2001 (spirits), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand to address this particular bill, even though, as has been expressed by other colleagues, we have grave concerns in regard to it. However, taxation in general is of keen interest to all sides of this House, as Canadians are always keen to know the government's intentions in dealing with tax. I am sure that if we were to canvass constituents, as in the last number of weeks and months we have been working in our constituencies, we would find an overwhelmingly positive response to what has been implemented in a very short time in regard to the issue of government taxation policies. Later this morning, in fact we are going to be talking about the biggest single tax break going to Canada's middle class, of some 7%, and the millions of Canadians who are going to benefit from that.

This morning we have before us a private member's bill that is focused on spirits. Even though I do not necessarily indulge in spirits myself, I understand the importance of that particular industry and how important it is that we ensure we get it right. I would start by complimenting in particular small businesses that have done so well for our nation by the development and research that goes into it. It is not as simple as pouring some water into a container and then mixing in some oats and so forth and voila we have spirits.

In Canada, we have some of the best spirits in the world. Even though I do not indulge, I have been to other countries where I have seen Canadian spirits. It is important when we deal with this particular piece of legislation that we take into consideration the impact of reducing a tariff or something of that nature. We are a trading nation, and the spirits industry in Canada exports a great deal of product outside of Canada. People who have travelled abroad would see that first-hand.

Private Members' Business

Here we have a piece of legislation that would give a bit of an edge for our national companies that are producing spirits, and on the surface one might ask why we would not vote for legislation of this nature. I suspect that members will find, even from within the industry itself, that a good percentage of people say they see future growth not only here in Canada but abroad. We have a very aggressive government on the trade file. We have a Minister of International Trade who is constantly outside of Canada, trying to break down barriers and ensure that not only the consumers but also our exporters will benefit from that.

I think of some of the distilleries we have in the province of Manitoba, Seagram Crown Royal. This is something that people can buy all over the world. When we look on the surface of what is proposed with this legislation, one might ask why not, but there is an argument to be made as to why not. A big part of that argument is dealing specifically with the idea of trade. If we were to look at this sector and say here is how we could give it an advantage, and other countries around the world look at that when we talk about taking down trade barriers, we could see repercussions that could cost our industry future sales. I believe that Canada produces the types of spirits that are quite saleable around the world, and this is something that needs to be taken into consideration.

We know that the single most important thing we can do for small businesses here in Canada is to grow the economy in which we operate.

• (1105)

By strengthening, for example, our middle class, we are ensuring that Canadian businesses will have more customers coming through their doors, not only in the short term but the long term. That is why, at the local level, I made reference at the beginning of my speech as to what this government is doing for Canada's middle class with the tax break we have delivered. That will help at the local level.

Our spirits industry is an important player in our diverse economy. As we discuss the rate of reduction proposed in this bill, it is important to first note that the excise duty rates have effectively been unchanged for the last 30 years. In that sense alone, it means that producers are already benefiting from a diminished real rate of taxation due to inflation.

Part of responsible governance is taking our international rules and commitments seriously. Canada depends on these international rules to protect its exports abroad. If we look at it from that perspective, this morning we are talking about spirits, but let us not kid ourselves: Canada is a trading nation. As I indicated, we are trying to the best of our ability to bring forward an aggressive and freer trade policy in which Canadians, in particular consumers, and I would suggest exporters, who create the jobs, are going to benefit.

When we take that sort of approach, from which all of Canadian society will benefit, I would suggest the timing of this legislation in itself could be questioned. I find it somewhat interesting that even the Harper government before us did not see fit to address this issue. It is interesting that now the Conservatives who are in opposition are bringing forward something the Harper government chose not to do. There is a valid reason for that.

I would argue that as the Conservatives attempted to deal with the bigger issue of trade, while understanding the importance of that to our nation they felt the timing was not right, let alone the content. We notice that they maintained what former prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin did, which was to keep that same rate for the last 30 years. I have been involved in politics for a good number of years, and I have heard many different representations both from individual and caucus points of view, and this is an issue that has not been lobbied, at least not to me directly.

There may be a couple of members from the Conservative Party who have honed in on this specific priority issue. However, if we look at it from a broader perspective of taxation policy, I do not believe this is necessary at this point in time. In fact, it could be to the detriment of the industry as a whole. The spirits industry in all regions of our country want to aggressively pursue deals abroad, especially when we talk about some of the trade agreements we are hearing about, the ones that the Harper government did not quite finish or get done and we are trying to finalize.

Those are the types of things I believe are providing hope to industries, manufacturers, and producers at the local level, and they see future opportunities. We do not want to complicate those matters in future trade accords because spirits industries in other countries are saying there are Canadian firms trying to expand their reach into our countries and yet are putting forward taxation laws such as this. Therefore, the Conservatives need to tread carefully, be aware of the bigger picture, and understand why the Harper government itself did not choose to go that way.

• (1110)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin I just want to extend a warm welcome to you and to all my colleagues in the House. I hope we all had a restful and productive summer. It is great to see everyone again. Also, I want to wish a warm welcome to this year's new crop of pages. I know they are going to do a great job for us, and we are looking forward to working with them.

I would like to thank the member for Huron—Bruce for bringing forward the bill. I am proud to be speaking in support of it, because I believe that actions like this that help the small craft distillers across Canada, and one in particular in my riding, are going to be very beneficial.

Bill C-232 amends section 122 of the Excise Act, 2001. Its main purpose is to reduce the duty on spirits that are produced in Canada. That is an important thing to underline, because we have heard a lot from the opposite benches about how this is all about trade, as well as some misdirections in the debate. This bill is primarily about helping small craft distilleries, ones that do not really have a market outside of Canada. In a very competitive market, these distilleries need some help from the federal government.

The excise tax, as it is currently written, establishes a duty rate for the absolute ethyl alcohol contained in spirits. Its current rate is \$11.69. Bill C-232 is going to see the first 100,000 litres of absolute ethyl alcohol reduced to a duty of \$6 per litre, and any production over that will be reduced by a small amount to \$11 per litre.

Private Members' Business

This is a good way to go. I have reviewed the debates from the first hour on the bill, and I just listened to the member for Winnipeg North. Frankly speaking, I cannot really understand why the Liberals seem to be going the way they are with the bill. I have listened to them reasoning the fact that they brought in the Canada child benefit, that the middle income tax bracket has been reduced, and that it might be in conflict with WTO rules and such.

However, hoping that Canadians are going to be spending their child benefits and tax breaks on Canadian spirits is hardly the way to give our hard-working small batch distillers the support they need to thrive. I know that as a father of young kids, with regard to the extra money I get for my children, my immediate thought is not that I am going to go to a liquor store and spend it on a bottle of gin.

There is also the fact that the Liberals have a little bit of a mixed history in this 42nd Parliament about supporting small businesses. They came to the House with a promise to reduce the rate to 9%, and then they broke that promise. I would have thought that a measure like this would be something that they would latch onto, to show small businesses that they did break one promise but they are willing to listen to industry experts and introduce a helping hand.

My party acknowledges the large contribution that small and medium-sized businesses provide to job creation in Canada. In Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, we have some fantastic entrepreneurs. These people put in very long hours. They often pay themselves a very small salary as they are giving their all to their businesses.

With craft distillers, it really is an art and a science all in one. They put a ton of effort into what they do to make an exceptional product. They have to make an exceptional product, because it is a very competitive industry and they do not have access to the amounts of capital that the big players in the market already have.

I do not agree with all aspects of the bill, but I certainly agree with the part that reduces the duty on the first 100,000 litres. To my friends across the way in the Liberal Party, instead of arguing about things that we have not had much discussion on, we should at least take the time to pass the bill at second reading and send it to committee so that we can call forward industry experts and regulatory experts to get an honest view of what the bill's impacts will be.

I do not believe in throwing the baby out with the bathwater. We should give the bill a chance at committee and see if it is going to do the things it says it will.

• (1115)

The government has stated that one of its goals is job creation and it has acknowledged that around 80% of the jobs in Canada come from small and medium-sized enterprises, so if we give our craft distillers a helping hand, reducing the duty on what they pay for their spirits, that is going to be a great thing.

I want to segue and highlight one distiller in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. I have an award-winning distillery called Ampersand Distilling Company, which makes an award-winning gin and has moved on to vodka. Ampersand's market is Vancouver Island. It does not export beyond that. Some parts of the Lower Mainland are lucky enough to get its products, but it is not a

big player. So far the duty is the same for all quantities of spirits produced. Ampersand does not come close to what big players like Seagram can produce. Even reaching 100,000 litres would be a dream come true for it.

That is just one example. I know that many MPs in the House are lucky to represent small craft distillers. If they are going to vote against the bill, I hope distillers in their ridings have very frank discussions with them about their reasons, because the bill does deserve a second look at committee.

Ampersand Distilling Company is a family-founded craft distillery. It is on a five-acre organic farm and is run by a father, son, wife, and a couple of employees. Giving them a hand-up would not only expand the beautiful product they make, but already the Cowichan Valley is getting a name for itself for producing amazing wines and if we can add craft spirits, that will be a big draw to tourism dollars.

We have been taking a narrow view. We have to look at the spin-off effects, the boost to tourism, and so on. It is already a difficult industry. It is a highly competitive market. Every litre of alcohol produced has to go through rigorous standards and be recorded and labelled. There have to be reports. Sometimes people from the Canada Revenue Agency pop in for snap inspections. It is a heavy burden. Some of these regulations are necessary, but we can ease the burden because larger businesses are able to bear regulatory burden much easier than small businesses. It is about giving these small businesses a leg-up.

Between 2004-12, statistics show the sale of goods manufactured by the Canadian distilling industry decreased by 2.4%. It went from \$762.3 million to \$744.2 million. During that time the import of spirits had an average annual growth rate of 6.6%, so our share of the domestic market has been shrinking. We have had a lot more imports coming in and our hard-working men and women in the craft distilling industry have to compete that much harder for a smaller slice of the market. As a result, imports represented a greater portion of the domestic market. They increased to 80% in 2012 compared to 74% in 2004.

The Association of Canadian Distillers did a lot of work on this issue and has recommended that the excise tax on the first 100,000 litres of absolute ethyl alcohol be reduced. That is something that I can agree with and I would love to hear more about if the bill is sent to committee.

For all the reasons I just mentioned, the bill needs to be sent to committee, but we can sometimes get lost in the rhetoric. The passage of the bill would certainly raise the spirits of our craft distillers and provide the industry with a great shot in the arm. I hope MPs will support the bill and raise a toast to the hard-working men and women and the great dedication they have to their craft.

Private Members' Business

• (1120)

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour and a pleasure to speak to the bill brought forward by my colleague from Huron—Bruce. It was introduced before Parliament broke for the summer and, as has been mentioned, it gave us an opportunity to have discussions with distillers, which I did this summer out in Nova Scotia, along with the folks in my own area in Ontario. I also spoke with the agriculture community, which not only plays a significant role in terms of the success of this industry but also in terms of building the industry and making a quality product. I will touch on that a little later as I move along.

Bill C-232 is about changing the excise tax. It takes it away from the percentage of absolute alcohol and moves it to the volume of alcohol that is being produced. That may sound a little harsh, but the reality is that for alcohol over 7%, the duty was \$11.69 per litre. For under 7%, it was \$0.295 per litre of absolute alcohol. The idea now is to move that away from that percentage point to a volume, which is quick and simple. In fact, the distillers we have in Canada are micro, small and medium-sized. Therefore, it will move it to a very simplified and fair regime of \$6 for the first 100,000 litres produced and \$11 for over 100,000 litres.

You have to remember that when we speak of volume, it is equal for all types of alcoholic beverages; that is, 1.5 ounces of spirits containing 40% alcohol, five ounces of wine containing 12% alcohol, and 12 ounces of beer containing 5% alcohol. That is referred to as a standard glass. Therefore, it makes it comparable across the board for those who want to look at the equivalency of different drinks. The excise tax on beer and wine has been lower.

I listened to my colleague from Winnipeg ask why our government did not do this before when we were in government. We in fact took action but it was a process. However, members have to remember that although the Liberals proposed to deal with it in their budget, they chose not to at the time. I am glad to hear that they now see this as a positive move because quite honestly it is. It is about small and medium-sized businesses. It is about the workers in our areas who work hard every day. This is of benefit to them. Why is that? We know that if we give an opportunity to any enterprise, the benefits will come. In this particular case, these small and medium-sized companies, mainly distillers, will take that money and reinvest it into innovation, marketing, and job creation.

In other jurisdictions where the excise tax has been lowered, it was not at a cost to the government. As Conservatives, we have always said that the reason we were able to produce surpluses in our budgets at year end was that when we lower taxes, we increase the revenue to the government.

• (1125)

Why is that? It is because we leave more money in the pockets of people. Businesses hire workers, workers pay taxes, and, as a result, the government and business both win by generating revenue in excess of what they did before the excise taxes, and any taxes, were lowered. That has become evident in the United States, where they have seen tremendous growth in the distillery industry. When the U. K. dropped the excise tax by 2%, it actually generated a revenue increase of some 96 million euros.

We believe that lowering taxes for businesses, particularly small and medium-sized businesses, for the most part, will generate more revenue than if we keep taxing them to death.

One of the other industries that makes this industry so important is obviously agriculture. In my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, agriculture is the largest industry. For the producers of the corn, wheat, barley, and some rye, that goes to the distillers, it is a significant part of income in the agriculture industry. In Ontario, the distillery industry is the fourth-largest purchaser of corn. Some 320,000 metric tonnes go into the production of spirits.

Why are the Canadian distillery industry and Canadian spirits so well regarded around the world? It is like anything else. Those on the manufacturing and production side who produce a quality product can be assured that in world markets, they will have a select and good market for their products. This is the case with our distilleries and the spirits produced in Canada. Our farmers produce the highest quality grains used to produce these spirits.

One of the great things Canada has is water. Canada is one of those blessed and very fortunate countries that can produce, with the technology we have, some of the best, purest, most pristine water in the world.

We are looking at a market that is shrinking for the spirit industry in Canada. The bill brought forward by my colleague for Huron—Bruce would give this industry an opportunity to start to gain back, through exports and domestic use, some of that market share by producing some of the greatest and finest spirits in the world. We want to make sure that we give these distillers, farmers, and all of those within the industry, the value-added industry, the benefits that, in the end, would benefit the Canadian people, through the government. As I mentioned, all of our distillers in Canada are small and medium sized.

• (1130)

In terms of marketing and promotion, we have world-class spirits. It is Canadian branded. We, and the Speaker of the House, have a designated choice of spirits for Canadians. The only recommendation I would make is that we use Canadian spirits for our designation as the Speaker's choice rather than something from another country.

• (1135)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the member for Huron—Bruce for bringing the bill before us. The bill supports small distilleries and small businesses across Canada, and as such, I am happy to support it at this stage. However, I think it could be improved.

As my colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford said, this is not a bill about international trade; it is a bill about increasing Canadian distilleries' share of this market. It is certainly not a bill that touches at all on middle-class tax breaks.

Private Members' Business

The craft distillery industry is booming in Canada. Four years ago, there were only nine distilleries of any size in British Columbia. There are now 34 craft distilleries there, small distilleries, and there will be 44 by next year. They are springing up in my riding. My old doctor's office in Naramata is now a craft distillery. I will not go on to try to relate that to the health care situation in Canada, but it just shows the growth of this industry, both locally in my riding and across the country.

These businesses are creating good jobs, providing high-quality products, and diversifying the economy of many small communities across the country, and we should do whatever we reasonably can to support them.

In my riding, two of the important primary economic drivers are agriculture and tourism, and increasingly, the real growth in the regional economy is at the intersection of those two sectors.

The obvious example is the phenomenal expansion of the estate winery sector in British Columbia and in other parts of Canada. In the south Okanagan, wineries have really boosted both the agricultural sector, through good markets for grapes and good prices for farmers, and the tourism sector, filling in the spring and fall shoulder seasons with thousands of visitors tasting at wineries.

Distilleries have begun to provide the same benefits locally. As I said, a few years ago, there was only one distillery in my riding. There are now five, and more are planned. These are true craft distilleries. Under B.C. regulations, they are restricted to 50,000 litres of alcohol production per year, and they must use B.C. agricultural products to make that alcohol.

These regulations differ across the country. In Nova Scotia, I believe craft distilleries are restricted to 75,000 litres per year, and I think it is 100,000 litres in Ontario. From what I understand, neither of these provinces require that distilleries use Canadian grains to produce that alcohol. Some distilleries simply import raw alcohol to produce their spirits. However, in my riding, and throughout British Columbia, craft distilleries are required to use local products, and for a good reason. They create jobs in our country and produce spirits that are truly local in origin.

Okanagan distillers use Okanagan grains to make alcohol and often use Okanagan fruit to flavour specialty liqueurs. One of the oldest distilleries in my riding, Maple Leaf Spirits, in Penticton, uses apricots from literally the orchard next door, right across the fence, to make one of its liqueurs. This is precisely what brings visitors to these craft distilleries. They want to taste and purchase products that are carefully made, literally handmade, and unique to our region.

Like the member for Winnipeg North, I do not indulge in spirits that often, but I do like to have a cold gin and tonic on some of the hot Okanagan days in summer. This summer I had a friend come up from Vancouver to stay with us in the Okanagan. She was taking advantage, as many visitors do, of the warm lakes and fine wines of the region. She often brings a selection of wines with her, and we enjoy the summer evenings tasting the new vintages, but this time, she arrived with four different gins, including one from a distiller in my neighbourhood, the Dubh Glas Distillery, in Oliver. We did a blind taste test, and I was surprised by the variation. I had always thought that a gin was a gin was a gin and that it did not really matter

what we mixed in with our tonic. Happily, I found out that the locally produced gin was far superior in taste, in my opinion, to the others.

● (1140)

It is this superior quality and unique flavour that is driving the growth in the craft distilling industry. It is the same process that has driven growth in the local wine industry. We have helped out that industry with various incentives, and our efforts have paid off handsomely, with a vibrant wine industry in several parts of the country.

One of the things we did to help small Canadian wineries was eliminate the excise tax on wines that use Canadian grapes. This helped them compete with imported wine. We should do the same for craft distilleries.

This legislation, which would lower the excise tax to \$6 per litre, is okay as a first step, but we should really provide incentives for the small distilleries that are producing excellent, truly handcrafted products. They distill their own raw alcohol using Canadian grains and therefore contribute to the Canadian economy both in the agricultural sector and the tourism sector.

We should match the tax breaks we gave wineries by having an excise tax exemption for craft distilleries that produce less than 50,000 litres of alcohol per year and produce it from Canadian products.

I am happy to support the bill at this stage. We should provide all the reasonable assistance we can for this thriving industry, assistance that will help small businesses and farms across the country. However, I hope it can be amended at committee to really stimulate the growth of truly excellent craft distilling.

Cheers.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back in the House for the fall session, and indeed an honour to speak to Bill C-232, an act to amend the Excise Act, 2001 (spirits). I want to thank my colleague, the member for Huron—Bruce, for bringing the bill forward. It is something that he cares deeply about for a number of reasons, and something that I have worked on with him in the past. In the last session, I tabled a private member's bill, Bill C-456, which was also an act to amend the Excise Tax to reduce the tax on ethyl alcohol by \$1 per litre. However, the member has brought forward a far more focused bill, one we should all get behind because of what it could do for the spirits industry.

Private Members' Business

There are only five types of whisky in the world. One of the most popular is our iconic Canadian rye whisky. I am proud to say that the best rye whisky in the world is produced right in my riding, in Gimli, at the Diageo plant. A lot of people do not realize this, but the Diageo plant in Gimli is the largest whisky distillery in Canada and the fifth-largest distillery in the world producing whisky.

A lot of us are familiar with Northern Harvest Rye, which is produced at the Crown Royal plant in Gimli. It is now the world champion whisky, having won in Scotland back in January against all the scotches, the bourbons, and Irish whiskies. It is a very popular blended whisky and one that all of us should be proud of. It is unfortunate that the Speaker's whisky is not a Canadian whisky, and it is definitely not Northern Harvest Rye. I would hope that in the future the whisky featured at the House of Commons could be a Canadian rye whisky.

I want to correct the record on something that the member for Winnipeg North said about making sure that the tax treatment is fair and does not impact imports and exports. We know for a fact that this is an equitable tax that would apply to importers and exporters. When we changed the taxation on beers and wines made by local vintners or craft breweries, these producers never experienced any trade retaliation whatsoever. Therefore, the member for Winnipeg North should get up and correct the record, rather than trying to propagate a dissenting opinion based upon erroneous assessments.

The Diageo plant in Gimli, where all the Crown Royal in the world is produced, has some challenges ahead of it. One of those is trying to deal with a rail bridge over which Diageo brings in its grains and exports out its distilled whisky. It is a short line rail. Unfortunately, there needs to be investment made in it to bring it up to safe standards. The short line is looking at some options on how it can do that to continue to service Diageo. Aside from that, Diageo would love to expand the plant because Crown Royal is the number one export whisky from Canada, as well as the number one consumed whisky within Canada. It would love to expand production, but of course this requires long-term investments. One does not just roll out a batch of whisky and put it out into the market. It has to be aged and blended, and Diageo has to make sure it is putting together a high-quality product.

Diageo would love to see that expansion take place, but there is this unfair taxation within Canada today through the excise tax on spirits. This unfairness is the result of our decision a number of years ago, under our previous Conservative government, to give a greater break to wine and beer, so that taxation on undistilled alcohol from those industries is lower than on spirits. We need to close that disparity to see major investments in distilleries across the country and to allow them to serve the market out there.

• (1145)

If we look at the experience we had, we saw a major increase in the number of new entrepreneurial businesses, small businesses, creating local employment and buying locally produced agricultural products, after we changed the excise tax on the craft breweries and the small vintners and the wines they produce.

Bill C-232 would decrease the current excise tax of \$11.696 per litre of absolute ethyl alcohol. It would decrease the excise tax on the first 100,000 litres produced down to \$6 a litre. That would be a

huge saving to those small craft distilleries, allowing more opportunity for Canadian businesses to produce a variety of spirits, not just Canadian rye whisky but others as well, and really have that local context.

If we look at how that went in the brewery and vintner industries, we saw an explosion in the number of these small businesses, particularly small craft breweries. We also saw an opportunity for us as consumers to do more connoisseurship, I guess we could say, of the different varieties that are out there. There are different blends, there are different flavours, there are different tastes, which we had not been exposed to for a long time in Canada. It provided us with a whole new experience in trying these different fine wines produced locally, these different great craft beers. It would be fantastic if we could have that same explosion happen in the distillery industry.

The one thing we continue to talk about is how this tax reduction on distilleries would create jobs. A case in point is the craft brewery industry itself. Last week, when I was in Halifax, I had an opportunity to go down to Pier 21 and visit Garrison Brewing Company, a small craft brewery that started after the changes happened in the excise tax for the beer industry. It was able to take an idea and grow it into a prosperous business. Nova Scotia alone went from having just a couple of craft breweries to now having over 45. The interesting fact is that if we take our mainstream breweries and the number of jobs they create and compare those with craft breweries, for every job in the mainstream breweries, a craft brewery has five. It is a 5:1 ratio. We are talking about employment opportunities. This is a time in our economy when we need every possible tool the government can give to entrepreneurs and business to create new jobs. We are going to create jobs, not only in building these distilleries but also in the operation of these distilleries, because they tend to be less mechanized and more labour intensive, giving more attention to the details of their distillery practices themselves, as we see in craft breweries and in small vintners.

It is important that we create this opportunity in a lot of our local communities, not just in the major centres that we usually see.

Gimli, of course, is an exception. The reason that Diageo, and before that Seagram's, set up in Gimli was for the water. The water and locally produced grains produce Crown Royal's unique taste.

I talked about the opportunities from the employment side. It also creates a huge opportunity for agricultural producers, as distilleries are a major buyer of Canadian grains. I see it in my riding of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, where local producers are growing rye, corn, barley, and other inputs on contract for Diageo to create that unique taste and flavour of Crown Royal. The same type of opportunities will be presented to small distilleries right across this country as they feed into the growing consumer market for unique and new products in the spirits industry.

I encourage all my colleagues in the House to support the bill. Let us get it to committee for study and allow the committee to bring in experts to document how this reduction in the excise tax would probably increase the level of tax revenue coming back to the government, through increased employment and an increased number of businesses, which would benefit from the changes in the Excise Tax Act.

Again, I thank my colleague, the member for the Huron—Bruce, for bringing forward such an important bill today.

• (1150)

The Deputy Speaker: Seeing no one else, I call on the hon. member for Huron—Bruce for his right of reply. The hon. member has five minutes.

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise again today with regard to this bill.

There is one thing I would like to correct on the record, namely, that it might be the second time that the member for Winnipeg North has misspoken on trade compliance with the WTO. This bill was specifically crafted so it would be WTO-compliant. I worked with experts in industry to make sure that it is compliant, because they did not want to get into the situation that beer and wine are currently in. Therefore, the reductions in excise tax are not targeted to a specific sector, but to all businesses in the distillery industry. If the bill happens to go to committee, it would be great if the trade officials could provide their take on it. I am sure that their take would be the same as mine.

It is also disappointing to hear the Liberal member for Winnipeg North talk about how lucky the industry is that the taxes have not gone up in 30 years. I hope that is not the Liberal position on all taxation. We should do our very best each and every time to reduce taxation. That said, there is a significant difference between the excise tax that brewers and vintners pay compared to the distillery sector. This bill would reduce it by a small amount to help businesses throughout the country survive and excel.

The other point that the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman brought up is that two years ago, the U.K. reduced its excise tax by 2%. The obvious thinking at the time was that less excise tax would be collected as a result, but the opposite was true, and the U.K. collected more excise tax. That is what happens when taxes are reduced. It provides more money to the people who manage their own businesses, money that they reinvest.

I have received emails and phone calls literally from coast to coast from Conservative ridings, Liberal-held ridings, NDP ridings, and maybe even a Green riding, where distillers are located. What do they say? They say they support this bill and ask why anyone would not support it. One distillery said that if this reduction happens, it would hire 30 people. Another distillery said that if this happens, its excise tax would be reduced by \$50,000 and it would be able to hire another person.

This is what Conservatives are talking about: a chance to reduce taxes in a certain sector that would create economic activity by enabling companies to purchase plant, equipment, and materials, as well as hire more people. I can speak from my own experience in my riding of Huron—Bruce. Since the excise tax for wineries and

Private Members' Business

breweries was reduced, we have had many more wineries and many more opening, employing many people. They are becoming more and more specialized each and every day. On the brewery side, there were zero breweries when I was first elected in 2008 and now there are five, with many employees and many growing opportunities.

The great thing about the Ontario example is that the LCBO finally woke up and is now working with small producers to first get their products on the local shelves, and, if there is success there, across the entire province as well. I can speak of one company, Cowbell Brewing, in my riding, which has its products on 100 to 200 shelves across the province. One of the things that enabled them to do that was the excise tax, which allows a certain degree of profitability in the industry.

I would ask my colleagues across the way to speak with small distilleries in their ridings between now and Wednesday to see if they support this or not. We have already contacted them. Members should speak to them to find out what they think. Instead of presenting a rubber cheque at some government funding announcement, this is an opportunity for them to provide a tax reduction that does not cost the government anything and that would create jobs.

It has been a pleasure to research the topic, introduce it in the House of Commons, and have a good debate on it. I am looking forward to the standing vote on Wednesday. Hopefully five or more of my colleagues will stand when I sit.

• (1155)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 21, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

• (1200)

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: It being 11:57 a.m., the House will stand suspended for a few moments until we reach 12 o'clock.

Government Orders

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:57 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 noon.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from June 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Labrador, which means I only will have 10 minutes to speak to a very important legislation.

This is where the previous Conservative government really lost touch. The Conservatives were out of touch with Canadians and real people, and that it ultimately led to the current Prime Minister. Even before he became the leader of the Liberal Party, he talked about the importance of Canada's middle class. The Prime Minister has been consistent throughout not only his leadership, but even prior to it in saying how important Canada's middle class is to our economy and to Canada's future prosperity. The Conservative government never really understood that. One only needs to look across the way to see how those members have voted on this legislation. I would challenge them to revisit the way they voted on the passage of Bill C-2 at second reading, and listen to what Canadians are telling them. If they are really in touch with Canadians, they will appreciate what Bill C-2 is all about. Not only that, it goes even beyond Bill C-2. It is about Canada's middle class and those who want to become a part of it.

I have been a parliamentarian at the provincial or federal levels now for 25-plus years. Never before have I seen a government so determined to have an impact on Canada's middle class. That is why it is with great enthusiasm that I highly recommend to all members, no matter what their political affiliation, to get behind Bill C-2 and vote in favour of it. If they understand how the economy works, I believe they will recognize how important it is that the middle class be supported. Let me give an example. If a middle class is given a tax break or is enriched, we will have a healthier economy. How does that work? If there is more money in the pockets of average Canadians, that means they have more disposable income to invest in our economy.

There is an immense amount of literature and there are many arguments put forward to tell us that if the middle class has confidence in the economy and they have money in their pockets, they will spend that money. By spending that money, we then enrich and afford small businesses and so many others the opportunity to do that much better.

I find it interesting. Whether from the Conservatives or the New Democrats, and at times we get confused messages coming from those two parties, there seems to be a consistent message in their fight to resist Bill C-2, which I do not quite understand. One of the

things they ask us is why the government does not support small businesses. This bill would do more to support Canada's small businesses than anything the previous Harper government did in its ten years. It would put that money back into the pockets of people. By doing that, people would be spend. We can ask small business owners, as I have done, as have many of my colleagues who have canvassed their constituents over the summer in a very real and tangible way. They will tell us that the best thing we can give a small business is not necessarily a tax break, but a consumer. Small business owners want people going into their stores, buying their products and consuming them.

● (1205)

Bill C-2 is all about that. It would give a significant amount of money to Canada's middle class. Ultimately it is not just talk; it was the first piece of legislation that the Prime Minister introduced to the House of Commons, and it was implemented on January 1. Not only did we want to give the middle class that tax break, we also wanted it to take effect as soon as possible. We saw that in the implementation of the government's policy. It was a substantial election platform promise made to Canadians. The Prime Minister and this government are materializing on that promise. We should recognize this valuable legislation. It reflects what Canadians want and is something on which the government is delivering.

Other criticisms on Bill C-2 have nothing to do with the bill. The New Democrats ask about those who make less than the threshold to get the tax break. It is important to recognize that over nine million Canadians will benefit by this tax break. The NDP refuses to acknowledge that this is step one of a number of steps. All my NDP friends need to look at is the Canada child benefit. Some of Canada's poorest families are getting significant increases in child support. We would have to look a long way back before we would see a government taking such a strong social commitment to lifting children out of poverty. Hundreds of thousands of children are being lifted out of poverty because of the Canada child tax benefit. That tax-free money is already being sent to families across this nation.

That is just one aspect to help those with low incomes who want to become part of Canada's middle class. What about the other most vulnerable, our seniors? Some of the most vulnerable seniors are easily identified through the guaranteed income supplement. We saw a significant increase in the last budget for seniors. I believe some of them will receive an additional \$900 per year. If people are in a poverty situation and receive the GIS, that \$900 is the equivalent of thousands of dollars to individuals making \$100,000 per year. It is a significant increase for those vulnerable seniors. Through Bill C-2, they see a government that truly cares and is prepared to invest in Canada's middle class, but we have not forgotten about our most vulnerable such as children and seniors, in particular those who are on the guaranteed income supplement.

We have seen a redistribution of wealth that we have not seen in many decades. The bill is in part made possible because of a new tax for those Canadians making more than \$200,000 taxable income per year. There is that expectation from this government. It is making our system that much fairer.

Government Orders

•(1210)

When we look at Bill C-2, I would like to think the commitment to that tax break is being fulfilled here.

I started off by saying that the Conservatives have lost touch. They can demonstrate that they are listening to Canadians by voting in favour of Bill C-2.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I clearly recall that when the Liberals were campaigning approximately a year ago they talked about the middle-class tax cut, but they never did define “middle class”. I know that the member opposite is in the tax bracket that would benefit most from this tax break, and I do not think that many Canadians would look at members of Parliament and say they are part of the middle class.

Therefore, I would ask the member this. Could he define “middle class”, and would he suggest that the members of this House are the ones who should be benefiting the most from this initiative, which is what the Liberals have done?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if that is how the Conservative members want to justify voting against the legislation, they can do that. However, I would suggest that it is ill-advised.

The real benefactors of this tax break are teachers, firefighters, professionals, and factory workers. These individuals are part of Canada's middle class. They work very hard to build our society. That is the group that is receiving the greatest total benefit. If members want to nitpick, I am happy to do an overall assessment of who is benefiting, which is Canada's middle class and those who want to be able to participate in it.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know that two-thirds of Canadians, 17.9 million Canadians, will not benefit from this Liberal tax break. In fact, those who work full time and earn \$45,000 a year, which is \$23 an hour or less, will get nothing.

The Liberals talk about lifting people who are not in the middle class and helping them join the middle class, but they have forgotten them with this tax break. They tell them that they will help and grow the middle class. The people who will benefit the most in this tax bill earn between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year, or between \$50 and \$100 an hour. Even they do not think it is fair that those who earn \$23 an hour or less get nothing.

I would like the member to tell us what the Liberal middle class is, because in Canada the median middle class is \$31,000 a year. I know in his riding it is \$24,000 a year. In my riding, it is \$26,000 a year. The member likes to scold the Conservatives for being out of touch with Canadians and the middle class. Therefore, I would like to hear from the member, what is the Liberal middle class?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if the member would read the legislation, he would get a very good sense of what the middle class is.

If the member wants to take the issue to the next election, whether in 2019 or whenever it might be, I would invite him to do that. I would like the members who vote against this bill to tell those individuals I pointed out, the teachers, the firefighters, the health care

workers, the many different professionals, the factory workers, and hard-working middle-class members, that they voted against this bill because they wanted their own narrow perspective which does not encompass what the government is providing.

When the member makes reference to those who make less than \$45,000, imagine those individuals making under \$45,000 who have children, and the benefits they are getting under the new Canada child benefit program. The NDP conveniently forget that.

•(1215)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for outlining our government's priorities on how this bill will help the middle class.

During the summer, I met a lot of people in the constituency who received the Canada child benefit, tax free, for the first time. The difference it is making on individual lives is phenomenal.

I wonder if our member could outline the issues with respect to the TFSA. In many ways, the TFSA was short-sighted in terms of increasing the amount of tax-free growth within the TFSA. It will debilitate our future generations from getting the benefit of tax revenue. Therefore, could our member advise as to the changes, and how those will benefit the economy right away and ensure we have a long and steady stream of tax revenue so that future generations are not debilitated?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, when we looked at how we could deliver the most effective tax change that would assist Canada's middle class, it was determined that Bill C-2 would be the easiest and most effective way of putting money back into the pockets of Canada's middle class.

If we contrast that to the tax incentive that the Conservatives were talking about in terms of increasing it, there are two distinct approaches. I would argue that our approach is far more direct and that millions of Canadians will benefit by it, which is far greater than what was proposed by the previous government.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak to Bill C-2. I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for sharing his time with me today.

Bill C-2 would amend the Income Tax Act. It falls in line with what the Liberal Party said during the election campaign and what the Prime Minister said in subsequent days. Bill C-2 would reduce the personal income tax of many Canadians and allow them to have more money in their pockets. It also introduces new marginal tax increases to people at higher taxable income levels. Why anyone in the House of Commons would not want to support that is beyond me. Bill C-2 would allow more money to be held by families who need it, families in the middle-class tax bracket.

Bill C-2 is a good piece of legislation. It is good because it will help many middle-class families, and many income earners who fall into this bracket, to move forward and do things in their lives that they have not been able to because they were in higher tax brackets, losing more of their money and not being able to catch up.

Government Orders

With Bill C-2, our government is allowing middle-class families and income earners to catch up. We are giving them the break they deserve, and this is what Canadians want. It was a large part of the platform of the Liberal Party of Canada in the election. Canadians had an opportunity to have their voices heard at the ballot box, and they chose to have reforms made to the income tax legislation that would allow the middle class in this country to move forward. That is exactly what we are doing.

We are making changes around direct income tax adjustments and allowing more income tax earners to be in a lesser tax bracket. Higher income earners will pay a little more, which we asked them to do in a friendly way and they agreed. We also introduced the child tax benefit in July of this year. This Liberal government initiative allows more families to gain more money in child care benefits that are tax free. They no longer have to incorporate these benefits as part of their income, which was required by the former government and gave them less money in their pocket.

Our government is making that child care benefit tax free. We are bringing more balance to the child care benefit to ensure that families who need that benefit to care for their children will actually get the benefit. This means that people in the higher income bracket will be eliminated from the child care benefit. They can take comfort in knowing that those with lower incomes who need the money to support their children in their initiatives, schooling, careers, and in their lives, will have a little extra money to do that. This is about bringing more fairness and balance to Canadians right across the country.

The other thing we have done to complement the changes we are proposing in the Income Tax Act, besides the child care benefit, is the increase in the guaranteed income supplement for single seniors. This was a huge issue in the election campaign from aging individuals in our country who felt they needed an increase in their supplement to allow them to support themselves, especially widows and widowers. We introduced that benefit, which is going to help them substantially.

We also made improvements to the employment insurance program. We expanded it to include regions that were the hardest hit in the country at the time, including Newfoundland and Labrador, the province in which I live, and also Alberta. These two provinces have been going through huge transitions.

In addition to the income tax breaks, the child care benefits, and the increase in the guaranteed income supplement, we provided a reprieve for workers who have found themselves unemployed. We were able to make changes to the employment insurance program to help them in a difficult time.

• (1220)

However, we also need to look at how we are investing in capital infrastructure, which complements the strategy of where the government is going in lifting up people in our country and ensuring there is a greater balance.

When we look around the country today, we see in the first year of our mandate that we have already been investing money in transit, transportation, housing, and infrastructure, which the country has needed for a very long time. This is not just an investment for today

but ensuring economic prosperity for the regions in which we are investing this money. That in itself is creating new opportunity and new jobs for people in many regions of the country, and they are seeing the benefits very quickly. They are seeing it in their homes, their pockets, and in their communities. I think that is very important.

The changes we are making to the income tax legislation, as I said, will ensure that those people who were at a personal income tax rate of over \$45,000 a year will drop from 22% taxation to 20.5%. We will also introduce a new personal marginal tax rate of 33%, which will be for those with taxable income in excess of \$200,000 a year.

The opposition members are critical because they know that what we are doing is right. It is the right direction to take. They also know that what we are doing is benefiting families. They had the opportunity to do this but chose not to. They chose to distribute the investments of the country in a different way. They provided more income relief for wealthy income earners than they did for low and middle-class income earners. We have chosen a different route. Our route is creating a better balance for Canadians right across the country.

I represent a riding that falls in the middle income level. I define that middle income level as people who make \$40,000 to \$45,000 a year to \$100,000 a year. They are the people who work in our factories, mines, hydro power projects, schools, hospitals, fire-fighting and policing services. These are the middle-class earners of Canada.

We are saying to them that we recognize that over the last 10 years they have been falling behind and that we are now going to allow them an opportunity to start catching up, be a stronger part of the middle class, and ensure that their families have that opportunity. We are doing it through our income tax reductions, child care benefit, guaranteed income supplement to seniors, and our investment infrastructure programs, which are helping communities, businesses, and Canadians right across the country.

I would suggest that there is no member of Parliament that has any reason or rationale not to support the changes we are proposing to allow middle-class families to have more money in their pockets.

• (1225)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Labrador for her speech, but I think she neglected to tell Canadians one very important thing.

When the Liberals were on the campaign trail and first talked about this middle-class tax cut, they guaranteed that it would be revenue neutral, so that the money the rich paid would wash out in the wash. What the member has not told Canadians is that this will add to the deficit. It has been estimated by the parliamentary budget officer that it would be \$8.9 billion over six years.

When the member was on the campaign trail, did she commit to her community that this would be a revenue neutral tax cut, because clearly it is not?

Government Orders

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, what we indicated to people on the campaign trail, and are still indicating to people today, is that the changes we are making in the income tax legislation will allow them to have more money in their pockets.

The former government catered to the wealthiest of the wealthy in our society. It did not reach out to lift up those in the middle class.

We recognize that, and it is exactly what we are doing. We have made changes in a number of pieces of legislation to accommodate this. We are making good on our commitment in the election campaign, and we are ensuring that middle-class Canadians are going to benefit.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on the comment from the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. This tax cut will cost Canadian taxpayers as a whole \$8.9 billion over the course of the next four or five years.

How can the Liberal government condone such an expense when it does not even help those who really need the help most? This may not be a tax cut for the super wealthy, but it is a tax cut for the upper middle class, if not the upper class itself. Those who make \$45,000 a year, and there are many, almost 60% of Canadians, will be left out of this tax cut. They will be the ones who will end up paying that \$8.9 billion.

I wonder how the government can condone such a tax cut in light of the current situation in our country.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, first of all I think we need to realize that the tax cut the government is proposing today is not going to have a negative impact on anyone in society, other than those who may earn over \$200,000 a year in income. That needs to be noted.

Maybe the New Democratic Party could tell us if it agrees with the approach in the legislation toward TFSA's. We will be reducing the contribution limit from \$10,000 back to \$5,500, simply because Canadians in the middle class and lower class were not able to take advantage of the TFSA. We see this as an opportunity for the government to save, not just today but in future generations of governance and taxation.

• (1230)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to this important bill and to welcome all members back to the House on the first day of the resumption of Parliament. I hope all of my colleagues had a good summer and are ready to get back to work on behalf of Canadians in all of our ridings.

Bill C-2 received first reading in the House on December 9, 2015, following the adoption of a ways and means motion. At that time the New Democratic Party voted in favour of Bill C-2 at second reading in order to be able to propose our amendments to make the bill progressive and actually conform to the rhetoric that accompanied it both during the election and in the House at that time.

Despite the support of various stakeholders, our amendments at committee were rejected. Therefore, we cannot support the bill at third reading as it currently stands and will be opposing the bill.

Bill C-2 amends certain provisions of the Income Tax Act, such as the tax credit for gifts, taxation on income splitting, the tax payable by a non-testamentary trust, the refundable tax on investment income, private corporations, the tax on assessable dividends, the limit on TFSA's or tax-free savings accounts, and most important, the tax rates Canadians pay on their income in this country.

The New Democrats stated our position on the two significant elements of Bill C-2: the amendment on the income tax rates and the amended TFSA limit. Our approach was careful and principled then, and it is careful and thoughtful now. Although we support the government's proposal to limit the TFSA contributions to \$5,500, we cannot accept the amendments of the Liberal government to the tax rates, which will primarily benefit the wealthiest.

Let me put this in some context. After almost a decade of poor economic growth and misguided management by the previous Conservative government, working-class and middle-class Canadians and their families are working harder than ever, yet falling further behind. What Canada needs now is a government that will fight against this pattern and this direction, against growing inequalities. However, we find, when we analyze the provisions of the bill and the way the government is using tax rates, that the Liberals will do just the opposite.

The Liberals have continually said they have a plan to help Canadians, middle class and otherwise. They promised change: rapid, urgent, and positive change. However, since they came to power, the Liberals have largely ignored Canada's real middle class, and certainly, as I will show hon. members with numbers, they have absolutely ignored Canada's working class and low-income earners with the bill.

Bill C-2 should have been the Liberals' opportunity to move from rhetoric to action. Unfortunately, that is not what happened. The Liberals' tax plan gives nothing to 60% of Canadians. I listened carefully to my friend from Winnipeg on the other side, who invited us to take the bill to Canada's next election. When two-thirds of Canadians do not receive a red penny from these tax changes, and when they see that people earning more than \$89,000 in this country receive the lion's share of these tax cuts while over 17 million Canadians do not receive a cent, I would be happy to take this into the election and debate my hon. friend on who the bill really benefits.

The government is proving every day to be one of celebrity, one of rhetoric, one of spin. Let us look at something surprising. Let us look at facts. Let us look at the numbers. The government is proposing to reduce the second personal income tax rate in this country from 22% to 20.5% and to increase the tax rate to those earning more than \$200,000 from 29% to 33%.

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This is how Canada's tax rates will look as a result of the bill. If people make \$45,282 or less of taxable income, the current rate is 15% and the new rate would be 15%. They receive zero tax breaks from the bill. If people make between \$45,282 and \$90,563, the next bracket of taxable income, they get a tax cut of 1.5%. From \$90,563 to \$140,388, the tax rate is the same. From \$140,388 to \$200,000, the tax rate is the same. For more than \$200,000, as I say, the tax rate would go from 29% to 33%.

● (1235)

An analysis of this Liberal tax plan reveals that it is in fact the wealthiest Canadians who will benefit the most from the tax reduction program. The Prime Minister's tax plan excludes Canadians who are not in the second income tax bracket, the large majority of Canadians who earn less than \$45,000.

No one has to listen to me and we certainly should not listen to the spin doctors on the government side of the House, so let us see what the parliamentary budget officer says. The PBO's office said it is estimated that 17.9 million Canadians who will file income tax returns in 2016 fall within the first tax bracket. They have taxable income and will report taxable income of less than \$45,282, and will, therefore, fall below the threshold set by the Liberals to benefit from any tax adjustment. Therefore, the Liberal tax proposal excludes the lowest 60% of wage earners, anybody making under \$45,282.

According to the latest statistics available from Statistics Canada, the average Canadian income is \$40,000, while the median income is \$31,000. That means 50% of Canadians make \$31,000 or less. Canadians in this country most in need, those whose incomes are equal to or less than the median or average incomes, will not benefit in any way from this Liberal plan. In fact, only people in the first, second, or third income deciles will see a drop in their taxes.

My hon. colleague on the other side of the House from Winnipeg North also mentioned that the best thing we can do for small businesses is to provide them with consumers. Every economist in the world will say that the people who spend the most of their disposable incomes are the working poor. They cannot afford to save. Every dollar given to a working poor Canadian is a dollar that will be circulated in the economy and spent at every business in our communities, yet the government has not given a penny to two-thirds of Canadians to spend in their communities or in small businesses. Why the government thinks that this proposal is going to stimulate small business, when two-thirds of Canadians will not have a penny in their pockets to spend in their communities or in small businesses, is beyond me.

Let us look at it the other way. Canadians whose income ranks in the highest 30% will be the main beneficiaries, while the wealthiest 10% of Canadians will pocket most of the money from these tax reductions. Even with the income tax increase for those earning more than \$200,000, the Liberal plan still offers benefits that are three times higher for people earning \$210,000 or more a year than for people earning \$50,000.

An income tax reduction for the middle class should benefit a larger proportion of Canadians, in New Democrats' view. That is not the case with the bill. Full-time workers earning less than \$23 an hour, which in my riding of Vancouver Kingsway is most people, will get no tax reduction, while those earning \$100 an hour will get

the maximum tax reduction. That is a funny middle-class tax plan from the Liberals.

Using numbers from the Government of Canada's job bank, let us turn again to another objective source that has illustrated who would benefit from these changes.

An office worker who has a median hourly rate of pay of \$19 an hour would get zero from this tax plan. A hairdresser who has a median income of \$13.25 an hour would get zero from this tax plan. A fish plant worker who averages \$12.50 an hour in median income would get zero from this tax plan. A bank teller who averages \$17.20 an hour in median income would get zero from this tax plan. A school bus driver who averages \$20 an hour would get zero from the Liberals. A child care worker who makes \$17.35 an hour in median income would get zero from the Liberals. The Prime Minister's nanny, who makes \$18.20 an hour, would get zero from the Liberals. Even the Prime Minister's assistant chef, who makes \$20 to \$21.68 an hour, would get nothing from the Liberals.

Let us see who does get money from the Liberal tax plan. A lawyer who averages a median hourly income of \$53.91 would get \$679.22 courtesy of the Liberals.

● (1240)

A member of Parliament, who is hardly middle class when we make \$170,000 a year base income, will receive \$679.22. Let us stop and contrast that. A member of Parliament gets money back from the government, almost \$700, and officer workers, child care workers, and school bus drivers get nothing.

That is the proposal from the Liberal government to make Canada's tax system fairer. I do not believe that any Canadian who hears those contrasts will agree that it makes our tax system any fairer.

Contrary to what the Liberals claimed during the election campaign, the revenues generated by the tax increase for the very wealthy will not be enough to finance their plan.

I notice that the Liberals consistently refuse to answer questions put by the Conservative opposition and the New Democrats to actually hold them accountable for the promise they made to Canadians during the election.

On this side of the House, at least, we believe that candidates ought to tell the truth to Canadians during elections. What the Liberals said to Canadians was that if they were elected, the tax cuts for the middle class would be revenue neutral and would be paid for by a tax increase for the wealthiest Canadians. They told Canadians that directly.

After the election, it turned out that the Liberals were out by billions of dollars. It has been estimated that some \$7 billion of excess money will have to be borrowed to pay for the tax cut, because in fact, the Liberal math was wrong.

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In terms of Vancouver Kingsway, I have done my homework. According to Statistics Canada figures from 2010, in my riding roughly 70% of individual income earners will see absolutely no benefit from this cut, because they do not report income over \$45,282. In my riding, we have 25,635 people who reported income of over \$45,000 and 58,480 who reported income of under \$45,282. The median income in my riding of Vancouver Kingsway is \$22,614, and the average income is \$30,639.

I think my riding is typical of most members' ridings across this country. Let us forget the spin about the middle class and the spin by the Liberal government that everyone is going to do better. The numbers tell the truth, and that is that most Canadians will actually not see a dime from this tax proposal, but wealthy Canadians will.

I want to just turn to something that has not been mentioned, which is the gender impact. It is well known in this country that women, still in 2016, earn significantly less money than men do. It is well known in this country that women who work full time earn less than their male counterparts.

The numbers I found for Vancouver Kingsway bear that out. The median income for men in my riding is \$25,532. It is \$20,303 for women. It is a full \$5,000 less. What that means is that this bill, which exacerbates the inequity between wealthy Canadians and poorer, working, and middle-class Canadians, is going to have a disproportionately bad impact on women.

I was at a conference a couple of days ago when the Prime Minister stood up and said, "Poverty is sexist." That is true, but then his government, in this House, puts a bill in that will change the tax rates in this country that will disproportionately give advantages to men and disproportionately harm women because of the skewed nature of the tax changes.

I want to mention the changes to the TFSA contribution limit. On this, the NDP does agree with the government. The Conservatives wanted to raise the annual TFSA limit from \$5,500 to \$10,000. The Liberals, to their credit, campaigned against that during the election, and the New Democrats agreed with that. There are a number of reasons for that. The bottom line is basically that the TFSA, by increasing the amount of money individual Canadians can shelter from taxes, is a cost to the treasury. A cost to the treasury means that it takes revenue from the government needed to pay for much-needed programs that the New Democrats will fight for in this Parliament, like pharmacare, child care, and health care.

● (1245)

Moreover, it has been shown that because investors in our country can take already established investments and shift them to TFSAs, most people, by and large, putting money into TFSAs are not making new investments. They are simply shifting investments.

Finally, I do not know too many Canadians who have an extra \$10,000 this year they can put into TFSAs.

I want to comment a bit about the New Democrats' plan and what we would do.

If we really want to make a difference in the country, we have to make an adjustment to the first tax rate. What the New Democrats proposed during the election, and what we suggest to this

government, was that we would reduce the income tax rate for the first \$45,282 of income from 15% to 14%. That way, 83% of taxpayers would see a change in the amount of tax payable. According to the parliamentary budget officer, nine million Canadians would benefit from this proposal who do not benefit from the proposal of the current government. This solution would not only benefit more taxpayers but the cost difference would be minimal. The difference, we would argue, could be easily recovered through a very slight half-percentage point increase in taxes for large corporations.

I would point out that the Liberals are indistinguishable from the Conservatives on this score. Canada already has an extremely low corporate tax rate of 15% for large, profitable corporations, and neither of those two parties proposes altering that at all. If we were to increase that by half a point, from 15% to 15.5%, for companies like the Royal Bank and Imperial Oil, large profitable companies that are making a lot of money in the country, we could actually put more money in the hands of working-class Canadians, who would then circulate that money in the economy and help stimulate small business, which, the New Democrats believe, deserve a corporate tax cut. That is not what the Liberals and Conservatives believe, though.

David Macdonald at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Nicolas Zorn of l'Institut du Nouveau Monde, Stephen Gordon, an economics professor at Laval University, and Luc Godbout, professor and holder of the research chair on taxation and public finance at the University of Sherbrooke, are all absolutely *ad idem* on this issue. They have all crunched the numbers, and they all say the same thing: this amendment to Canada's tax laws would benefit the wealthy, would do nothing for the poorest Canadians, and is bad economic policy.

The New Democrats will stand in the House and continue to fight against this bad policy and fight for the millions of Canadians who deserve some tax relief and support from the government, as opposed to spin and rhetoric from a government that is more interested in celebrity and style than in actually helping the millions of Canadians from coast to coast to coast who are suffering in this economy.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the member is not doing himself or his party a favour in the way he portrays the legislation or the Government of Canada's agenda. The budget came forward and Bill C-2 came forward. Bill C-2 specifically deals with a tax cut, between the brackets of \$45,000 and \$90,000, from 22% to 20.5%. It would also implement a tax increase, for those who make over \$200,000, from 29% to 33%. What we are going to be voting on is that aspect.

Government Orders

The member wanted to focus on the fact that the Government of Canada has left out others. We see in the budget the Canada child benefit, which helps most of the individuals he says the Liberal government has fallen short on. His facts are just not correct, when we look at the budget combined with the legislation. The issue is whether the member supports the middle class getting a tax decrease and those making more than \$200,000 an increase. That is the essence.

• (1250)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, it is funny. My hon. colleague seems to think that every person in Canada has a child and a family. They do not, do they? Pointing out this incredible inequity in the change of tax rates by saying “We have given Canadians a child tax credit” does nothing for low-income Canadians who do not have children. I take it that my friend would probably agree with that.

I guess what he is saying is that low-income Canadians with no children get nothing, but wealthy Canadians will benefit from this Liberal government. That is skewed logic.

I want to quote the parliamentary budget officer, who said directly that benefits of this tax cut will skew to higher-income, higher-wealth households.

David Macdonald from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, using data from Statistics Canada, demonstrated that middle-class families earning between \$48,000 and \$62,000 would gain only \$51 a year, while families earning between \$166,000 and \$211,000 would receive \$813.

My friend can keep saying the words “middle class, middle class, middle class”, but what the numbers tell us is that middle-class Canadians, whether they make \$48,000, \$62,000, or less than \$45,000, will see hardly any money from this, but people who make \$150,000 plus will. That is not the New Democrats' definition of “middle class”.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back to something that both the member and I have alluded to. On the campaign trail a year ago, we remember hearing the commitment from the Liberals on the tax cut they were going to provide. They very clearly said that it was going to be revenue neutral. We now know that there is a big “oops” in that calculation.

I wonder if he could talk a bit about the math behind it and who, ultimately, is going to actually have to cover this tax reduction.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question from my hon. colleague. She is absolutely right. I may be old-fashioned, but I come from the school of thought that says that candidates, during an election, should tell the truth to the people they want to get votes from. I also think it is very important to create integrity in the system so that when people vote for a certain party, they can actually expect that the politicians will be true to their word.

The Liberals directly told Canadians during the election that their middle-class tax cut, as much as we can still call it “middle class”, which I think is not really accurate, would be paid for by a tax increase for the wealthiest Canadians. They were out by only a billion dollars, I think, and over the years many more billions of dollars. The problem with that is that when we are deficit financing,

the government is effectively borrowing money to give to wealthy Canadians that Canadians of all income levels will have to pay for.

This was not just a one-off mistake. The Prime Minister also said during the election that we would have three modest \$10-billion deficits, and he would balance the budget in the fourth year. With the very first budget tabled by the government, we have a \$30-billion deficit, six more years of deficits, and no plan to balance the budget whatsoever.

They did not bring in 25,000 refugees by the end of the year. They did not bring in 25,000 government-assisted refugees. They are not restoring mail delivery to homes in Canada. I could go on and on with the broken promises of the government, but we have a whole session to do that.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I read an interesting opinion piece in the paper a couple of days ago by Robin Sears. He said that one of the great facts of Canadian political life is that Liberals “always break progressive hearts”.

I did not come to this House to give myself a tax break, yet this bill is going to give me and everyone in this chamber \$679. That is not the middle class I was sent here to represent. It is not the middle class I came to fight for.

Our friend across the way from Winnipeg North likes to keep talking about the child benefit. Yes, it pays out a maximum of \$6,400. What he neglects to tell this House is that child care costs in British Columbia are double that, and there is a lack of affordable spaces.

I know my friend from Vancouver Kingsway is a great member of Parliament for his region, and I know that he has received feedback on this and many other Liberal bills. I would love to hear some of the feedback he has received from his constituents on the wrong direction the Liberal government is taking.

• (1255)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague, who is doing an outstanding job for his constituents on Vancouver Island, for that question, because it allows me to raise the very critical issue of child care.

The Liberals, in previous governments, promised Canadians a national child care plan. In fact, I have often, in this House, heard Liberals blame the New Democrats for the Liberals not bringing in a national child care plan. How that is the case when they had 13 years of majority governments to do so is beyond me, but I have heard that.

Here we are. The Liberal government is a majority government. I challenge the Liberal government to actually bring in a national child care plan that makes sure that every single parent in this country can drop off his or her children at a quality, accessible, affordable child care. Let us see if the government can produce that instead of bragging about throwing money at families that is not sufficient for them to actually take care of their children.

Government Orders

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back in the House. I hope everyone took the time this summer to reconnect with their constituents to find out what was happening in their ridings. I also hope they took a bit of time to enjoy our very short summers in Canada.

It is interesting that we are back here today debating Bill C-2. I noted an article yesterday in which it said that the Liberal government had the most unproductive Parliament in two decades in what it had managed to move forward with. Perhaps Bill C-2 is an example.

Bill C-2 was introduced in December of last year and we are now at third reading. That really illustrates the Liberals' inability to move what they say are important pieces of legislation through the House. However, I would rather have no legislation than bad legislation, which Bill C-2 is.

Because it has been so long, as a quick refresher, Bill C-2 contains a number of measures such as the change in the marginal tax rate, the TFSA reduction in limit, and of course some other things. There are general clean-up measures dealing with such things as charitable donation tax credits and income earned by trust, among others. Clearly what we will hear from the debate is that those clean-up measures are relatively uncontroversial. Really the issues around the marginal tax rate and the TFSAs are the most problematic.

Again today the debate has predominantly focused so far on the Liberals proudly proclaiming that their middle-class tax cut was a significant move forward. However, the Liberals really forgot to tell Canadians two very important things. One is that they never have clearly defined the middle class. I think most Canadians, as they listen to this, might be thinking that as the middle class, members of Parliament will see \$700 where people who earn \$23 an hour will see nothing.

I will be sharing my time, Mr. Speaker, with the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

We have a very poorly defined middle class, and I do not think many of us would really call members of Parliament middle class who are deserving of the biggest tax cut. As Conservatives, we certainly support tax cuts in whatever form, but the bigger problem is that tax cut and what it would actually do. The government had a big oops in its math. The Liberals went to Canadians and said they were going to give this tax cut and that it was going to be revenue neutral because they were going to increase taxes for higher income earners. That was the commitment and the promise the Liberals made to Canadians. Lo and behold, they are in government and it is "wow, we've made a really big math error in that particular calculation". That is an \$8.9 billion error that will be over six years. The mistake the Liberals have made is over \$1 billion a year.

We also had a commitment that they would have a \$10 billion deficit. It has gone to \$30 billion now. This is just one of the measures that has added to the deficit that will create problems into the future.

This is not a promise kept. This is a promise that has been broken to Canadians because it is not revenue neutral. It has been said in the past that debt is deferred taxes. For the \$600 or \$700 to someone

who earns \$160,000 a year, their children and grandchildren will have to pay. To be quite frank, the government is irresponsible to put that kind of debt and deficit on our children and grandchildren when it is not necessary. It is quite shameful.

● (1300)

The other piece I want to focus some comments on is the tax-free savings account. There really is no justification for the way the Liberals have structured their marginal tax reduction. They have reduced the ability to contribute to a tax-free savings account from \$10,000 down to \$5,000 plus a bit of change.

Let me talk about what the tax-free savings account is all about. This is from a Department of Finance document that looks at tax expenditures and evaluations.

It states:

Ensuring that the tax system provides meaningful incentives to save supports a more efficient allocation between current and future consumption. In particular, the accumulation of personal savings allows Canadians to improve their living standards and better align income and consumption when planning for important life events such as retirement [or purchasing a house]....[It is] increasing the funds available for capital investment, which leads to a higher capacity to produce goods and services.

The evidence from the program shows that Canadians have taken advantage of these tax-saving opportunities. It is a popular means of saving for Canadians of all ages. I would commend to anyone who is interested in the TFSA and its impact. This is an excellent document, and it certainly talks about the benefits.

What is the Liberals' argument with respect to why they had to reduce the tax-free savings account? They said that it was only benefiting the rich, that not everyone could put money into it and therefore it was not a good thing to do.

There are 440,000 GIS recipients who have put \$4.3 billion into their tax-free savings accounts. That gives us a really good example. I think anyone could imagine that living on old age security and the guaranteed income supplement is a challenge for any senior. However, let us say that there are seniors who have a house but really no major means of support. They then sell their houses and have tiny nest eggs that they can put into their tax-free savings accounts and have the interest that they make to support them during their retirement and very difficult times. Having that allocation is a very important mechanism for seniors putting a little from the sale of a house into a GIS, or young people in Vancouver or Toronto. Right now we know how difficult it is for young people to get into the housing market. Therefore, it is a real step backward and a real shame to see the measures the government has taken in that area.

Government Orders

The Liberals do not like allowing us the personal freedom to make choices about our own money. They want to enforce an increase in the Canada pension plan, which will not only enforce increased contributions from individuals but also employers. They like a plan that the government controls. For some reason they are adversely opposed to plans that Canadians control. Perhaps if people do not want to put extra money into the CPP, they see the TFSA as an opportunity to put money into their savings. Therefore, there is not a one size fits all.

I am very concerned that the government is showing a massive predisposition toward spending taxpayer money that it does not have, deficits, debt, and creating a one-size-fits-all government-run program that is not good for meeting the needs of Canadians in all of their diversities.

• (1305)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a natural question that should be asked when a Conservative member speaks to a tax-reducing legislation. We need to make it very clear that Bill C-2 does give tax relief to millions of Canadians. Traditionally, I would have thought the Conservatives would have supported a tax cut. The core of Bill C-2 is just that: a tax cut to Canada's hard-working middle class and those aspiring to be a part of the middle class.

Therefore, as a member of the Conservative Party, does she not believe she should be supporting tax cuts? I would have thought that would be a given. How does she justify to her constituents that she does not support them getting a tax break?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, that is a good point. We do support tax cuts in many forms, but we also put a high priority on a balanced budget. Again, debt is deferred taxes. Liberals are taking a tax cut now and moving it to future generations. Our government worked very hard to see Canada through the global recession and get back to balanced budgets. The Liberal government spent \$8 billion over the summer on gazebos and assorted items. It has miscalculated the money the tax cut would cost. Liberals have a huge spending problem and we need to be very concerned.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be taking part in this debate because I am worried about the working class. People work so hard, but, unfortunately, they still have trouble making ends meet.

The Liberal government is not really doing more for the middle class. Canadians earning \$31,000 per year, the median income, will not benefit from this tax cut, which is really for those earning between \$89,000 and \$200,000 per year. The people who are having the toughest time making ends meet are not the ones who are going to benefit the most from this tax cut.

It is sad to see this kind of measure from the Liberal government after it promised to work for the middle class and those who need it most. That is not what it is doing. We were also told the plan would be revenue neutral, but, unfortunately, revenue will drop.

Who will once again end up paying for this poor fiscal management?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, it is not very often that we agree with the NDP, but my colleague has some excellent questions. We talked earlier about the math problem the Liberals had with the execution of their middle-class tax cut being \$8.9 billion, over a billion dollars a year of math problems. They also have a definition problem. They have never been able to clearly articulate what the middle class is and why they are defining and giving the biggest benefit to those making between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year. I am sure most Canadians if asked if that were the middle class would clearly say this is not what they expected in tax cuts and in revenue neutral.

• (1310)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague clearly articulated how the Liberals are back to using gun registry math, where we had a \$2 million gun registry balloon to \$1 billion. That is a debate for another day seeing as how they are bringing that one back.

I would like my colleague to tell us how the reduction of the TFSA maximum amount from \$10,000 per year to \$5,500 a year is working against the middle class.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance has an excellent report on the uptake of Canadians and how the TFSA has been a very important vehicle for them. Again, whether it is for young people perhaps who want to save for their first home, whether it is people in the middle class who are looking to save toward retirement, the argument that because they cannot put \$10,000 a year in is not a good argument. There are some years where people can put in \$10,000. To have that limit has been a very important vehicle for all.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I thank the electors of my constituency for this opportunity to represent their interests in the affairs of this nation.

Today we will talk about paying for bad spending, like this legislation, Bill C-2. It is one of the reasons Canada has gone from having a budgetary surplus to having a huge requirement to raise taxes.

The legislation we have before us today is the result of election campaign promises. These measures could easily have been incorporated into the federal budget, but for whatever reason of political expediency that motivates the government, we are dealing with budget measures, but not from the March budget.

Government Orders

Some election promises are made to be broken. Unfortunately for Canadians, the election promises that were broken were the wrong ones, starting with a decision to triple the deficit from \$10 billion to \$30 billion in each of the government's first three years, with no plan to get Canada out of deficit. Deficits are nothing more than deferred taxes.

The Prime Minister went across the country during the campaign saying, we'll take the money from rich and we'll give it to the middle class for income tax cuts, and don't worry, it will not come out of the Treasury. It will be a revenue-neutral bill. The Prime Minister repeatedly and directly stated that he would introduce a \$3 billion tax cut for the middle class, paid for by a \$3 billion increase on high-income earners. The fact of the matter is that, as usual, the Liberals got their numbers completely wrong. There is no such thing as a revenue-neutral Liberal tax cut.

Now Canadians understand why the measures in the legislation before us today were sliced out of where they should have been, in the March 22 federal budget. That is because someone's tax cut on the one hand must be paid by someone else on the other hand, Canadians now realize that the title of the budget document was misnamed. It should really have read, "Paying for Bad Spending".

By the Minister of Finance's own admission, when he is not in denial of the fact that our Conservative government left the nation's finances in a budgetary surplus, there will be a revenue shortfall of almost \$2 billion from the measures contained in this legislation. Where will that money come from to pay for this campaign promise? It has to come from existing revenues, or the government will create an even larger tax increase requirement.

Starting April 1, the federal government is spending \$444.4 million to hire a new army of tax collectors to go after average Canadians, with a five-year quota of \$2.6 billion. For anyone who cannot afford to hire an expensive accountant or lawyer to defend themselves, or who has so much money that they can afford to use overseas tax shelters, the Liberal government will spend \$351.6 million with a five-year collection quota of \$7.4 billion to collect so-called tax debt. In round numbers, it will be spending almost \$800 million in total to squeeze \$10 billion more out of the pockets of Canadians.

The CBC tells us that Montreal-based clothing maker Gildan earned \$396 million in profit last year, but paid just over \$6 million in taxes, a rate of about 2%. Drug maker Valeant, based in nearby Laval, Quebec, booked \$1.1 billion in profit in 2014 but paid only \$110 million in tax.

If the plan was to go after companies that use overseas tax shelters to avoid paying their fair share of tax, Canadians would support that. However, rather than paying for the tax changes in Bill C-2 by going after the large corporations that make extensive use of lawyers, accountants, and tax shelters, the Liberal government has targeted campgrounds—not any campgrounds, just the small mom and pop campgrounds that are typically family owned and operated.

The Liberal government even mentioned a number, five employees, on page 220 of the budget, implying that a campground with fewer than five full-time employees is a tax planning scheme. This is the arbitrary Liberal threshold to be considered a small business.

Forget that many of these small campgrounds consist of a husband and wife doing all the work, or that the short camping season in Canada is only a season. Someone has to pay for the Liberal campaign promises.

This is what the executive director of a camping organization in Ontario had to say:

Camgrounds are active, labour-intensive recreational businesses that provide an affordable vacationing option for Canadian families and international visitors.

These recent Canada Revenue assessments not only put these small, mostly family-owned businesses at risk, but also sends a terrible signal to the entire industry just days before the 2016 camping season is about to begin...

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has stated that "Requiring five staff to qualify for the small business tax rate is deeply insulting to the entrepreneurs who are often a part of the daily operations of their businesses. It's called the small business tax rate. Being too small should not be a reason to exclude anyone." It is called paying for bad spending.

● (1315)

The Minister of Finance in his opening remarks regarding Bill C-2 stated the government consulted widely before introducing the measures in his legislation. He claimed to have asked Canadians directly how the government could support them and grow the economy. The Minister of Finance even claimed to have met people from all walks of life, including small business owners. He obviously skipped meeting with any small business entrepreneurs who operate family campgrounds.

As much as I know that the government likes to say it consults Canadians, here are a few comments from average Canadians on how they feel about the federal government going after small family-owned campgrounds to pay for its wild spending.

If a company with fewer than five employees is not a small company, then what is, besides campgrounds that are still reeling from having to charge property tax on seasonal trailers? Surely the CRA must have bigger fish to fry.

Government Orders

There is this comment: “I am not running a passive small business. I am running a business. One that I work seven days a week. My campground is host to campers from Germany, Holland, France, Switzerland and darn near every state and province in North America. Passive I am not. I am however the owner of a small business and I resent that you suggest otherwise in order to rob me or any campground of more tax dollars. I do not believe that small family-run businesses should pay more tax than billion-dollar corporate businesses. I, along with my family, have camped most of my life and I'd like to continue doing so.”

As tax collection targets of the Liberal government, imagine the shock of family campground owners when they receive collection letters telling them they no longer are considered small businesses and owe tens of thousands of dollars in reassessed taxes. A campground owner in southwestern Ontario recently received a collection letter stating that he owed \$250,000 in reassessed taxes. Another campground owner received a notice of assessment for 2013-14 showing that \$36,000 more in taxes was due, plus \$250 per month in interest charges alone. Campgrounds will be closing. This move to go after small businesses like family campgrounds is not unexpected.

The second campaign promise to be broken by the Liberal government after breaking the first by blowing the deficit sky-high was to renege on its promise to lower the small business tax rate. The Prime Minister demonstrated his contempt for small business by claiming that small businesses were nothing more than tax scams. He believes they are set up as a way to avoid paying taxes. That comment is an insult to the husband and wife team who work 60- to 70-hour weeks to manage a family campground during the short summer camping season. Camping is family time, getting kids off video games and out into nature and the great outdoors. The last affordable family vacation will now be taken away from Canadians.

Since I brought this change in taxation policy to the attention of the people who would be the most adversely affected by it, I am pleased to recognize the many individual campground owners, as well as the many municipalities, who have expressed their support for any action taken to rescind this unfair taxation.

We are supposed to be more active. What better way to be healthy than spending the day outdoors? Campgrounds are an escape for people who live in urban areas. Not everyone can afford a cottage. These businesses need to be recognized for what they are: small family run businesses. Small business is the backbone of our nation. Canada was built on appreciation for the great outdoors. The government should stop over-taxing and allow our kids to enjoy themselves in nature.

It is truly unfortunate that the first budget of the new regime should be so wrong for Canada. I urge the Liberal Party to really think about the harm it is doing to Canada with its policy of high deficits and raising taxes.

● (1320)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question continues from my previous one, which the member responded to by talking about deficits. The member seems to be convinced that the Liberal government intends to have

nothing but deficits when in fact the reality is that when the Conservatives took office, they inherited a healthy multi-billion surplus, and then ran deficits in every year since 2009. Until today the Harper government had a deficit, so it deferred.

Why does the member now believe that a deficit is bad when the Harper government itself created a \$160 billion plus deficit? It does not make sense.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, again, the Liberals are in denial. Our government left this country with a surplus at election time.

Because the Liberals like to consult so much, on climate change for example, and load up the meetings with their Liberal riding association members, is that another way to funnel money now? It used to be foundations during the Chrétien and Martin years, but now it is these organizations run by their electoral district associations. However, because they like to consult, I am going to provide more consultation from our campground owners.

One them says, “I have grown up with my parents running a family campground, run by my parents alone, with the occasional help of my sister and I. There is no 'one size fits all' but in our area, campgrounds are not investment opportunities, but instead a way for many families to make a living by offering those outside of the area a small piece of heaven.”

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier today we heard from the member for Winnipeg North. He accused the Conservatives of being completely out of touch with the middle class. The member expressed the opinion that the Conservatives did not do enough to tackle inequality during their term in government.

When we look at the tax break that is being proposed, we know that those who earn \$45,000 or less will get nothing, and those who earn between \$100,000 and \$200,000 will get the most. We know that even those who are earning between \$100,000 and \$200,000 need a break. Housing prices are going through the roof. However, Canadians are fair, and I do not think we will find a Canadian who earns between \$100,000 and \$200,000 who thinks it is fair that they will get a tax break and someone who earns less than \$45,000 will get nothing.

Does the member think that the middle-class tax break being proposed by the Liberals is fair? Would she support the New Democrats' call to include the bottom tax bracket in the Liberal middle-class tax break, or scrap it altogether and do something more productive like create a national child care plan?

Government Orders

● (1325)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, clearly the Conservative Party represents the taxpayers. We have to fight for tax cuts and against tax increases. One of those increases is the small business tax credit. The Liberals, instead of lowering the amount that we had in mind and pledged to do during the election, did not. That really amounts to a tax increase.

I want to share another comment from another campground:

...I support small family run campgrounds. Regardless of how many people they employ, the surrounding municipalities benefit greatly from all the campers they draw in from other areas to contribute to our local businesses and attractions. Many of the people hired to work at the campgrounds are returning college and university students who rely on these summer jobs to pay for their education.

They, as my colleague said, are in the lower-income bracket and need the work.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood. I rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-2, an act to amend the Income Tax Act.

This legislation slashes the contribution limit for the tax-free savings account from \$10,000 to \$5,500. The rationale behind this cut, as we have heard many times from the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, and other ministers is that the tax-free savings account is only for wealthy Canadians, and no one has an extra \$10,000 just lying around.

This rationale could not be further from the truth. Seniors are saving for their retirements, students are saving to pay for their educations, new parents are saving for their children, and young entrepreneurs are saving to start a business.

In my riding of South Surrey—White Rock, it is the seniors who will be hit the hardest by the legislation. Constituents in my riding overwhelmingly do not support this change. A report from the parliamentary budget officer back in 2015 stated that middle-income earners and Canadian seniors were benefiting the most from the tax-free savings account. This report also stated that raising the limit to \$10,000 would benefit middle-income earners and seniors even more in the long term. This is exactly what the Conservative government did. We raised the limit to \$10,000 to benefit seniors and the middle class.

However, I hear from the Liberal government that the tax-free savings account, again, only benefits the rich and therefore needs to be cut in half. It is the same thing with small business. We heard from the Liberal government that small business is only a tax haven for the rich. I cannot help but wonder where and how it is getting its information, because it is contrary to the parliamentary budget officer, contrary to experts in the banking industry, and frankly contrary to plain old common sense.

Let us talk about the so-called tax cut for the middle class. Again, we heard over and over again that the tax cut, which is also included in this bill, would be revenue neutral and would not cost Canadians anything. This statement is simply not true. The finance minister has since amended his comments and stated that his plan is not revenue neutral, and in fact it will cost Canadian taxpayers at least \$1 billion. However, in a report from the parliamentary budget officer, it is stated that the figure is \$1.7 billion.

Now we have gone from revenue neutral to costing the taxpayers \$1.7 billion. However, it gets even better for taxpayers and those who are losing their jobs. The Liberal government told taxpayers that for a tiny deficit of \$10 billion, infrastructure projects would be built and the economy would flourish. Again, that is not true.

From a balanced budget with a \$1-billion surplus, the condition that we left our finances in, as stated numerous times by the parliamentary budget officer, the Liberal government burned through the \$1 billion, racked up a \$30-billion deficit, and we are still waiting for the infrastructure projects.

The Liberals have decreased the ability for seniors, middle-class families, and students to save, and increased the debt burden on every Canadian through reckless spending, as well as removing the tax credits for post-secondary tuition, school textbooks, and for sports and arts programs for children. They also increased the contributions to the CPP, and \$6.7 billion has been spent or committed overseas. Just today, the Prime Minister announced over \$450 million to the UN. That raises the total to over \$7.1 billion.

● (1330)

Further to that, recently announced by the Prime Minister, an eight-month-old Asian infrastructure investment bank initiated by the Chinese government will see approximately 2.9 billion of Canadian taxpayer dollars for infrastructure built in Asia. It is important to note that all of these figures are only what is publicly being pledged. As we know, not all government spending is announced publicly.

There is only one question to ask: what tax increases will the Liberal government implement in order to pay off the debt? It will have to be paid off. I remind the government that there is only one taxpayer and it is not their money.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we talk about being out of touch with real Canadians and we see that demonstrated by yet another Conservative speaker.

On the one hand, the member is saying that seniors are going to be most negatively affected by this government, when in fact the most vulnerable of seniors, the ones receiving the guaranteed income supplement, are seeing a larger increase than the Harper government ever gave to seniors. If she was in touch with the seniors in her community and if Conservatives listened to what their communities were saying, they would hear that the Government of Canada is in fact addressing many of the needs of our seniors.

Government Orders

The member made reference again to the deficit. Does she not realize that the Conservative Harper government had over \$160 billion, more than the Chrétien and Martin governments. Only the Chrétien and Martin governments had balanced budgets.

Is she listening to her constituents?

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague well knows, there was a global recession and Canada fared extremely well as it went through that.

Also, the GIS absolutely helps seniors, but why give with one hand and take away with the other hand?

When we look at how financially prudent the Conservative government was and how our banking system was set up, Canada fared better and were at the top of most countries around the world. I think there needs to be more acknowledgement of the actual facts.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to bring it back to the fact that the NDP and the Conservatives seem to be agreeing on at least one thing in this debate, and that is the concern around the fact that this tax break we are hearing of is not revenue neutral and will create an \$8.9-billion deficit that will have to be paid back by all Canadians. The tax break we are hearing about is going to benefit wealthier Canadians.

The member's colleague who spoke previously mentioned the fact that there are many large profitable Canadian corporations that are getting off very lightly in terms of taxes. Canada has some of the smallest corporate income taxes in the world. I wonder if the member would comment on the NDP proposal to raise those corporate income taxes by 0.5%, which would help cover this shortfall and help real middle-class Canadians in their tax savings.

• (1335)

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, I think they need to go back to the drawing board. The Liberals have taken away tax credits for kids and added additional CPP contributions. They are all over the map on a number of things. There has to be a broad plan outlining exactly what it looks like, how much is being spent, how much is being borrowed, what the income is, and a plan to pay it back. It needs to be looked at broadly by people who actually know what they are doing.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my colleague just reminded me about first responders and how important it is that we recognize that when we talk about the middle class we are talking about factory shop workers, police, health care workers, and many different professions both in the private and public sectors. They all would benefit. Actually, they have benefited because this bill took effect in January of this year so they are all getting more money in their pockets.

Why would she oppose putting more money in the pockets of the types of individuals I just listed?

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, I guess the point is this. All of us support our first responders and all of us want to ensure they are well supported and well paid in the jobs they do. However, the Liberals' so-called tax cut would benefit everybody over \$100,000. Again, they have to look at it with some critical thinking and through a lens that makes sense, and certainly this does not make sense.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great opportunity today to speak to Bill C-2. Spend, spend, spend is what the government has as its agenda, and spend it did. In the last 94 days since we last sat in the House, the government has given out roughly \$8 billion. Canadians from coast to coast are realizing that the government's agenda will send our country into massive debt. Debt comes with a cost, and it appears that the well educated and those with high-paying jobs will pay the brunt of these budget announcements.

A poll released earlier this month shows that nearly half of all Canadians are draining their bank accounts between each two-week pay period. Many are adding to their debt levels, which as we know are very dangerous. There are four in ten Canadians who say that they spend it all between pay periods, so even a small increase in interest rates would spell disaster for many Canadian families. We have enjoyed record levels of low interest rates, but sooner or later they will go up. We are obviously not prepared for this. Live and spend for today, but tomorrow brings paybacks, and governments should always be aware of that.

We have talked long and hard about not spending our children's and grandchildren's future in this place, so then why are we doing it? We should be reminded about the economic policies of the Liberal government some 30 years ago, which increased taxes, debt, and bailouts. It took subsequent governments 30 years to recover from that reckless spending. Why is the current government repeating the same policies? It took a generation to recover from that.

To look back in history, it was our previous government that restored the pay increase to the middle class by an average of \$5,000 per year. Those living in Ontario appear to be far more pessimistic than the rest of the country as a whole. We should not be surprised about that, because it too is a Liberal government, and like the one in Ottawa, Liberals love to spend, spend, spend. Taxes will eventually have to be paid for down the road.

It has been an especially dark summer in my province of Saskatchewan. We have had many layoffs, shutdowns, and takeovers in the headlines of our major newspapers in the province. Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems laid off 150 Saskatoon employees in July. The company later said it is going to close the plant permanently and sell off all of the assets. In July, workers at Mosaic's Colonsay potash mine were told that the entire mine would be shut down until January 3, 2017. The company said it hoped to call back workers, but there is no guarantee. In late July, I drove by that mine in Colonsay, once hosting well over 200 to 300 stalls for parking, and there were five vehicles in the parking lot. It has affected the entire area, as businesses surrounding the Colonsay mine have been hit hard with the shutdown. Many were forced to cut hours or lay off staff.

Government Orders

The entire potash industry in this country is nervous, with the possible merger of Potash Corp. and Agrium that was announced earlier this month. Vecima, another company in Saskatoon, announced massive layoffs in July. The decline in the construction industry has hit our province especially hard. The largest decline in construction employment was in the Saskatoon metropolitan area where the employment for three months ending in August was 3,200 lower than it was the year before.

• (1340)

There were 42,000 unemployed in the province of Saskatchewan during August. That is an increase of 3,400 from the month before, and 5,200 more than the number of unemployed in August of 2015. EI recipients jumped 19% alone in the month of June.

Doug Elliott, who is the publisher of *Sask Trends Monitor*, said that people were unable to find work and simply stopped looking entirely. Let us think about this. The incentive to work among the current unemployment ranks is lost in our country.

Now we hear that the government will move forward on its carbon tax. Like it or not, we are going to have a carbon tax in our country. There was no agreement at all from the Vancouver meetings that were held in March, and we actually missed the September 2 deadline. Now, like it or not, we are going to have a carbon tax, because we were promised one. What happened to the collaboration that was promised by the government almost a year ago?

Employers are feeling the pressure in oil and gas producing provinces like mine in Saskatchewan, along with Alberta, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The budget did nothing to improve their situation at all. Once considered the backbone of Canadian economy, these provinces were left to fend for themselves with the current federal Liberal government.

I might add, changes coming to the CPP would add more cost to businesses at a time when they are scrambling in this weak economy, yet the federal government shows no mercy for business and the middle class. According to a new Ipsos survey conducted on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, eight of ten people want the government to consult with the public before going ahead with its CPP expansion plans. Therefore, if the CPP reforms mean that businesses freeze or even cut wages, employees will simply oppose these reforms. Working Canadians do not support changes to the CPP if it has the consequence of freezing or even diminishing their salaries at all. This makes sense, since we all know Canadians are feeling the pinch in this economy right now.

Today the Minister of Finance confirmed that the economy will create 1,050 fewer jobs per year over 10 years than would have been the case without the higher premiums. Changes to the Income Tax Act were, and continue to be, a major concern for entrepreneurs and professionals coast to coast. These are the people who are driving our economy. We know that our previous current government left the current government with a surplus. In the last 94 days alone, the federal Liberal government has gone through nearly \$8 billion of announcements, plus the \$1.3 billion spent outside of our country.

Our previous Conservative government believed that people needed to save for the future. The popular TFSAs were there for emergencies. This was visionary, as it promoted families to save for

the future. In times of uncertainty, like right now, they could withdraw from those TFSAs. In times of prosperity, they could save for the future. By saving now, it would take the burden off the federal government in future years. It could be used to redirect the money to other needed programs.

This summer, I knocked on hundreds of doors in my riding of Saskatoon—Grasswood, and we did a number of barbecues. I was constantly told by people how disappointed they are in the Liberal government. Many professionals said they would simply cut back their hours. Instead of serving the public like they do now for six and seven days a week, they will cut back their hours to three or four days a week. The incentive is gone, and that will make us all pay dearly in the end.

• (1345)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see you back in the chair and to see all the friendly faces back in the confines. I am happy to be back.

I am more than happy to help the member with his history lesson as he takes us down memory lane from deficits past. If we are going to reach back, I think we should reach all the way back.

Let us go back to 1984, when the Conservatives led by the Prime Minister Mulroney took over and inherited a national debt of \$120 billion. By the time he left in 1993, the national debt had gone up to \$560 billion. Enter Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin in 1993, who were able to take on the tough questions, balance the books, and have successive surplus budgets. They brought the national debt down to \$460 billion.

In came another Conservative government, and where did we end up? We ended up with \$612 billion of accrued national debt under the Conservatives.

I think we have to be fair with Canadians. Successive Conservative governments have collected this huge amount of national debt and the Liberals have come in try to fix the mess they were left with. I think that is probably where we are now. We are going to give relief to many Canadians and we are going to attack the deficit.

Does he not agree that again it is left to the Liberals to mop up the mess?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, first, they did not promise a \$30-billion deficit in their term; they promised a \$10-billion deficit. Now we know that they are three times over that.

However, if we look back at governments, let us look to the North American trade agreement that was brought in by a Conservative prime minister. My province has prospered because of that trade agreement. We can look back to 2008-09, where the Province of Ontario, because of the Conservative government at the time, was saved. We had a massive world crisis on our hands in 2008-09, as members know, and it was our government that saved the automobile industry.

Government Orders

• (1350)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the excellent speech by my friend in terms of our fiscal situation.

However, hearing the ridiculousness coming from the other side makes one's head spin. They completely ignore the existence of the financial crisis, and they forget that it was their party that every step of the way said we should be spending more. We made timely, targeted, and temporary investments in the economy, and it was their side, every step of the way, that said we should spend more. Now that they are in government, they are spending far more. They eliminated the balanced budget that we had, and now they are somehow presenting themselves as fiscal savers.

Would my friend please correct the record in terms of what was said about that?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, I am going to point out that in the last 94 days since we last sat in this place, \$8 billion has been pushed out by the Liberal government. How are the Liberals going to balance that? They agreed on a \$10-billion deficit. We know by the announcement alone that in three months or less they have blown this thing right out. Canadians are not fooled by this. We all spent the summer door-knocking, having barbecues, and talking to our constituents. They know that Bill C-2 will not survive.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to be back in the House of Commons, and it is wonderful to hear my colleague, the member for Cape Breton—Canso, long for the days of finance minister Paul Martin. It takes a lot for a blue-blooded Calgary Conservative like me to actually long for the days of finance minister Paul Martin, because this particular Liberal government is so far to the left of that.

The member for Cape Breton—Canso talks about history. I think he is longing for days long past because the Liberal government is actually making the leader of the NDP happy in his demands.

I wonder if my colleague would talk about the great irony of a Liberal government putting forward and talking about the merits of a balanced budget when it is mortgaging generations of Canadians' futures with this particular budget.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that we have seen the economy turn in three provinces: Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland. We have seen little or no response from the federal Liberal government. We know these three provinces carried Canada for decades. Because of the oil and gas situation, they are hurting right now and they are far from getting help from the government.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back, good to see you back in the chair, and good to see all of my colleagues here as well. I have limited time before we have to adjourn this debate so I will make my comments as brief as possible.

However, I have to at the outset correct the record again for my colleague, my friend from Cape Breton—Canso, who tried to imply that during the time of the previous government we recklessly ran up deficits and added to the national debt indiscriminately. Of course that is not true. We did so for one very good reason. We did it

grudgingly but it was necessary to spend money, particularly on infrastructure projects, during the time of the worldwide global recession.

Every country in the G20 agreed to that plan. We did so grudgingly, as I mentioned, but the one thing that stays with me, and my colleague and my friend who was opposite at the time would have to agree to this, is this. As we were preparing our budgets and as we were preparing to spend \$50 billion or \$60 billion on infrastructure projects to try to stimulate the economy, the complaints the member opposite and his colleagues in the Liberal benches had were that we were not spending enough. They and their colleagues in the NDP were on record day after day saying that we had to spend more. Now, the Liberals have the audacity to stand in their place and complain about the debt. This is typical Liberal hypocrisy. It is doublespeak. The Liberals have always in their terms of office spent first and tried to correct the record later. That is simply not the way we have done things when we were in government.

What is even more troubling to me is the fact that the Liberal government, beyond trying to be a revisionist history party, is reversing many of the initiatives we brought forward that are so incredibly popular and beneficial to Canadians.

I take for an example the TFSA. The tax-free savings account is the most important tax-saving initiative that we have seen in the country since the advent of the RRSP. It allowed Canadians to put after-tax money into an account where that money could accumulate tax free and then to withdraw the money tax free. It was unbelievably popular with Canadians. We had at the outset \$5,000 as a limit that Canadians could contribute to this account. We later increased that to \$10,000 and then to \$10,500. However, when the Liberals came to power, they said they would roll back the contribution limits to \$5,000. Their rationale was that the ordinary Canadian could not afford to put \$10,000 a year into an account so they ratcheted it back.

I just have one question. When has it become a bad thing to allow Canadians to save more money tax free? When has that become a bad thing? Apparently it has because the government says it is. Tens of millions of Canadians have maxed out on their TFSA contributions each and every year. Tens of millions more were looking forward to putting more money into a TFSA so they could withdraw the money when they wanted, to spend it on what they wished.

However, the government of course knows better than Canadians. The Liberals said sorry, that people could not put that money into a tax-free savings account because they wanted it to spend it. That is the tax-and-spend philosophy of the Liberals and it is something that most Canadians eventually, and hopefully sooner rather than later, will come to understand and realize once again that there is only one party in this place that truly protects the interests of the taxpayers, and that is the Conservative Party of Canada.

• (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the vote be deferred to the end of the time provided for government orders tomorrow, Tuesday, September 20.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly the deferred recorded division will be deferred until tomorrow, September 20, at the end of government orders.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

RICK HART

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer my community lost a champion with the untimely passing of Rick Hart on July 2.

Fleetwood is the geographic heart of my riding, and Rick was truly the heart of Fleetwood. As the neighbourhood association president, Rick worked tirelessly to preserve our past with parks and memorials. As the catalyst for our present, he helped bring about our marvellous sports and leisure facility, our library, and our community centre. As a visionary for Fleetwood's vibrant future, he worked with us, our city, and this government as we moved forward with Surrey's rapid transit expansion. He did a lot, and he was just getting started.

Rick's wife, Joy, said his favourite quote was "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

It was timely that just last May, Rick was honoured as Surrey's "Good Citizen of the Year".

Please join me to salute "Mr. Fleetwood", Rick Hart.

* * *

●(1400)

ALBERTA ECONOMY

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back. However, I wish I was back with better news.

In Alberta, our economy has been hit hard. This July, in my riding, we saw the highest unemployment rate since September

Statements by Members

1995. However, Alberta can and will bounce back, because we are a strong and resilient province.

What we do not need is a job-killing Liberal carbon tax. What we do not need are empty words from cabinet, which is more concerned about photo ops than helping the west. What we do not need is a Prime Minister telling us we should be thankful.

One thing is certain. The current government will not be able to ignore us on this side of the House. We will be the voice for struggling Albertans, and we will be relentless until we have a government that cares and has a plan for Alberta's economy.

* * *

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past June 28, Mississauga East was shaken by a massive house explosion that affected many residents of my community. I stand here today to support the unwavering resilience of the residents of Hickory Drive, Mississauga and the surrounding area.

As they still deal with the onerous hardships cast on their neighbourhood, let me acknowledge the work of Mayor Bonnie Crombie, city councillors, first responders, the fire officials, and their steadfast efforts to assist this neighbourhood.

To date, in an area formerly comprised of long-time residents and thriving vegetable gardens, many homes have been designated as unlivable. Many families are displaced, living with the uncertainty of when they can return home.

It was an honour this past Saturday to help host a community barbeque at the Burnhamthorpe Community Centre to assist those affected by this unfortunate event.

Let us give Hickory residents our heartfelt support as they await return to their homes.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2005, the B.C. Liberals promised British Columbians that all at-risk schools would be seismically upgraded by 2020. Yet, today, many B. C. schools remain at high risk of significant structural failure in the event of even a moderate earthquake. This broken promise means that every day the lives of thousands of children and staff are in jeopardy. This risk is compounded, because many schools are designated community meeting spots, meaning we are asking citizens to rush to unsafe buildings in case of a natural disaster.

Because of the shortage of funds for seismic upgrading, school boards across B.C. are being forced to close schools. Eleven are slated for closure in Vancouver alone, including Carleton, Graham Bruce, and Gladstone Secondary, quality schools whose closing will displace thousands of students.

Statements by Members

The federal government is responsible for public safety. The Prime Minister has retained the portfolio of youth. Today, I call on the Prime Minister to fulfill these responsibilities and immediately make federal funds available to seismically upgrade BC schools so every child can attend a neighbourhood school that is safe.

* * *

DELINE SELF-GOVERNMENT

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on September 1 the community of Deline on the shores of Great Bear Lake in my riding became the first community-based aboriginal public government. This agreement was 20 years in the making and will mean that the community can enact laws governing areas from municipal services to health and education. The people of this close-knit community will have more control over decisions that affect their lives.

I was honoured to attend their celebrations earlier this month both as the member of Parliament and on behalf of the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

I would like to congratulate the people of Deline on this historic agreement and wish Ekwatide Raymond Tutcho and other elected leaders of the new Deline Got'ine Government the best of luck with the hard work ahead in implementing the Deline final self-government agreement.

* * *

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Wednesday the House will vote on whether members of Parliament should protect Canadian taxpayers. We will vote on whether to study the means of creating a legally enforceable duty of care from the Canada Revenue Agency to taxpayers. We will vote on whether the Canada Revenue Agency is ultimately accountable to the public or vice-versa, on whether to place the interests of law-abiding taxpayers ahead of a powerful government agency, and on whether we, as elected members of Parliament, should demonstrate leadership in this field or merely sit back and wait for the courts. We will vote on Motion M-43 this Wednesday.

I encourage my hon. colleagues to get ahead of a judicial trend, recognize the need to study this area of accountability and taxpayer protection, and to take up their responsibility as legislators representing Canadians. I encourage them to join me in voting yes to Motion M-43 on Wednesday.

* * *

● (1405)

POLYCYSTIC KIDNEY DISEASE

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday in my riding of Pierrefonds—Dollard I took part in the walk for polycystic kidney disease, PKD. It was organized by Ms. Luisa Miniaci Di-Leo, the Montreal chapter coordinator of the PKD Foundation of Canada.

Polycystic kidney disease is a genetic disorder that causes multiple cysts to form on the kidneys, which in turn may cause a variety of

serious complications ranging from high blood pressure to kidney failure.

[*Translation*]

PKD is a genetic, potentially fatal disease. It is one of the most common hereditary diseases, and it affects thousands of Canadians. This disease is linked to about 5% of individuals who require dialysis or a kidney transplant.

The PKD Foundation of Canada was created in 1993 and has since expanded. Thanks to that foundation, treatments for PKD are truly and finally within reach.

* * *

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I toured all over Quebec this summer in order to meet with farmers in every region.

I came across some inspiring and very hard-working people. They are the artisans to whom we owe the delicious meals we shared with family and friends over the summer. Unfortunately, these people cannot enjoy their work because the government has abandoned them.

The issue of diafiltered milk clearly shows the federal government's lack of interest in our farmers and the regions. Those dairy producers that have not yet thrown in the towel are losing thousands of dollars a month. Morale is very low out there. Our farmers are being forced to resort to farm outreach workers, respite houses, and so on. It is extremely troubling.

I would like to take this first opportunity to speak in the House to send the following message to the people I met: Do not give up. The Bloc Québécois will not give up on you. We will take care of you. We will be vigilant and we will hold this government to account.

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[*English*]**2016 PARALYMPIC GAMES**

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, fairness, respect, self-discipline, inspiration, the pursuit of excellence, these qualities, the hallmarks of the Paralympic movement, shone brightly in all of Canada's athletes at the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games.

We are thrilled by Canada's team and I am honoured by this opportunity to congratulate equestrian Robyn Andrews and wheelchair basketball team member Liam Hickey, both from St. John's, as well as Katarina Roxon from Kippens on the west coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

[*Translation*]

Katarina just won a gold medal in the 100 metre breaststroke. We hope to see her name prominently displayed across the province, just as it has been etched in the minds of a new generation of young athletes.

[*English*]

Congratulations to all of our Paralympians. Their excellence and determination inspire all of us.

*Statements by Members***OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is nowhere else in Canada that has been devastated as hard by the energy downturn as Alberta and my riding of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. We have seen our population decline in record numbers, even greater than the Liberals' national energy program in the 1980s. Hotels that were once busting at the seams are now empty.

However, it is not just Fort McMurray. All of the smaller towns in my riding are reeling. They have also seen their business sales decline as high as 70%. A record number of families have left. They have lost faith in the Liberal government's commitment to get pipelines built. With an oil tanker ban on the west coast, more environmental regulations, and the undefinable term of social licence, the prospects of employment in the oil sector are at historical lows.

It is time for the Liberal government to stop playing political games and commit to building pipelines and getting Canadians back to work.

* * *

[Translation]

MAURIL BÉLANGER

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I address you today to remember our parliamentary colleague and friend, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, Mauril Bélanger.

Regardless of our party or political convictions, in August, this House lost a proud and loyal Canadian. Mauril championed countless causes. He carried the flag of la Francophonie with pride and courage. He worked tirelessly for his constituents. The memory of his accomplishments and his dedication will always be an example to us all as parliamentarians, and also as colleagues in this House. May his passion provide us strength in our grief.

Goodbye, friend, and thank you for everything.

* * *

●(1410)

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the House of Commons, I rise to extend all of our heartfelt sympathies to the victims of the explosion in New York on Saturday, as well as the victims of the mall stabbings in Minnesota. We wish them all speedy recoveries. These incidents, as well as the two in New Jersey, are concerning for all of us.

I want to commend the tremendous work done by first responders, who are always willing to put themselves in danger at times like these. It is a testament to their good efforts that no lives were lost in these terrible events.

[Translation]

As the investigations continue, I want to assure all Canadians that our law enforcement agencies are working in close co-operation with

their U.S. counterparts to provide any assistance they can to ensure public safety. Our agencies remain vigilant 24 hours a day to protect the safety and security of Canadians.

* * *

[English]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a recent Canadian Federation of Independent Business survey says over one-third of Canadian workers know that the Liberals' scheme to raise CPP premiums will reduce their ability to spend on essential household goods and services. Two-thirds of small business owners say they will face pressure to freeze or cut workers' salaries. Only 18% of employed Canadians and 5% of small business owners think mandatory increases in CPP contributions will help Canadians save more for retirement.

The Liberals refuse to listen to Canadian workers and Canadian businesses and stand up for their interests. Canadian small business owners and employees both prefer RRSPs, tax-free savings accounts, and other personal investments to payroll tax increases such as the CPP premium tax hike. It is a shame that the Liberals are determined to mandate payroll tax increases, especially during the current difficult economic times.

* * *

MISSISSAUGA—ERIN MILLS

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spent this summer being amazed and astonished by how versatile, diverse, inclusive, and engaged the residents of Mississauga—Erin Mills are.

Over the summer, together, we talked about important national issues such as immigration, electoral reform, climate change, and opening our arms to refugees. Together, over 2,000 residents of our beautiful riding came together and celebrated our community at our first annual barbecue.

The inclusiveness of Mississaugans is reflected yet again as they gather today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at in Canada. Congratulations.

I stand up today to recognize the remarkable people of Mississauga—Erin Mills, and with renewed energy, I vow to do my part to bring effective representation for all of them to this place.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada's emissions keep climbing, year after year, and the Liberal government has yet to explain how its plan will break this trend and live up to our international obligations to combat climate change.

Furthermore, Canadians learned yesterday that the Liberal government, which was granted power on promises of change, will be keeping the same Harper government's emission targets in place.

Oral Questions

Last month, I hosted a well-attended town hall on climate change in my riding. There was a passion and a hunger for real change on carbon emissions, and I am not referring to a political slogan turned into a hashtag for social media.

The Conservative record on climate change was abysmal and seeing the Liberals go down that same path will never be acceptable to Canadians. Every MP in the House, especially those who serve as ministers, owes it to our next generation to effectively address this greatest challenge of the 21st century.

* * *

● (1415)

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Lakeland residents want to know why the Liberals do not seem to care about the 110,000 Canadians who have lost their jobs in the energy sector, Canada's largest private investor, which contributes \$17 billion annually to government programs and services across Canada.

Canadians are struggling to pay their bills and to keep their homes. Pipelines are a private sector solution and create well-paying jobs. Pipelines ensure the future of Canada's world-leading responsible energy development. Canadians expect their Prime Minister to be a champion for the best interests of all of Canada, oil and gas workers in western provinces, assembly line workers in Ontario, manufacturers in Quebec, refinery workers Atlantic Canada, and hard-working Canadians and small businesses in all the other sectors that depend on energy.

Tomorrow, I will present the most-signed Canadian e-petition, which calls for supporting new pipelines across Canada and the hundreds of thousands of employed and unemployed oil workers. I hope the Prime Minister will be listening.

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TERRY FOX

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at 18 he was a student, at 19 he was a cancer patient, and at 21 he was a hero, Terry Fox.

After losing his leg to osteogenic sarcoma, he embarked on a cross-country marathon of hope to raise money for cancer research. When Terry's cancer returned, Canadians took over, and today the Terry Fox Run is the largest single-day cancer fundraiser in the world.

Before he died, Terry said, "Even if I don't finish, we need others to continue." Yesterday Canadians and millions around the world participated in the 36th annual Terry Fox Run. As an organizer of Oakville's Terry Fox Run, I joined over 900 residents to honour Terry, who said, "Dreams are made possible if you try".

Thanks to the Terry Fox Foundation, all MPs are Terry Foxers today with a pin to show our support for his legacy. Thanks to Terry for continuing to inspire us.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, common-sense Canadians know that when we borrow money, we have to pay it back. The Liberals have borrowed a lot of money, and guess who is paying it back? Canadians. They have raised taxes on families and on small business, and now they are forcing through a carbon tax hike and a CPP tax hike that will cost many Canadian families thousands of dollars a year. At the end of the day, how much more money are they going to take from hard-working Canadians?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned about the challenges facing middle-class Canadians. That is exactly the reason we decided to lower taxes on nine million middle-class Canadians. That is exactly the reason we introduced the Canada child benefit, which will help nine out of ten families with children to have more money to raise their children. We know that those things are going to make Canadian families better off today, and we are making investments for tomorrow so we can have a more productive and efficient economy for our children and our grandchildren.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our priority is to be here to fight for hard-working Canadians, but they are clearly not a priority for the Prime Minister. Thousands of Canadians were laid off this summer, household debt is at an all-time high, and Canadians do not believe that the Prime Minister can manage the economy. Canadians are worried about their future and jobs are not being created, so what is his answer?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the challenges facing middle-class Canadians are real. That is in fact why they elected us. They realized that making investments for the future is the answer, not austerity. What we have said to Canadians is that we are going to take what is the best balance sheet among the G7 countries and are going to make investments in their future. We are going to make sure that we find a way to have the next generation of Canadians better off than the last one. That is the commitment we make to Canadians today.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a romantic notion about peace-keeping that simply does not match up to reality. This is 2016, not 1956. Increasingly, there is no peace to keep. The conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa are dangerous. Even Roméo Dallaire agrees that a mission there will be deadly.

Oral Questions

Does the Prime Minister understand this is not a peacekeeping mission but rather a dangerous deployment that will risk Canadian lives, and does he think it is worth it?

• (1420)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we fully understand the complexity of peace operations, but we cannot be an island of stability in an ocean of turmoil. Canada needs to do its part. This is why I took retired lieutenant-general Roméo Dallaire with me on my five-country trip to Africa, to learn about the complexities.

We are taking a whole-of-government approach to this. We are going to make a thorough effort before we put all the facts together and before we have a thorough debate on this.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the most difficult and important decision that any government can make is to deploy our Canadian Forces in a war zone. Canadians must be able to trust that these decisions are made in our national interest, not the political interest of the Liberal Party. Sending our troops on a dangerous African mission appears to be about a purely political goal—getting a UN Security Council seat. However, our troops are not pawns on a political chessboard. Why has the Prime Minister decided that this is the best way to win over his friends at the UN?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians rejected this type of pessimism in the last federal election. They voted for a party that promised to re-engage Canada in the world and a government that would be committed to actively contributing to greater security and peace in the world. Over the last 10 months, under the leadership of our Prime Minister and our government, we have had the support of the United Nations on climate change, gender equality, in welcoming Syrian refugees, fighting disease, and investing in peace support operations as well. This will be a whole-of-government effort.

[Translation]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2014, the Prime Minister had this to say about the deployment of troops to fight ISIS, “Canadians expect the highest standard of openness and honesty from a leader who wants to send our forces to war.”

He asked the government to allow the House of Commons to debate and vote on the issue, and that is what the previous government did.

Will the Prime Minister walk the talk and allow debate and a vote in the House?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to actively contributing to greater security and peace in the world, and we welcome a healthy debate both in the House and with Canadians. During my consultations with the defence policy review, we heard from Canadians, and peace operations was at the top there. Members should keep in mind that peace operations are just one small part. We have to look at conflict mediation, conflict prevention, and construction as well. I have to state over and over again that this

will be a whole-of-government effort, not just strictly peace operations.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a leopard cannot change its spots.

The Liberals promised real change for health care, but today they are resorting to their favourite strategy from the past, a good fight with Quebec.

Instead of attacking Quebec on a file the province has already taken care of, will the government deal with the underlying problem of the \$36 billion in cuts made by Stephen Harper?

[English]

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the great pleasure of working collaboratively with my colleagues in the provinces and territories since the time I became minister of health. I have enjoyed many good conversations with my colleagues across the country. We have talked about our shared priorities and where we want to invest in health.

There will be no cuts to health. We will continue to increase the Canada health transfer, as previously discussed, and we will discuss other areas where there can be investments made that are important to Canadians.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister has just confirmed that they are in fact continuing with the cuts imposed by Stephen Harper. Those reductions are going to hurt health services in all of those provinces and territories she just referred to.

Canadians were promised a change from the Conservative government's approach on health care, but now the Liberals are admitting that they are going to continue with those cuts. Could the minister explain to us how following the Conservative cuts in health care somehow constitutes real change in Canada?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to talk about why our approach to health care does constitute real change. We are investing. The Canada health transfer this year is the largest ever, to the tune of \$36.1 billion. It will go up accordingly next year, according to plan.

However, what Canadians want are investments in innovation. Canadians know that while our health care system is something we are proud of, it could be better. We are going to talk with our colleagues in the provinces and territories about where those investments should be made and what Canadians can expect.

Oral Questions

●(1425)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when she says it is going according to plan, what she is actually saying is it is going according to the Conservative plan.

As the Prime Minister talks to our allies today about the role of our country on the world stage, we are again reminded that actions speak louder than words. Despite the words about peace, just last month in Geneva the government actually voted against nuclear disarmament. Real leadership means acting in the interests of peace, not just talking about it.

Will the Liberal government reverse this shameful position and vote in favour of nuclear disarmament at the UN General Assembly next week?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the most effective way to reach a nuclear-free world is with a pragmatic step-by-step approach. We need to have a strategy of engagement. We will be at the table in Geneva and again in Japan with our G7 allies, working together for the elimination of nuclear weapons. We will continue to be present with our allies.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on this step-by-step approach, let us suggest that one of those steps should be actually voting for nuclear disarmament.

[Translation]

I was in Paris with the Prime Minister when he promised to take action on the crucial climate change file. This is the most important commitment for future generations.

Apparently, instead of keeping its promise, the Liberal government is going to ratify the Paris agreement with the same targets and deadlines set by Stephen Harper.

Does the minister believe that this is what constitutes change, the Conservative plan handed to us by the Liberals with a smile?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are ready to take action on climate change. I spent the summer talking with my counterparts all across the country.

[English]

However, let us be clear, the Harper targets were fake targets. When one puts out targets and does not have a plan to meet them and emissions go up—and we have been very transparent about how the emissions have gone up—it is hard to meet them.

What Canadians expect is real action, and we are going to deliver real action with the provinces and territories, with indigenous leaders, with business, with youth, with all Canadians, because that is what we are committed to doing.

*[Translation]***FINANCE**

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the last fiscal year, this government turned a large operating surplus into a deficit. The current government is spending non-stop.

The government does not have a plan for returning to a balanced budget. The Minister of Finance is talking about a plan for the future that involves making our grandchildren pay off his debt. That is his plan for the future.

When will the government present its plan for returning to a balanced budget?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canada's middle class is struggling and that investments are needed immediately.

We began by implementing programs that will help the middle class right now, such as the middle-class tax cut and the Canada child benefit, which will help nine out of 10 families.

It is important for our future that we make investments and stimulate growth, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

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SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, another area that is very important for our country's economy is the softwood lumber industry. In fact, 400,000 jobs depend on it.

In 2006, we rectified a situation. People waited 10 years for the former Liberal government to find a solution to the problem, and we are the ones who solved it. Since then, Canadian businesses have been able to export their products to the United States with relative ease.

The government made big promises, including a good relationship with the United States. Meanwhile, the Minister of International Trade has said that Canada will turn to the courts. What a great idea. Let us take our American partners to court rather than coming to an agreement with them.

Why are the Liberals unable to settle this matter with the Americans through negotiations?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this issue is a priority for us and the opposition knows that.

We are in the midst of serious negotiations on this issue. There is unprecedented co-operation with producers, industry workers, and the provinces and territories. Last week, the minister met with the U.S. trade representative, Mike Froman, in Washington.

We do not want to reach just any old deal. We want a good deal for Canada.

*Oral Questions**[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have now confirmed that they are planning to impose a made-in-Ottawa carbon tax on all Canadians, no matter where they live and no matter if their province already has a carbon tax.

British Columbia already has a carbon tax, but the Liberals in Ottawa are indicating that it might not be high enough to kill jobs, and it might not take enough money out of the pockets of hard-working British Columbians.

Why are the Liberals in Ottawa threatening to force the government of B.C. to raise taxes on British Columbians?

• (1430)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that the environment and the economy go together. Right now, 80% of Canadians live in a jurisdiction where there is a price on carbon: B. C. and Alberta have a carbon tax; Ontario and Quebec have a cap and trade system.

We understand that carbon pricing is the most efficient way to reduce emissions and to foster innovation.

I am very proud that 25 Canadian companies have joined on to our carbon pricing leadership coalition calling for a price on carbon, because they know it is the way forward to innovate and to grow our economy.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister does not seem to understand that 110,000 energy workers have lost their jobs.

B.C. is home to a developing LNG sector, where tens of thousands of jobs are riding on the investment decisions of LNG companies.

When Liberals in Ottawa threaten to increase carbon taxes on B.C. employers, they threaten billions of dollars of investment in the economy, money that would pay for hospitals and schools and would provide thousands of family-supporting jobs.

Why are the Liberals so intent on threatening British Columbia families with their made-in-Ottawa, job-killing carbon tax?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite might not understand that B.C. has a carbon tax, and it is revenue neutral, so B.C. actually returns the revenues to its citizens.

The energy companies are actually with us. Let me quote from Suncor CEO Steve Williams:

We think climate change is happening. We think a broad-based carbon price is the right answer.

CEO of Dutch Shell, Total, and four other major energy companies:

We firmly believe that carbon pricing will discourage high carbon options.... We now need governments around the world to provide us with this framework....

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, maybe that minister is listening to CEOs, but she needs to start listening to premiers of provinces like Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, and the territories, who have been clear. They do not want a carbon

tax, because they know that Canadians, particularly rural and northern Canadians, cannot afford it.

Why is the government ignoring the provinces and imposing a carbon tax that will hurt the economy, hurt Canadians, and do nothing for jobs?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the party opposite, we understand that the environment and the economy go together.

Since I was elected, I have spent time criss-crossing the country, meeting with all provinces, all territories, meeting with labour leaders, meeting with indigenous leaders, meeting with Canadians, and meeting with business.

Canadians expect us to act on climate change, because we are the first generation to feel the impact, and we are the only generation that can actually change things.

We are going to move forward with our plan, because we understand that it is the right thing to do to tackle climate change and grow our economy.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that minister clearly has not been talking to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians in the energy sector whose jobs have been lost. She is not listening to the provinces that do not want a carbon tax.

A carbon tax will kill jobs, and it is an imposition of Ottawa on the provinces. Why are the Liberals ignoring not only what the premiers are saying but what rural and remote Canadians are saying? They do not want a carbon tax. It is going to kill jobs. The Liberals need to listen to people outside of the city of Ottawa.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have spent the last eight months criss-crossing the country speaking with labour, speaking with business leaders, speaking with indigenous Canadians, speaking with everyone who would like to actually move forward on climate change. We have had discussions. I met with my territorial counterparts. They are concerned about the impact of carbon pricing, and we are having a good discussion with them.

The bottom line is that right now, 80% of Canadians live in a jurisdiction where, through the leadership of the province, because there was inaction by the Conservative government, there is a price on carbon. We are going to move forward in a thoughtful way, working with provinces and territories—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government was elected with a promise to build a new nation-to-nation relationship, so why is it still discriminating against first nations children?

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found the government guilty of discrimination, but it is still failing to comply with the tribunal's order.

My question is simple: how can the Prime Minister, the Minister of Youth, justify systematic discrimination against indigenous children in 2016?

• (1435)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is committed to reviewing child and family services on reserves and partnering with first nations to reform those services. We are working with first nations communities, key organizations, front-line service providers and other stakeholders to create better systems that will reduce the number of children placed and ensure a truly child-centred approach.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the current government has ignored two compliance orders by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to end systemic racist discrimination against indigenous children. That Minister of Health was asked to end the systemic denials of emergency orthodontic surgery that run at denial rates of 99%. Instead, she has decided to spend more money fighting these families in court than the surgeries would cost.

We are talking about a moral and legal obligation to children. Can the minister explain why she would rather spend the money on lawyers than on responding to the emergency needs of indigenous children who are being denied their rights?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite is well aware, we do have a non-insured health benefits program that is available to first nations and Inuit families. These features of care are provided on the basis of medically necessary needs, including, of course, orthodontic care.

I am pleased that the member continues to work with us to seek ways that the program can be improved, as all good programs can be. We will find ways to make sure that the care is there for the people who need it.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Jason Kenney (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is intent on imposing job-killing carbon taxes on the provinces. Its message is, "Either you do this, or we will force you to". So much for sunny ways.

Carbon taxes raise the price of everything, from filling up the gas tank to buying groceries to heating homes, and they kill jobs. Why is the current government so intent on raising the price of everything and killing jobs through its carbon tax?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 80% of Canadians live in a jurisdiction where there is a price on carbon. I am very proud of the leadership of the Alberta government that brought in a price on carbon, because it recognizes that it is the best way to reduce pollution and also to foster innovation. That is why we have energy companies that are saying, "Please, put a price on carbon, because we will innovate, we will create good jobs, and we will position ourselves for the future".

Hon. Jason Kenney (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the only people the minister is consulting in Alberta are NDP politicians, who did not even mention a carbon tax in their election campaign. We are going through the toughest recession we have had in decades, and the worst possible thing is to hike prices and impose new taxes on everything.

Brad Wall understands that. He is opposed to the current government's top-down, do-it-or-else approach to federalism.

Will the current government stop killing jobs and making a bad situation worse in Alberta? Will the Liberals stop their carbon tax plan?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will continue talking with the provinces and territories, with business leaders, with indigenous leaders, and with labour, including labour groups in Alberta, because we know we need to tackle climate change, and we need to grow our economy.

I am very surprised by the member opposite, who I thought would believe in free market economics and would understand that carbon pricing is a market mechanism that is the best way to reduce carbon pollution and innovate, but perhaps he does not believe in climate change, and that might be the problem.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are declaring all-out war on the provinces that do not want to go along with their carbon tax scheme. They are not even willing to do their own work. Yesterday we saw paid PMO officials attacking Brad Wall, the most popular premier in Canada.

Is this the best the Liberals can do on climate change, using unelected staff to attack a premier for defending his province's interests?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud that we are working with all provinces and territories to reduce emissions and also grow our economy.

All of the premiers stepped up with the Prime Minister in the Vancouver declaration and said that they were committed to meeting our international obligations, so that is what we are doing. We are going to continue working with the provinces and territories so that we have a credible plan, so we reduce our emissions, so we grow our economy, and we make a better world for our kids.

• (1440)

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are threatening the provinces and Canadians with new climate taxes. The Liberals have been clear: they do not get things their way, they are just going to slap on more taxes, including fuel taxes. Higher fuel taxes punish rural Canadians and agriculture more than anyone else.

This is the start of Canadians paying more for everything. Why are the Liberals so viciously targeting rural people and agriculture with their new climate taxation fixation?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have not thought of a good rhyme yet, but I will try.

We are committed to taking action on climate change. We recognize that it is the thing we need to do. Take the example of B.C. It has a carbon tax. It is revenue neutral; it gives money back to the consumers. But what does it do? It is a market mechanism that reduces what we do not want. We do not want carbon pollution; we want less, so we innovate, businesses innovate, and we position ourselves for a cleaner future, because we want to create good jobs and we want to grow the economy.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this morning we learned of allegations that implicate both CSIS and the RCMP in the report of three Canadians being tortured in Syria between 2001 and 2004. Seemingly even the Canadian ambassador was involved. These are very serious allegations against two of our security agencies and the reputation of our country.

How does the government explain these troubling allegations, and is it going to investigate?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the allegations, to a very large extent, have been examined by two very important commissions, Iacobucci and O'Connor. Those commissions made important recommendations. Some of those recommendations have been implemented.

One key one was not implemented by the previous government, and that was the need for a parliamentary mechanism to provide review and scrutiny of all of the security and police agencies and all of their activities in Canada. We have introduced legislation to do exactly that in Bill C-22, and we look forward to that legislation being passed expeditiously.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a number of reports have revealed massive problems with Canada's arms exports program. We already know that Canadian weapons exported to Saudi Arabia have been used in Yemen.

Now we learn that weapons manufactured by Streit Group have been sold to countries like Libya and Sudan, despite Canadian sanctions. The Liberals have already rejected our proposal to create a parliamentary committee to study arms exports.

Will the Liberals reconsider their position and give parliamentarians the right to look—

The Speaker: The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[English]

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to strengthening Canada's export controls, something the former government failed to do. We will provide more rigour and transparency. We are acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty. Currently we are consulting with NGOs and industry and look forward to input from our parliamentary colleagues at committee and in the House as we bring the legislation forward.

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[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians suffer from arthritis, a disease that affects seniors in particular.

With that in mind, what measures are this government and the Minister of Health taking to help arthritis sufferers and prevent new cases?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Arthritis is a disease that affects too many Canadians. Those who have it face a variety of difficult symptoms. We are continuing to invest \$46 million in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to learn more about chronic inflammation and develop better prevention and treatment options.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when our troops are deployed on dangerous missions Canadians deserve to know the details. The Prime Minister missed another opportunity to be open and transparent with Canadians. Rather than tabling his African mission in the House, the Prime Minister went to the UN instead. The Prime Minister is playing political games in hopes of getting a seat on the UN Security Council and is shamefully using our troops as pawns.

Oral Questions

Will the Prime Minister start respecting Parliament and bring this dangerous UN mission to the House for a full debate and a vote, yes or no?

• (1445)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been transparent right from the beginning. In my mandate letter, it is clearly stated we will be involved with peace operations. When I went on my fact-finding mission, I tried to make all my observations known. As we get more information, I look forward to having a healthy debate.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): What about the vote, Mr. Speaker?

This summer, the Minister of National Defence admitted peacekeeping no longer exists, yet in the Speech from the Throne, the Liberals promised to “renew Canada’s commitment to United Nations peacekeeping”. However, distinguished General Roméo Dallaire has said that there will be more Canadian casualties on the sub-Saharan mission.

Will the Prime Minister admit that he misled Canadians by promising to do peacekeeping when he knew that our troops would be placed in harm’s way on the UN mission in Africa?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians, and the world, are proud of the great work that all our men and women in uniform have done on operations with the United Nations and NATO and on all of the missions that have been done all over the world. We can be very proud of the work we will do. However, we cannot put the cart before the horse. We are doing our due diligence to get all the necessary information and when we do, we will make sure that we present it to Canadians and to the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence had to go to Africa to find out that peacekeeping no longer exists. The losses suffered by the peacekeepers should be a clear indication that we are talking about an extremely dangerous mission. General Roméo Dallaire has said that the risk of casualties is far greater than before. Our soldiers will be standing targets.

Will the government be open and hold a debate and a vote on this matter here in Parliament instead of at the UN?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am no stranger to conflict. One of the reasons I wanted to actually get on the ground was that I like to get into the countries and find out for myself. That was one of the reasons I took retired General Roméo Dallaire and Madam Justice Louise Arbour with me, to get a full perspective and to get the interpretation from their own minds while we were actually talking to the leadership of those countries, talking to the international organizations. However, a lot of work needs to be done. We have a whole-of-government effort we want to bring to the table, plus we want to bring the whole of government from other countries, ensuring that we make a meaningful contribution to the world.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Parliament needs to know what type of high-risk mission the government is committing Canadians to.

The Liberals are getting ready to send our soldiers to danger zones and claiming that it is a peacekeeping mission. Our soldiers will be standing targets of armed factions whose sole objective is to kill foreign nationals on their land, as Roméo Dallaire has said.

In light of that fact, will the government hold a debate and a vote on this matter in Parliament or not?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, conflicts in Africa are extremely complex. We need to ensure there is an appropriate mandate in place and ensure that contributing nations also fulfill those mandates. A lot of work needs to be done. We need to make sure that all the efforts from the international organizations, the United Nations, and all the other agencies there are also contributing well. When we have all the information, we will present it to Canadians and to the House for debate.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, have Canadians heard correctly that it is Canada that is now backtracking on its international climate promises? The Liberals criticized the Harper government on its climate targets as totally inadequate, and they were right. In their platform, the Liberals promised to “establish national emissions-reduction targets”. Then, in Paris, they committed to doing better than the previous government.

Why is the government now breaking its promise to the world and to future generations of Canadians? Why is it backtracking?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to working with the provinces and territories to meet our international obligations. We are working very hard to understand the challenges and opportunities in different provinces and territories, and we are going to come forward with a plan.

Let us be clear about the Harper target. The Harper government had absolutely no plan to reach the target. It did not care. It had a target out there, with no actions. That is not what we are going to do. We are going to come with concrete actions that are going to tackle our emissions and grow our economy in a thoughtful way.

•(1450)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, travellers who use the Pierre Elliott Trudeau international airport are furious. The waiting time to clear Canadian customs is simply unacceptable. Since April 1, passengers in Montreal have been three times more likely than passengers in Toronto to wait more than one hour while staring at empty booths.

This is a simple question: will the minister fix the problem quickly or call for another study in order to buy some time?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly acknowledge that the waiting times are unacceptable.

We know that tourism and the arrival of passengers from foreign countries are extremely important for Montreal and we are pleased to see the increased traffic. However, we must absolutely reduce these waiting times. It is important to go through security, but the waiting times need to be reduced.

That is why I am working with my colleague, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, to find a solution to this problem.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals recently stated that their government plans to use TV ads to promote their electoral reform campaign. Given the Liberal Party's history with the sponsorship of ad campaigns, there are a lot of questions and Canadians deserve the answers.

Liberals have alluded to the fact that they will be working with third parties to create these ads. Who are these third parties? Are they taxpayer funded and what are their connections to the Liberal Party?

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are no plans for television advertising. Certainly, what we do want to do is to engage Canadians on a pan-Canadian basis. I am very proud that more than 140 members of Parliament on this side of the House have either had, or will have in a very short while, town halls. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have had three. I am having that many on Sunday.

If we are going to purport to listen to Canadians, let us actually engage them.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is pretty clear the Liberals already have an outcome in mind and it is one that will only benefit Liberal politicians. First the Liberals charged entry into their town halls, then the justice minister turned away over 30 people from her meeting, and now the Liberals are making shady deals with third parties to make sunny ways electoral ads, despite the claims we are hearing today.

It has become abundantly clear this is not about Canadians; it is about Liberal politicians and their friends. Why are the Liberals

Oral Questions

rewarding their friends with advertising dollars instead of giving Canadians a say in a referendum?

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative critic for democratic reform has himself said that first past the post is not the best system. The minister has gone to Saanich—Gulf Islands, has gone to Skeena—Bulkley Valley, has worked with members from all of the different parties.

I would say to the Conservatives that it is the time to put forward ideas, to work with us, to improve our democracy, to make sure that every vote is counted, and to participate in this process.

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[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the election system is one of the aspects, perhaps the most important aspect, of a democracy. There is no playing games with that. The debate must be serious and balanced, and it must be fair for everyone. That is why we support a referendum at the end of the year.

Meanwhile, to ensure that the debate will be fair and balanced, can the government assure us that its cronies from the sponsorship scandal, those who lined their pockets, will not be returning with the Liberal Party?

Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really important that we improve our electoral system. This is an historic opportunity, not just for our party, but also for the House of Commons in general. I want to encourage the Conservative Party to participate, along with the other parties and the Liberal Party, in consultations that will be held across Canada with a view to improving our system.

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[English]

HOUSING

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, access to affordable housing is a problem for many Canadians.

In Scarborough Centre, one in three people are spending 30% or more of their income on housing compared to the national average of one in five. The lack of affordable housing is especially challenging for seniors trying to make ends meet on fixed incomes.

Could the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development tell us what the government is doing to encourage the building of more affordable housing, especially for seniors?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will start by thanking the member for Scarborough Centre for her hard work on behalf of all seniors.

Oral Questions

This government believes that all Canadians need and deserve housing that is safe, affordable, and secure. To give Canadians greater access to affordable housing, last year's budget invested a record \$2.3 billion in assisting affordable housing, particularly the needs of seniors. This funding is expected to benefit more than 5,000 seniors across Canada.

I will also take this opportunity to welcome our new cohort of pages and say that we look forward to working with them over the next few months.

* * *

• (1455)

JUSTICE

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the imminent retirement of Supreme Court Justice Thomas Cromwell will leave a vacancy for Atlantic Canada.

The Minister of Justice has said that the next Supreme Court justice may not be from Atlantic Canada. This is very surprising, because it is a constitutional convention that Atlantic Canada is represented on the Supreme Court. It is also the fair thing to do.

I would like to know what the Liberal problem is with doing right for Atlantic Canada.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was pleased to introduce a new process for the appointment of Supreme Court justices to make it open and transparent.

I was very pleased to be able to appoint a panel to review applications. I look forward to receiving those applications, two of which will be from Atlantic Canada. No decision has been made, but we are confident that we will appoint a diverse, functionally bilingual, high-calibre jurist to the Supreme Court of Canada. I look forward to participating in that.

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STATISTICS CANADA

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Wayne Smith, Canada's chief statistician, resigned Friday and blasted the Liberal government for failing to protect the independence of Stats Canada.

The Liberals promised to restore Stats Canada's independence, but Mr. Smith said "that independence has never been more compromised."

I ask the minister to resist the urge to simply blame the Harper Conservatives because Mr. Smith was referring to the Liberal government.

How does the Liberal government defend this breach of independence and this clearly broken promise?

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, we would like to thank the former chief statistician, Wayne Smith, on his long, 35 years of service to Canada and to Statistics Canada.

We promised Canadians in the last election that we would reinstate the long-form census, and by golly, they responded in great numbers, historic numbers. That is a great testament to Mr. Smith's work.

Our government remains committed to reinforcing the independence of Stats Canada. We are working on that. We are making sure that it is an important part of the minister's mandate letter. We are going to continue with that work.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents in the riding of Don Valley West, particularly in the neighbourhood of Leaside, have raised strong concerns about the number and timing of airplanes flying over their homes and the noise they generate.

Could the Minister of Transport please update the House on what he is doing about these concerns?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Don Valley West, and indeed his fellow colleagues from the GTA, for raising this important issue.

Certainly, mitigating noise is something that we try to do within the parameters of maintaining aviation safety. Recently my staff met with some of the community groups that have raised the issue of noise. I have passed that on to the CEO of Nav Canada.

I am glad to say that the CEO of Nav Canada has hired a third party, which is looking into the matter. I will report when the results are obtained.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the decision to send Canadian men and women in our armed forces into harm's way is one of the most serious decisions that parliamentarians will ever undertake. That is why the Conservative government always believed in taking it to debate in the House of Commons.

Given that the Minister of National Defence formerly served for our country, and it seems like he will not allow this to come to a vote, can he explain both to our men and women in uniform and to Canadians why the Liberals will not put this to a vote in the House of Commons?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we can be proud of our men and women who have served all over the world in previous missions, and even now. However, a lot of work needs to be done for peace operations. We are going to be going in with eyes wide open, making sure that we have all the necessary information to allow the military to do its work, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of International Development. We will make sure that we have all the right information. We need to be able to get a full analysis.

Once we have better information, we will be presenting this to Canadians, as we have done, moving forward. A lot of work needs to be done, and I look forward to the healthy debate once we have all the necessary information.

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[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker: nobody wants ancillary fees for health care services.

Today we learned that the Minister of Health's plan for abolishing ancillary fees involves taking sick people in Quebec hostage by cutting transfer payments by an additional \$160 million.

The minister can say she is protecting the health care system all she wants, but she is actually victimizing sick people in Quebec. Enough is enough.

Will the minister immediately and unconditionally restore the health transfers that she is planning to cut in the next budget?

• (1500)

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is working hard with the provinces and territories to strengthen our universal public health care system so that Canadians can access the care they need regardless of their ability or desire to pay.

The government has renewed its commitment by restoring federal leadership on health and championing a national vision that upholds the principles laid out in the Canada Health Act, including universality and accessibility. That is what we are going to do.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister recently visited a mosque.

Members of the Bloc Québécois want to know whether this government would have found it more or less acceptable if, rather than women, homosexuals, Indigenous people or Blacks had been the ones relegated to the balcony. If that were the case, would the Prime Minister still have agreed to speak?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to gender equality in all areas of Canadian life, but we are also committed to respecting the diversity of Canadian communities. We will visit with people in ways that are appropriate for their communities, whether it is a military community, a religious community, or an indigenous community.

I am very proud of our government, which understands that in order to develop a relationship we must be respectful of the community we are in.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in Quebec, we believe that gender equality is fundamental and non-negotiable. This government clearly does not agree.

Routine Proceedings

Does the Minister of Status of Women think it is acceptable for her Prime Minister to speak in a gender-segregated mosque? Is that what Liberal Canada looks like?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a fundamental component of feminism is supporting women's right to choose. When we respect communities, and the faith of communities, and we meet them in a place where they have determined the rules of engagement, that is exactly what we believe in when we support feminism in our country.

* * *

• (1505)

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that Thursday, September 22 shall be an allotted day.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to the PACP report Chapter 3, Mental Health Services for Veterans of the fall 2014 report of the Auditor General of Canada.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaty entitled "Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement", signed in Kiev on July 11, 2016. An explanatory memorandum is included with the treaty.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 58 petitions.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

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

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities entitled “Temporary Foreign Worker Program”. I would like to thank everyone on the committee, the clerk, the analysts, and all the staff involved in producing this report.

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

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present today, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on National Defence in relation to the study of Canada and the defence of North America from an aerial readiness perspective.

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

[*Translation*]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the twelfth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the twelfth report later this day.

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights entitled “Access to Justice Part 1: Court Challenges Program”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109 the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

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

• (1510)

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions I wish to present.

The first petition is Electronic Petition No. 195, which calls on the government to continue to enforce the immigration, refugees and citizenship act as it applies to former KGB agent Mikhail Lennikov, somebody who was in refuge in Vancouver but has since left the country. He now wants to return to Canada. Anyone who is associated with the KGB should be denied entry into Canada.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I wish to present is signed by many people from across Canada.

The petitioners are looking to the Government of Canada to maintain the listing of the Islamic State of Iran as a terrorist organization. We all know that the government of Iran is a major sponsor of terrorism around the world. We want to ensure that the Government of Canada, although it has decided to open up a diplomatic relationship with the regime, does not take it off the terrorist list both as a government but also with its Quds force as well.

ARVA FLOUR MILL

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a few hundred people about the Arva Flour Mill in my riding. It is nearly 200 years old. It has an exemplary, pure accident record, with no accidents. It is the only operating mill in Canada. It is important historically and for tourism. It does not meet certain conditions of the labour code because it is 200 years old.

The petitioners ask for an exemption from the Canadian Labour Code.

JUSTICE

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to present three more of many more petitions to come in support of Cassie and Molly's law. These signatures are representative of tens of thousands that have already been presented to the House and represent Canadians of all walks of life, affirmed by my Nanos poll with 97% of respondents identifying as pro-choice and 52% to 73% of those pro-choice individuals agreeing that there is a need for a law to protect pregnant women and their preborn children.

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present electronic petition No. 193. I have 1,410 signatures on the petition.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to task the parliamentary budget officer to do a thorough analysis of the trans-Pacific partnership impact on jobs, copyright, our health care, and so on.

Routine Proceedings

TAXATION

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to present two more petitions signed by Canadians who are calling on members of Parliament to support Bill C-241, which seeks to amend the Excise Tax Act to refund 100% GST paid by Canadian school authorities.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 193, 194, 199, 201, 202, 220, 221, 241, 243, 254, 255, 262, 263, 267, 269, 276, 277, 284, 286, 288, 298 to 300, 307 to 309, 312 to 314, 319, 321, 322, 323, 326, 328, 329, 334, 336, 340, 342, 343 and 347.

[Text]

Question No. 193—**Hon. Gerry Ritz:**

With regard to the Minister of International Trade and the Canada-European Union: Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement: (a) when did the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development start drafting an Explanatory Memorandum for tabling with the treaty; (b) what deadline was given to the department in order to draft an Explanatory Memorandum; (c) will the Minister table a copy of the Canada-European Union: Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and Explanatory Memorandum, and, if so, when; (d) is the Minister considering a request for an exemption from the Policy on Tabling of Treaties in Parliament; and (e) has the Minister instructed her Department to start drafting implementing legislation for the Canada-European Union: Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, and, if so, (i) what deadline was given to the Department for completion of drafting, (ii) what other departments has the Department consulted with in regard to the legislation, (iii) when does the Minister anticipate introducing the implementing legislation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to parts (a) and (b), Global Affairs Canada, GAC, has not been tasked with drafting an explanatory memorandum for the tabling of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, CETA.

With regard to parts (c) and (d), the Minister of International Trade intends to table the final text of CETA in the House of Commons this fall to facilitate parliamentary debate of the agreement.

For part (e), work related to implementation of the agreement is ongoing. With regard to (i), implementing legislation will need to be completed in advance of entry into force of CETA. The minister has indicated that she is targeting entry into force of CETA in 2017. With regard to (ii), all departments and agencies that need to make legislative changes will be involved in the drafting process. With regard to (iii), implementing legislation will be introduced following the signature of CETA. CETA is currently expected to be signed in the fall of 2016.

Question No. 194—**Hon. Gerry Ritz:**

With regard to the Minister of International Trade and the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement: (a) when did the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development start drafting an Explanatory Memorandum for tabling with the treaty; (b) what deadline was given to the Department in order to draft an Explanatory Memorandum; (c) will the Minister table a copy of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and Explanatory Memorandum, and, if so, when; (d) is the Minister considering a request for an exemption from the Policy on Tabling of Treaties in Parliament; and (e) has the Minister instructed the Department to start drafting implementing legislation for the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and, if so, (i) what

deadline was given to the Department for completion of drafting, (ii) what other departments has the Department consulted with in regard to the legislation, (iii) when does the Minister anticipate introducing the implementing legislation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is consulting Canadians on the outcomes of the trans-Pacific partnership agreement, the TPP. No decision has been made with respect to the ratification of the TPP, and no direction has been provided to the department with respect to tabling the treaty or drafting legislation.

Question No. 199—**Mr. Nathan Cullen:**

With regard to each Senate appointment made by the Prime Minister: (a) did the government verify that each individual being appointed to the Senate met their constitutional residency requirement; (b) how did the government verify each requirement in (a); and (c) what are the details of the verification in (a)?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the response from the Privy Council Office is as follows. The government verified that each individual being appointed to the Senate met their constitutional residency requirement prior to their appointment. The government requested copies of valid photo identification indicating the individual's address, as well as copies of bills, statements, or other documentation in the individual's name, indicating their place of residence. In the case of appointment recommendations for the province of Quebec, the government used the information provided to verify whether the individual resided in one of the vacant senatorial divisions.

Question No. 201—**Mr. Wayne Stetski:**

With respect to admission fees to National Parks, Marine Conservation Areas and national historic sites: (a) what policies does the government have in place to ensure that admission fees are collected; (b) what procedures does the government have in place to ensure that these policies are followed with large groups and with groups arriving in National Parks by train or on tour buses; (c) in its planning of revenue, does the government account for an estimate of uncollected admission fees in National Parks, Marine Conservation areas, and national historic sites; (d) if so, how much was this estimate for each of the past ten years; (e) what is the anticipated loss of revenue for National Parks, Marine Conservation Areas and national historic sites resulting from offering free admission to all visitors in 2017, and to some visitors beginning in 2018; (f) what plans does the government have in place to address the revenue gap left by providing free admission for all visitors in 2017, and for some visitors beginning in 2018; and (g) what analysis has the government undertaken of the potential risks to wildlife and ecological integrity related to anticipated increases in visitors due to free admission to National Parks and Marine Conservation Areas, and what were the results of this analysis?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Parks Canada entry fees are fixed pursuant to the Parks Canada Agency Act in compliance with the Canada National Parks Act and are collected as per the Parks Canada user fees and revenue management policy.

With regard to (b), the Parks Canada user fees and revenue management policy applies to the collection of all fees from individuals, families, groups, and commercial groups. The Parks Canada directive on revenue comptrollership for user fees establishes a standard method for the collection and recording of user fee revenues for all types of services, including entry for large groups and for groups arriving in national parks by train or on tour buses.

With regard to (c), Parks Canada does not account for revenues that are not collected.

Routine Proceedings

Part (d) is therefore not applicable.

With regard to part (e), the federal budget of 2016 announced up to \$83.3 million over five years to provide free admission for all visitors to national parks, national marine conservation areas, and national historic sites operated by Parks Canada in 2017, the 150th anniversary of Confederation, and to provide free admission for all children under the age of 18 beginning in 2018.

With regard to (f), the response is included in the response to part (e).

With regard to (g), national parks are designed as an interface between visitors and Canada's natural heritage. Projected attendance for national parks in 2017 is not expected to exceed peak attendance figures recorded in 2002. Ecological integrity monitoring is in place in all national parks to assure that valued aspects of the ecosystem are conserved. This data is reviewed and analyzed on a systematic basis for departmental performance reporting and planning purposes. For the national parks that are accessible by road, approximately 20% of the agency's ecological integrity indicators—or roughly three ecological integrity indicators per park—are potentially sensitive to increased visitation and will be observed and analyzed in 2017. Parks Canada will have sufficient information to protect its park ecosystems.

Question No. 202—Mr. Alain Rayes:

With regard to Budget 2016: what is the total number of hours paid by the government to employees and contractors for preparing the budget, and what is the cost associated with those hours of work?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the preparation of the budget is at the core of the Department of Finance's mandate and is a year-long process. As such, the department does not track the hours of work nor the cost associated with this work.

The total costs of contracted services (but not itemized by hours of work) relating to the printing and editing/translation of Budget 2016, not itemized by hours of work, were \$490,334.63 and \$111,244.52, respectively.

Question No. 220—Mr. Fin Donnelly:

With regard to the planned full-time staffing complement of Kitsilano Coast Guard Station: (a) how many full-time staff will have Rigid Hull Inflatable Operator Training certification; (b) how many full-time staff will have a Master Mariner certificate; (c) how many full-time staff will be 60 ton or higher certified; (d) how many full-time staff will be 150 ton certified; (e) how many full-time staff will have a Watchkeeper certificate; and (f) will the station be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members will please note the base became operational May 1, 2016. With regard to the planned full-time staffing complement at the Kitsilano Coast Guard base, with planning currently under way:

and with regard to (a), one deck crew member shall have certification for rigid hull inflatable operator's training, RHIOT, on each crew.

With regard to (b), a Master Mariner certificate will not be required for command of a vessel at Kitsilano, although there may be

times when an individual's certificate of competency exceeds requirements.

With regard to (c), a Master, Limited for a vessel of 60 tons or more will not be required for command of a vessel at Kitsilano, although there may be times when an individual's certificate of competency exceeds requirements. A Master, Limited for a vessel of less than 60 tons is planned as a minimum requirement for command of the pollution response vessel at Kitsilano. There are two full-time staff proposed.

With regard to (d), a Master, 150 tons, is proposed for two full-time staff as a minimum requirement for command of the SAR vessel to be procured.

With regard to (e), a Watchkeeping Mate certificate is not proposed as required, although there may be times when an individual's certificate of competency exceeds requirements.

With regard to (f), the Kitsilano Coast Guard base is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

Question No. 221—Mr. Fin Donnelly:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the construction of the Site C hydroelectric dam in northeastern British Columbia: (a) how many DFO staff members are responsible for monitoring the project's compliance with fish habitat protections; (b) how many independent environmental monitors are responsible for the project's compliance with fish habitat protections; (c) how many onsite DFO inspections have taken place since construction began and when did they take place; (d) how many onsite inspections have independent environmental monitors conducted since construction began and when did they take place; and (f) has the Ministry consulted with local First Nations to measure the impact of the project on their fishing rights?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), four staff members from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, DFO, have been involved in monitoring the project's compliance with the fisheries protection provisions of the Fisheries Act. This includes three staff from DFO's fisheries protection program and one from DFO's conservation and protection program. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and the BC Environmental Assessment Office are also conducting periodic monitoring for compliance with binding conditions from the federal and provincial environmental assessments.

With regard to (b), DFO does not utilize independent environmental monitors to monitor project compliance with the fisheries protection provisions of the Fisheries Act. An independent environmental monitor is a requirement of the environmental assessment certificate issued by the province of B.C. for the project. As a result, the number of independent monitors is determined by the BC Environmental Assessment Office.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (c), four on-site inspections have taken place since DFO issued the Fisheries Act authorization for site preparation works for the project on September 30, 2015. These site visits were conducted by fisheries protection program staff on November 26, 2016, November 27, 2016, and March 30, 2016, and an inspection by DFO's conservation and protection program staff was undertaken on October 28, 2015.

With regard to (d), the requirement for an independent environmental monitor is a condition of the provincial environmental assessment certificate for the project and the frequency of inspections is determined by the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office.

With regard to (f), yes, the department has consulted and continues to consult with local First Nations in relation to the potential impacts of the project. Consultations occurred during the environmental assessment process for the project and more recently during consideration of regulatory approvals for the project. Consultation efforts remain ongoing with respect to the application for a Fisheries Act authorization that has been made to the department for the construction of the main civil works and operations of the facility.

Question No. 241—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and each First Nation reserve community: (a) how many fires have there been in all First Nations reserve communities since 2006, broken down by year; (b) which communities have their own fire departments; (c) for each community mentioned in (b), which ones have functional firefighting equipment; and (d) which communities have agreements with nearby municipalities to provide firefighting services?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC, and its special operating agency, Indian Oil and Gas Canada, are concerned: INAC provides core capital funding to each First Nation community on an annual basis through the capital facilities and maintenance program.

First Nations prioritize spending to meet their requirements for community services, including fire protection. First Nations communities are not required to provide detailed reports on their funding decisions with their core funding, including those relating to fire protective services.

With regard to (a), the annual breakdown of reported fires is as follows: in 2006, 1025; in 2007, 1572; in 2008, 1472; in 2009, 1252; in 2010, 954.

In 2010, a decision was taken to stop collecting data of fire incidents on reserve in order to reduce the reporting burden on First Nations.

INAC will work with partner organizations, including the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada, on new options to address the fire data gaps on reserve.

With regard to (b), (c), and (d), First Nations manage fire protection services on reserve and are responsible for making specific decisions regarding fire protection services under the annual core capital funding they receive from INAC. First Nations may establish their own fire departments, or contract fire protection

services from nearby communities through a municipal transfer service agreement.

Question No. 243—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to the Department of Employment and Social Development, since the inception of the Housing First program: (a) how many units of affordable housing, broken down by province, have been created for (i) seniors, (ii) families; (b) what impact has the Housing First program had on reducing homelessness, broken down by province; (c) how many total new housing spaces have been created that are identified as affordable, broken down by province; and (d) how many new affordable housing spaces have been created in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Halifax, and Ottawa?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's homelessness partnering strategy, HPS, aims to prevent and reduce homelessness in Canada. The strategy provides direct financial support to 61 urban communities as well as aboriginal and rural and remote communities across Canada. This direct financial support gives communities flexibility to invest in proven approaches that reduce homelessness at the local level. To strengthen the work of communities in their efforts to help homeless Canadians find stable housing, budget 2016 announced an additional \$111.8 million in funding for the strategy over two years. This substantial new investment builds on the program's existing investment of nearly \$600 million over five years in 2014-2019 with a focus on the Housing First approach.

The HPS does not fund affordable housing spaces. It focuses on coordinating and providing services to help homeless individuals to access stable housing, as well as wraparound support services to help individuals maintain their housing following placement.

Given that the renewed strategy was recently launched, in 2014, and that the Housing First approach was gradually phased in among communities, the impact that the approach has had on reducing homelessness is not yet available nationally or provincially.

Question No. 254—Mr. Nathan Cullen:

With regard to prawn-by-trap licenses issued by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Coast Guard: (a) how many First Nations fishermen owned prawn-by-trap licenses before the limited prawn-by-trap entry was imposed in November 1989; (b) how many First Nations prawn-by-trap licenses were grandfathered as a result of the November 1989 limitation; and (c) how many First Nations prawn-by-trap licenses exist as of this date?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the department does not track what licence holders are aboriginal or affiliated with aboriginal organizations. The issuance of commercial licences for the prawn-by-trap fishery does not require individuals to self-identify as aboriginal persons or require entities to identify affiliations with aboriginal organizations. Communal commercial licences are identified by the First Nation organization or community.

With regard to (b), as explained, the department does not track this information.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (c), 57 communal commercial prawn-by-trap licences have been issued to First Nations communities since 1993, the start of the allocation transfer program. The department does not track how many other regular commercial prawn-by-trap licences are held by aboriginal individuals or aboriginal organizations.

Question No. 255—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the Statistics Canada 2016 census questionnaire: (a) what is the number of individuals who have refused to respond to the census questions by the mandated May 31, 2016, deadline; (b) what is the number of individuals referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada for further action for refusing to respond to the census questions; and (c) what is the number of prosecutions currently being undertaken by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada against individuals who refused to respond to the census questions?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), May 31, 2016, is not a mandated deadline by which individuals must respond to the census questions. If an individual has initially refused to complete a census questionnaire, the Chief Statistician will send a registered letter that requests that the questionnaire be completed properly, certified as accurate, and returned by a specific date. This step will occur in August 2016.

With regard to parts (b) and (c), Statistics Canada has not yet reached this stage in the collection process.

Question No. 262—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and contracts: (a) what contracts have been issued by the PMO from November 4, 2015, to present; and (b) for each of the contracts identified in (a), which were awarded without a competitive bidding process?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's Office did not issue any contracts from November 4, 2015 to present.

Question No. 263—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to the Prime Minister's visit to Washington from March 9 to 11, 2016: (a) how many guests who are not employees of the government were invited to events during the visit; and (b) how much money was spent to support the attendance of these guests?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, the Privy Council Office has no information on the number of guests invited to events during the visit who are not employees of the Canadian government. Invitations to events would have been issued by the host government and/or organization.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the cost of attendance for non-government employees at the events organized by the Government of the United States and/or any third party was covered by the host government and/or organization.

Question No. 267—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to the 2016 Census: (a) has all personal data collected from Canadians thus far been handled in a safe and secure manner; (b) how many additional resources have been dedicated to follow up on those who have not completed the Census yet; (c) have any census workers raised concerns with regard to their safety or the safety of the data they have collected from the public; (d) has the government moved forward with prosecuting any individuals for failing to respond to the 2016 request; and (e) what is the final date for those who have not completed the 2016 Census to do so before facing prosecution?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part

(a), there have been six incidents where completed questionnaires have not yet been accounted for within the process for the return of questionnaires or provided to another household in error rather than providing a blank questionnaire. It is possible that the completed questionnaires that have not yet been accounted for within the return process will be located during reconciliation at the processing centre. Instances have been small in number relative to the millions of questionnaires collected and have not elicited any major concerns about the collection processes. As part of field collection procedures, reports are filed for all incidents related to potential information and privacy breaches. Incidents involving breach or potential breach of confidentiality for census data are escalated to the director of Statistics Canada's information management division. Each case is reviewed individually and appropriate actions are taken to correct the situation and to reduce the probability of any future occurrences.

With regard to part (b), Statistics Canada has hired 27,896 staff to conduct follow-up activities on non-responding households.

With regard to part (c), Statistics Canada takes the health and safety of its employees very seriously and has procedures to report any safety incidents or accidents. In locations deemed as potentially higher risk for safety issues, proactive precautionary measures are taken to ensure the safety of all census workers, such as pairing enumerators during follow-up. Some census enumerators have reported concerns regarding health and safety over the course of collection activities. Statistics Canada responds promptly to each concern on a case-by-case basis. There have been no concerns raised by the staff with respect to the safety of the data they have collected.

With regard to part (d), Statistics Canada has not yet reached this stage in the collection process.

With regard to part (e), if an individual has initially refused to complete a census questionnaire, the Chief Statistician will send a registered letter that requests that the questionnaire be completed properly, certified as accurate, and returned by a specific date. This step will occur in August 2016.

Question No. 269—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to federal transfers for palliative care and home care, how much has been designated by the government for palliative care and home care, broken down by province and territory?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is working toward the development of a new health accord, including a \$3-billion investment in home care. The government looks forward to announcing details once an agreement has been finalized.

Question No. 276—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to tax revenue from marijuana dispensaries, how much total tax revenue has the Canada Revenue Agency collected from marijuana dispensaries since November 4, 2015?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the period November 4, 2015 to June 10, 2016, the CRA is unable to provide a response to the question as the administrative reporting system utilized does not currently include a specific category for marijuana dispensaries.

With regard to goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax, GST/HST, administration and income tax administration, the current reporting requirements that define the primary business activities of a given corporation are based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Canada 2012 industry classification standard. These NAICS standards are jointly developed and maintained by Statistics Canada and its counterparts in the United States and Mexico, and do not yet include a unique category for marijuana dispensaries. Further information on the NAICS is available at www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/subjects/standard/naics/2012/index.

Nevertheless, GST/HST applies on all taxable supplies made by GST/HST registrants. A taxpayer is generally required to register if the value of their supplies or services exceeds \$30,000 per year. From a GST/HST perspective, marijuana is considered a taxable supply and would be subject to tax if made by a GST/HST registrant. All dispensaries/shops that are registered for GST/HST are required to collect and remit the GST/HST on the supply of marijuana. Additionally, from an income tax perspective, income earned from a marijuana dispensary or shop is taxable, and should be reported as business income. According to the Income Tax Act and to the Excise Tax Act, all income, from either legal or illegal activities, is taxable and is to be reported. Taxpayers and GST/HST registrants suspected of deriving income from illegal activities are risk assessed and appropriate compliance actions are taken by the CRA, working closely with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, provincial and local police, and other law enforcement agencies.

Question No. 277—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to the Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada: (a) what were the total costs incurred as a result of changing the department's name; (b) what related costs were incurred to reflect the department's new name, and specifically what was spent on (i) signage, (ii) stationary, (iii) business cards, (iv) promotional materials?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the amount is \$9,326.26.

With regard to part (b), the amounts are as follows: signage, \$8,361.70; stationary, \$716.42; business cards, \$248.14; and promotional materials, nil.

Question No. 284—**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:**

With regard to Temporary Foreign Worker inspections: how many have been conducted since November 4, 2015?

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, between November 4, 2015 and June 14, 2016 the department has completed 2,440 inspections on employers who have used the temporary foreign worker program. These include regular employer compliance reviews, random and risk-based inspections, and reviews under ministerial instruction.

Question No. 286—**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:**

With regard to mortgages backed by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: (a) how many such mortgages exist; and (b) what is the total dollar value of those mortgages?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), as of March 31, 2016, as per Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's "Quarterly Financial Report", available on its website at www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca, the number of CMHC mortgage loans in force was 2,625,329. In response to (b), the dollar value was \$520 billion.

Question No. 288—**Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to the new interview and selection process for Senate appointments: (a) how many applicants were interviewed (i) by phone, (ii) in person; (b) of the applications in (a), who performed the interviews; (c) of the applications in (a), what process was put in place in order to determine which applicants were interviewed; (d) of the applications in (a), who decided which applicants would be interviewed; (e) what costs were involved in the interview process; (f) how many recommended nominees were sent to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for final decision; (g) were written recommendations made for the nominees, and, if so, what are the details of these written recommendations; (h) what was the travel cost for each interview done; and (i) were any memos sent to the PMO regarding the nominees, and, if so, what are the details of these memos?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the response from the Privy Council Office is as follows. During the transitional phase of the new Senate appointments process, the independent advisory board for Senate appointments reviewed all 284 candidacies received. A merit-based review was completed to assess the suitability of each of the recommended candidates, in accordance with the terms of reference, and members identified a list of priority candidates they deemed best met the criteria. Members used the nominations, reference letters, resumés or biographies, and personal statements as the basis for their assessment.

Each provincial advisory board of federal and ad hoc members from that province then met to discuss their short lists and to deliberate on the recommendations to the Prime Minister. In discussing their individual assessments, members noted an interesting level of consistency in assessments and in highly rated candidates. No interviews were conducted as part of the transitional process, therefore no costs were incurred.

The advisory board established a list of five qualified candidates for each of five vacancies, for a total of 25 recommended candidates, and provided their advice to the Prime Minister, in accordance with the terms of reference. Recommended candidates were not prioritized; the proposed candidates were listed in alphabetical order. The advice included a short synopsis detailing the merits of each recommended candidate, as well as more detailed information from their candidacy submission.

Routine Proceedings

Information regarding the specific details of the advisory board's recommendations constitutes advice to the Prime Minister and therefore has been protected under the guiding principles of the Access to Information Act which the government applies, along with the Privacy Act, when processing parliamentary returns.

Question No. 298—**Mr. Phil McColeman:**

With regard to the government's intention to expand the Canada Pension Plan (CPP): (a) what has the government done to consult employers and stakeholders representing the business community about the possibility of a change in the CPP; (b) what has the government done to consult small businesses about the possibility of a change in the CPP; (c) what feedback has been provided to the Finance Minister and the Department of Finance by businesses and stakeholders with respect to the possibility of expanding CPP; and (d) what feedback has been provided to the Finance Minister and the Department of Finance by Provincial Governments with respect to the possibility of expanding CPP?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government regularly consults with stakeholders on important policy issues. For example, during 2016 pre-budget consultations, tens of thousands of Canadians shared their thoughts through meetings, events, and through online channels, resulting in the highest-ever turnout for pre-budget consultations on record. As part of pre-budget consultations, a number of Canadians and stakeholders shared their views on Canada pension plan, CPP, enhancement, with many voicing their support.

A number of stakeholders representing the business community, such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, have provided their views publicly on enhancing the CPP. The impact of CPP enhancement on businesses was an important consideration of federal, provincial and territorial finance ministers in their deliberations on CPP enhancement.

The government was elected, in part, on a commitment to work with provinces and territories, workers, employers, and retiree organizations to enhance the CPP. In December 2015, the government began discussions on enhancing the CPP with provinces and territories.

Since December, the government has worked with provinces and territories extensively and collaboratively to enhance the CPP. This work has culminated in the agreement in principle reached by Canada's finance ministers on June 20, 2016, which reflects the views of provinces and territories, stakeholders, and Canadians at large.

To address concerns about the impact of a CPP enhancement on businesses and the economy, the increases to CPP contribution rates outlined in the agreement in principle are being gradually phased in over a seven-year period starting in 2019.

This will allow businesses and workers time to adjust to the additional contributions associated with the enhanced program. More information can be obtained from a background document on the agreement in principle found on the Department of Finance Canada website at www.fin.gc.ca/n16/data/16-081_1-eng.asp.

Question No. 299—**Mr. Phil McColeman:**

With regard to the Department of Finance's economic modelling: what effect would raising Canada Pension Plan contribution rates or the cap on pensionable

earnings have on (i) number of jobs, (ii) economic output, (iii) disposable income, (iv) private savings, (v) business investment?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on June 20, 2016, Canada's ministers of finance reached an agreement in principle to enhance the Canada pension plan, CPP. The agreement will strengthen the CPP for future generations of Canadians, increasing income replacement from one-quarter of their eligible earnings to one-third, with an increase to the earnings limit. These changes will be phased in slowly over seven years, from 2019 to 2025, so that the economic impacts are small and gradual.

Once fully in place, the CPP enhancement will increase the maximum CPP retirement benefit by about 50%. The current maximum benefit is \$13,110. In today's dollar terms, the enhanced CPP represents an increase of nearly \$7,000, to a maximum benefit of nearly \$20,000. Over time, the enhancement is expected to materially increase the incomes of retirees, leading to increased consumption. In addition, the CPP provides a secure, predictable benefit that is fully indexed to inflation and payable for life, which means that Canadians will be able to worry less about outliving their savings in retirement.

The Department of Finance has conducted analyses to estimate the impacts of the CPP enhancement using economic modelling tools. The assumptions used in these models reflect those that are standard throughout the economic literature and best efforts have been made to neither understate the costs nor overstate the benefits of the proposed CPP enhancement. In general, the economic impacts of the CPP enhancement are expected to be net positive over the long term. The short-term impacts posed by increased contribution rates will be very modest and further mitigated by the phase-in of contributions

In response to part (i) regarding the number of jobs, over the long term, employment levels are projected to be permanently higher by between 0.03% and 0.06% relative to the baseline. In the short term, enhancing the CPP will lead to a temporary effect on employment growth. At its maximum impact, this will result in employment being between 0.04% and 0.07% lower relative to its baseline level in the absence of the CPP enhancement. By way of comparison, over the past five years, overall employment growth averaged roughly 1.1% per year. In this context, the impact on the overall labour market from the enhancement will be very limited. While the short-term impacts would be very modest, middle-class families and the whole of the economy would benefit long term.

In response to part (ii) regarding economic output, in the long term, real GDP is estimated to be between 0.05% and 0.09% higher than under the status quo as a result of the CPP enhancement. Compared to the status quo growth track of GDP, the level of output is projected to be a maximum of between 0.03% and 0.05% lower over the phase-in period. In this context, GDP would continue to grow in the short term, albeit at a slightly slower rate. By way of comparison, the measures contained in budget 2016 are projected to increase the level of GDP by 0.5% in 2016-17 and 1% in 2017-18.

Routine Proceedings

In response to part (iii) regarding disposable income, over the long term, as CPP benefits increase and the positive impacts on output kick in, disposable income is projected to be higher by 0.2% to 0.4% relative to the status quo. In the short term, disposable income over the phase-in period is projected to be 0.03% to 0.06% lower than under status quo. Again, this short-term impact would be more than offset by the long-term economic benefits.

In response to part (iv) regarding private savings, the CPP enhancement would increase overall retirement savings. There will be a modest reduction in private savings as Canadians rebalance their savings decisions to account for enhanced CPP benefits. In the short term, private savings are expected to decline by between 0.5% and 1.3% per year. Over the long term, it is expected that the cumulative amount of private savings will be about 7% lower than under the status quo, reflecting the reduced need for Canadians to rely on their own savings to maintain their standard of living in retirement.

In response to part (v) regarding business investment, over the long term, the level of investment is projected to be 0.03% higher as higher aggregate savings through the CPP will increase the amount of financing available for investment. In the short term, business investment is projected to be 0.03% to 0.06% lower relative to the status quo over the phase-in period.

Question No. 300—Mr. Phil McColeman:

With regard to the Department of Finance's analysis of the economic impact of Budget 2016: (a) what econometric model and data sources were used to generate the job and GDP estimates; (b) what is the basis for the multipliers used; (c) was consideration given to the effect of higher levels of consumer debt; (d) does the economic model in Budget 2016 account for the regional breakdown of planned government spending and differences in the output gap across regions; (e) does the economic model in Budget 2016 account for the effects of currency appreciation; (f) what is the assumed lag time before infrastructure, housing, and program spending affects the real economy; (g) was the economic model in Budget 2016 reviewed by economists outside the Department; (h) if the answer to (g) is in the affirmative, why; (i) if the answer to (g) is in the negative, why not?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a), to generate the economic impact of the measures presented in budget 2016, the Department of Finance used its Canadian economic and fiscal model, CEFM, along with social and economic data from Statistics Canada and aggregate tax collection and refunds data from Canada Revenue Agency.

In response to part (b), shocks were performed on the macroeconomic variables within CEFM corresponding to various fiscal measures, e.g., non-residential investment, housing investment and taxes. The response of GDP to these simulations forms the basis for the multipliers.

In response to part (c), yes. The consumption equation in CEFM takes into account net financial assets, which is affected by household indebtedness.

In response to part (d), CEFM is a national model and as such does not consider any regional dimension surrounding government spending or economic output.

In response to part (e), the exchange rate is an endogenous variable in CEFM, i.e., the model takes the exchange rate into

account. Using a standard Hicksian IS-LM framework, in an open economy, a floating exchange rate responds to fiscal stimulus, i.e., appreciates, via changes in the interest rate. However, in the context of budget 2016, it is highly unlikely that interest rates, and thus the exchange rate, would move: with very weak projected economic growth and interest rates close to their lower bound, the LM curve is likely to be flat and thus rates unlikely to respond to changes in government spending or taxation; this assumes that the Bank of Canada would take a hands-off approach to rising domestic interest rates in the face of a weak economic situation; and, other factors affecting the currency in an uncertain global environment—'risk on/risk-off' capital flows, oil and other commodity price changes, etc.—would likely dominate any impact that measures contained in budget 2016 might have on domestic interest rates.

In response to part (f), based on the assumed spending profile, the impact of infrastructure and housing measures is expected to begin positively impacting the economy in 2016 quarter three with the peak impact occurring in 2017 quarter four.

In response to part (g), CEFM, the model used to provide the economic and fiscal forecasts in all budgets and updates, is not reviewed by economists outside the department as such. However, the department has, in the past, published working papers detailing the structure and dynamic properties of the model on the department website. The department also regularly discusses aspects of the model and its characteristics with organizations such as the PBO.

Part (h) is not applicable.

In response to part (i), beyond the model generally, and with respect to the multiplier estimates specifically, in the 2009 budget the Department of Finance contracted the Conference Board of Canada and the University of Toronto's Policy and Economic Analysis Program to estimate fiscal multipliers from their own models and compare them to those used to evaluate the impact of budget 2009 economic action plan stimulus measures. The multipliers estimated by these two organizations were similar to, or higher than, those used by the department in budget 2009. At that time, this suggested that the department's estimates were reasonable. Since 2009, neither the model used for the department's analysis, CEFM, nor the resulting multipliers have changed meaningfully. The department again contacted these two organizations to repeat the exercise for budget 2016. However, given the department's results were not materially different from the 2009 exercise, and in light of the cost involved in re-contracting the two firms, the department deemed that repeating the exercise would not provide value for money and thus not be in the public interest.

Question No. 307—Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion: (a) what is the overall budget for the new office; (b) what are the specific projects that the office has funded; and (c) what is the complete list all official statements released by the office since its creation?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the new Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion, OHRFI, which replaces the former ORF, is comprised of three divisions with 36 full-time employees: Human Rights and Indigenous Affairs; Inclusion and Religious Freedom; and Democracy. The overall operations and salary budget for the three divisions within the OHRFI totals \$3.04 million. The programming budget dedicated to the promotion of human rights, including religious freedom, will be as much as \$15 million, three times the amount originally committed to the former ORF. Programming will aim to promote peaceful pluralism, inclusion, respect for diversity and human rights, including freedom of religion or belief.

In response to (b), since its establishment on May 17, 2016, the new Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion, OHRFI, is working to identify programming opportunities. As a first step, the OHRFI has actively engaged with a multitude of different existing and new stakeholders, including those who have previously received funding through the former office of religious freedom, ORF. As part of this ongoing outreach, stakeholders and potential partners have been encouraged to submit concept papers on a variety of human rights issues, including freedom of religion or belief, peaceful pluralism, inclusion, diversity, and democracy.

In response to (c), the Prime Minister is actively championing all human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, through various platforms, including news releases, media events and social media. In addition, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have empowered Canadian heads of mission—ambassadors, high commissioners and consuls general—to speak from the field and promote human rights, freedoms and inclusion online, within conversations with counterparts and publicly with the media. Human rights promotion, including freedom of religion or belief, is now entrenched in our heads of missions' core objectives and priorities and will be included in their annual performance commitments. Further to statements made domestically and through social media channels, Canada has released a total of 10 stand-alone public statements and nine group statements at the 32nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, June 13, 2016 to July 1, 2016.

These Canadian statements focused on the 10th anniversary of the council; thematic issues including on women and migrants; and specific situations, including Burundi, Syria and Ukraine. Canada also delivered two statements during high-level meetings of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, on April 25 and June 29, 2016.

Question No. 308—Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to the proposed replacement for the Office of Religious Freedoms: (a) what are the detailed cost estimates of changes to the department and operations of the new office; (b) to reflect the department's new name, what costs will be incurred on (i) signage, (ii) promotional materials; and (c) what is the overall budget for the new office?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the operations and salary budget for the former office of religious freedom, ORF, comprised of five full-time employees, FTEs, was \$720,386 with an annual programming budget of \$4.25 million of which \$3.75 million was disbursed in

fiscal year 2015-16. By comparison, the new Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion, OHRFI, is comprised of three divisions—Human Rights and Indigenous Affairs; Inclusion and Religious Freedom; and Democracy—with a total of 36 FTEs. The overall operations and salary budget for the three divisions within the OHRFI totals \$3.04 million. The programming budget dedicated to the promotion of peaceful pluralism, inclusion, respect for diversity and human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, will be as much as \$15 million, three times the amount originally committed to the former ORF.

In response to (b), like the former ORF, the OHRFI does not have dedicated signage or promotional materials. As such, there have been no costs incurred to reflect the new name. In the first few weeks following the establishment of the OHRFI, significant outreach activities were undertaken with domestic stakeholders across Canada to maintain and expand the network previously established by the ORF, share information on the future operations of the office, and consult stakeholders to inform future advocacy and promotion activities. The OHRFI will continue to engage with domestic stakeholders on a regular basis, and continue to work closely with Canadian and international members of civil society, religious groups, academics and NGOs, to best leverage Canada's pluralist experience as a multicultural and multi-faith country.

In response to (c), as noted in (a) above, the operations and salary budget for the new Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion totals \$3.04 million. The programming budget dedicated to the promotion of peaceful pluralism, respect for diversity and human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, will be as much as \$15 million, three times the amount originally committed to the former ORF.

Question No. 309—Mr. Len Webber:

With regard to the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project Ministerial Panel: (a) what is the planned budget for the panel; (b) how many meetings will take place with stakeholders; (c) how many of its meetings will be open to the public, and for each, what advertising was undertaken to make the public aware of the meeting; (d) for each of its meetings, what are the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) number of people attending, (iv) organizations represented by attendees and contributors, (v) costs associated with the attendance of a Minister or ministerial staff member, (vi) travel-related costs associated with the attendance of departmental staff, (vii) aggregated costs dispersed to organizations or individuals in order to support their attendance at or contribution to the meeting, (viii) total cost associated with the meeting not already listed, including for room rentals, catering, translation, provision of documentation, and other related costs; and (e) what is total spending to date on the panel?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), up to \$500,000.00 Canadian has been budgeted to support the work of the panel.

In response to (b), all meetings will take place with stakeholders.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (c), on June 30, 2016, the panel announced a series of roundtable and town hall meetings along the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline and marine corridors in Alberta and British Columbia. Further information on meeting times and exact location was released as it became available. All of the panel's publicly announced meetings were open to the public. Information on these meetings is available on the panel's web pages and was communicated to the public through traditional and social media.

In response to (d)(i) and (ii), the panel held 44 public meetings in Alberta and British Columbia communities as follows: July 7, 2016, in Calgary, Alberta; July 8, 2016, in Edmonton, Alberta; July 9, 2016, in Jasper, Alberta; July 19 and 20, 2016, in Kamloops, British Columbia; July 21, 2016, in Chilliwack, British Columbia; July 26, 2016, in Abbotsford, British Columbia; July 27 and 28, 2016, in Langley, British Columbia; August 9 to 11, 2011, in Burnaby, British Columbia; August 16 to 18, 2016, in Vancouver, British Columbia; August 19, 2016, in North Vancouver, British Columbia; and August 22 and 23, 2016, Victoria, British Columbia

In response to (d)(iii), all of the panel's publicly announced meetings were open to both invited speakers as well as members of the public. Over 2,400 Canadians attended these public meetings, and more than 650 made presentations to the panel.

In response to (d)(iv), over 200 stakeholder groups were invited to meet with the panel, regardless of their previous status before the National Energy Board. Input will also be accepted via email or an online questionnaire until September 30, 2016.

In response to (d)(v) (vi) (vii) (viii), up to \$500,000.00 Canadian has been budgeted to support the work of the panel. This amount includes costs outlined in subquestions (v) to (viii).

In response to (e), as of September 7, 2016, total spending on the panel was approximately \$245,000.

Question No. 312—Mr. Len Webber:

With regard to the Ministerial Advisory Panel on Canada's Defence Policy Review: (a) what is the planned budget for the panel; (b) how many of its meetings will take place with stakeholders; (c) how many of its meetings will be open to the public, and for each one, what advertising was undertaken to make the public aware of the meeting; (d) for each meeting in (c) in total, and broken down by meeting, what are the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) number of people attending, (iv) organizations represented by attendees and contributors, (v) costs associated with the attendance of a Minister or Ministerial staff member, if applicable, (vi) travel-related costs associated with the attendance of Departmental staff, (vii) aggregated costs dispersed to organizations or individuals in order to support their attendance at or contribution to the meeting, (viii) total cost associated with the meeting not already listed, including room rentals, catering, translation, provision of documentation, and other related costs; and (e) what is the total spending to date on the panel?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a), all costs associated with the defence policy review, including the activities of the ministerial advisory panel, will be paid for from the department's existing budget. All costs will be captured throughout the process and reported on at the conclusion of the review through normal channels.

The estimated total cost for the panel is forecasted to be \$309,000.00 based on current requirements and scope of work. This estimate is subject to change and will be routinely updated.

In response to part (b), the role of the ministerial advisory panel is to provide direct advice to the Minister of National Defence on the defence policy review process and to test ideas and challenge approaches, leveraging the unique insight and accomplished perspectives of the panel members. To support this mandate, the ministerial advisory panel meets monthly and these meetings do not involve participation from stakeholders.

In response to part (c), as the meetings of the ministerial advisory panel are held between the panel, ministerial and departmental staff, and meant to provide the Minister of National Defence with advice on the defence policy review, they are not open to the public. However, at least one member of the panel has participated in all of the meetings in the cross-Canada series of roundtables convened separately as well as other fora organized by outside public organizations.

In response to part (d), as there are no meetings listed in the answer to part (c), there are no costs associated either.

In response to part (e), total spending related to the ministerial advisory panel and its activities is \$192,499.57 to August 16, 2016. These expenses include both funds committed and expended and may be adjusted as travel and stipend claims are processed.

Question No. 313—Hon. Tony Clement:

With regard to the ongoing dialogue between Canada and the Russian Federation since November 4, 2015: (a) has the Prime Minister of Canada spoken directly to the President of the Russian Federation; (b) has the Prime Minister of Canada spoken directly with the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation; (c) has the Minister of Global Affairs spoken directly with the President of the Russian Federation; (d) has the Minister of Global Affairs spoken directly with the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Russian Federation; (e) what topics were discussed for each of the meetings listed in (a), (b), (c), and (d); (f) what other dialogue has been held between officials of the Russian Federation and officials representing Canada; (g) what topics were discussed in the dialogue mentioned in (f); (h) has the case of Sergei Magnitsky been discussed in the dialogue mentioned in (a), (b), (c), (d) and (f); (i) has the Russian Federation, through its President, Foreign Minister, or officials, requested that Canada refrain from adopting legislation concerning Russian officials involved in the murder of Sergei Magnitsky, and, if so, what was Canada's response; (j) has the Russian Federation requested through its President, Foreign Minister, or officials, that Canada refrain from criticizing Russia on the subject of Ukraine or Crimea, and, if so, what was Canada's response; and (k) has the subject of human rights been discussed between any representative of Canada and any representative of the Russian Federation, and, if so, what was the response from the Russian Federation?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has been explicit in its condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine but also understands the value of engagement, that dialogue can lead to improvements for Canada, for Ukraine and for global security.

Routine Proceedings

In November 2015, the Prime Minister had a brief conversation with President Putin on the margins of the G20 Summit in Antalya, Turkey. The Prime Minister communicated that although Canada has indicated its intentions to broaden its engagement, Canada remains deeply concerned over Russian interference in Ukraine. The Prime Minister also reiterated Canada's strong and unequivocal support for Ukraine and called on Russia to fully engage and implement the Minsk agreements, in order to end the violence and bring about a peaceful and durable solution in eastern Ukraine.

Since this initial exchange, the Government of Canada has indicated that dialogue and diplomacy are important in the conduct of international affairs, including with countries with which Canada has a profound disagreement. This government's engagement strategy allows us to continue to hold Russia to account, including in regard to its actions in eastern Europe.

Canada has been re-establishing channels of direct dialogue with Russia, with eyes wide open, in order to advance Canadian interests and express Canadian values, on issues such as the Arctic, global security and human rights.

Canada's engagement is taking place gradually and incrementally, and is being conducted in accordance with the interests at stake. Issues of Canadian national interest have been discussed in both the bilateral format and in the multilateral context, including, for example, at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and in the United Nations Human Rights Council. Canada's engagement with Russia will continue to include clear messages regarding Russia's unacceptable actions in Ukraine and the maintenance of sanctions until Russia implements the Minsk agreements in full. Canada has announced the deployment of troops to Latvia for a mission of deterrence against Russian aggression.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs utilized his full bilateral meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov on the margins of the ASEAN regional forum in July to speak clearly and frankly to Russia about the unacceptability of Russia's action against Ukraine, and to make plain to Russia Canada's expectation that Russia deliver on its Minsk commitments and demonstrate respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He also engaged in firm discussions on Syria and NATO, and used the meeting to advance Canada's interest, including with regard to the Arctic and counterterrorism.

Question No. 314—Hon. Tony Clement:

With regard to the Minister of Foreign Affairs' stated intention to reengage with Iran following the cutting of diplomatic ties in 2012: (a) can the government confirm that officials from Global Affairs Canada have been in contact with officials from the Islamic Republic of Iran with regard to reengaging in diplomatic relations between Canada and Iran; (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, at what levels are the talks between Canada and Iran being held; (c) is the evaluation or analysis of reopening a Canadian mission in Tehran complete; (d) if the answer to (c) is in the affirmative, what are the details of the evaluation; (e) if the answer to (c) is in the negative, what is the status of the evaluation; (f) has a security audit been conducted on the safety of Canadian personnel in a future mission in Tehran; (g) if the answer to (c) is in the affirmative, what are the expenses so far for the evaluation or analysis mentioned in (c); and (h) if (f) is in the affirmative, what are the expenses so far for the security audit mentioned in (f) and have stakeholders such as Iranian-Canadians been consulted in relation to the reopening of a mission in Tehran?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), officials from Global Affairs Canada, GAC, have had preliminary discussions with officials from the

Islamic Republic of Iran, as publicly stated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This government is committing to re-engaging with Iran in a responsible and step-by-step manner. This is a harder path than the one chosen by the previous government, but it is the best way to make real progress in promoting human rights and protecting Canada's friends and allies.

With respect to (b) and (e), in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the principles set out in the Access to Information Act. Information has been withheld on the grounds that the disclosure of certain information could be injurious to the conduct of international affairs.

In response to (c), no. Discussions on re-engagement are at their preliminary stages. There is no precise timeline for the potential re-establishment of a Canadian diplomatic presence in Iran.

Part (d) is not applicable as the answer to (c) is not in the affirmative.

In response to (f), the safety and security of Canadian personnel is of paramount importance and will be a key consideration in any decision to re-establish a Canadian diplomatic presence in Iran. There is no precise timeline for the potential re-establishment of such a presence in Iran.

Part (g) is not applicable as the answer to (c) is not in the affirmative.

Part (h) is not applicable as the answer to (f) is not in the affirmative on the question of a security audit. GAC has not organized consultations on the reopening of a Canadian mission in Tehran.

Question No. 319—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to the additional \$331.5 million in humanitarian funding announced by the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie on May 24, 2016: (a) what agencies are receiving this new funding; (b) what process was used to determine which agencies would receive this funding; (c) what process was used to determine how much funding was allocated to each agency; (d) was this funding targeted to specific regions or countries; and (e) if the answer to (d) is in the affirmative, what process was used to determine targeting of the funding?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the agencies receiving this new funding include United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

United Nations agencies receiving funding include: World Food Programme, WFP; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR; United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF; International Organization for Migration, IOM; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA; and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. FAO.

Routine Proceedings

Non-governmental organizations receiving funding include: Action Contre la Faim, ACF; ACTED; Adventist Development and Relief Agency, ADRA, Canada; CARE Canada; Canadian Lutheran World Relief, CLWR; Concern Worldwide; Development and Peace; Hope International Development Agency; L'Oeuvre Léger; Médecins du Monde Canada, MdM; Médecins Sans Frontières, MSF; Norwegian Refugee Council, NRC; Oxfam Canada; Oxfam-Québec; Save the Children Canada; World Relief Canada; and World Vision Canada.

In response to (b), the process whereby agencies are selected for funding involves an assessment of multiple factors.

First, an agency's project proposal or funding appeal is assessed to determine whether their proposed response addresses prioritized humanitarian needs and is appropriate given the context, as well as their level of access to vulnerable populations.

Second, agencies are assessed based on their level of in-country experience, track record for delivering results, technical and logistical capacity, and support for coordination efforts and leadership in key sectors of the response.

Additional considerations include the degree to which an agency's proposed response is aligned with their organizational strengths, their integration of gender and environmental concerns, and their overall value-added relative to other agencies.

Third, the capacity and performance of the agency at the global level, particularly its history of delivering results with previous Global Affairs Canada funding, is reviewed to inform the country-level assessment. These multiple assessments are then combined to determine the degree to which an agency is best placed to respond to identified humanitarian needs relative to other actors.

Global Affairs Canada gathers and analyzes information on an ongoing basis from various sources to ensure that recommendations are evidence-based and represent an appropriate use of Canadian public funds. Consultations are also undertaken with relevant divisions within the department and with field missions, drawing on the depth of their country knowledge and situational awareness.

The decision to allocate funding across United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and non-governmental organizations allows Global Affairs Canada to take advantage of their respective comparative advantages. Moreover, funding diverse actors in a humanitarian response helps Global Affairs Canada manage risk by ensuring that if any one project experiences challenges in being fully implemented, overall humanitarian activities are able to continue.

In response to (c), the process for determining funding levels varies according to the type of agency. Larger United Nations organizations, such as the World Food Programme as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross, have a greater capacity to quickly absorb funding to scale up operations. They therefore issue larger funding appeals that cover their countrywide or regional responses and can be on the order hundreds of millions of dollars. Global Affairs Canada's contribution to these appeals is based on Canada's traditional burden share of the international donor response, which typically ranges from two to three per cent. The

level of this contribution will also depend on the relative capacity of an agency in a given context, the degree to which their response is aligned with priority needs, and their ability to access affected populations. In contrast, non-governmental organizations issue specific project proposals to Global Affairs Canada that have a more narrow geographic focus and range of activities. These proposals seek relatively smaller amounts of funding from Global Affairs Canada, which typically serves as the primary and often only government donor to a project.

In response to (d) and (e), Canada's humanitarian assistance is provided according to need. Global Affairs Canada allocates funding in a way that is proportional to the levels of need across crises and does not target any specific region or country on any other basis.

The total allocation to a given country is based on the size of the financial requirement outlined in the United Nations humanitarian appeal, an analysis of the scale of needs relative to other crises, the operational capacity of agencies on the ground, as well as their ability to reach affected populations. Canada's needs-based approach is consistent with its commitment to the principles and best practices of good humanitarian donorship.

Question No. 321—**Mr. Dean Allison:**

With regard to the instructions laid out in the mandate letter of the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie to consult regarding the creation of a new policy and funding framework to guide Canada's aid decisions: (a) what international aid organizations have been consulted; (b) how many Canadians participated in these consultations as individuals; (c) what is the governments' definition of "sustainable growth in the developing world"; and (d) what process will be undertaken to determine how funding will be allocated to projects that will encourage sustainable growth in the developing world?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), since the launch of the public consultation phase of the international assistance review on May 18, 2016, we have consulted a broad spectrum of partners and individuals both in Canada and abroad, such as civil society organizations, United Nations agencies, other international bodies and other governments. The thousands of people consulted were Canadian and non-Canadian, and included civil society organizations, universities and academia, private sector entities, think tanks, foundations, donor and partner governments, aboriginal groups, youth, consultants in the field of international assistance, experts and practitioners, local beneficiaries, as well as international, multilateral, regional and global organizations. While the public consultation period closed on July 31, 2016, our work continues. We are analyzing the many recommendations that we have received in order to shape our future policy, programming, and funding framework. A report on what and from whom we heard will be published in the coming months.

Routine Proceedings

Below are the details on public participation per consultation type: nine high-level events in Canada attended by 575 individuals, including representatives from 177 institutions; 1,213 written submissions through the web portal from Canadians and non-Canadians, including those writing as individuals and on behalf of organizations; 8,043 petition emails received from three different campaigns; and Canadian missions in over 40 countries hosted 220 consultation events; and over 35 working level meetings with civil society organizations, experts, and other government departments organized by Global Affairs in Canada.

With regard to (b), the consultation period closed on July 31, 2016, and numbers are still being tallied. As of July 29, 2016, estimates indicate that over 15,000 people, including Canadians and international stakeholders, have participated in public consultation activities both in Canada and abroad.

With regard to (c), economic growth refers to the increase in a country's economic output as measured by its gross domestic product, GDP. Broad-based, sustainable growth means taking targeted steps to deepen the reach of economic growth to include the poor, marginalized groups, women and youth. Distribution of growth is important. High and rising inequality can reduce the potential for growth and limit its effect on poverty reduction, an important consideration for government interventions. Environmental sustainability is an essential part of sustainable growth because environmental degradation affects the health and incomes of the world's poorest people.

With regard to (d), to support Canada's international assistance review, the government reached out to partners, both in Canada and abroad, to discuss how the government can respond better to the challenges and opportunities presented by the new global context, including the prioritization of sustainable economic growth in developing countries. The government will draw from the outcomes of the international assistance review when considering the future allocation of resources. As new priorities emerge, the government will continue to apply a robust lens to all programming decisions to ensure that Canada's contributions have a real and sustainable impact.

Question No. 322—Hon. Peter Kent:

With regard to the Global Affairs Canada's international development program and in light of statements made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in March, 2016: (a) has the Department reached a decision regarding the resumption of humanitarian aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), and if so, what is the sum UNRWA should expect to receive; and (b) will the Department have a protocol in place to follow up with the relevant UNRWA representatives to ensure the funds are not mismanaged?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the department has made a recommendation regarding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, UNRWA. No decisions have yet been finalized.

With regard to (b), if Canada were to provide funding to UNRWA, then Global Affairs Canada would apply the same enhanced due diligence measures that are in place for other organizations that implement Canada's assistance in the West Bank and Gaza. These measures are outlined below.

Global Affairs Canada's approach to enhanced due diligence for assistance to West Bank and Gaza includes the following. Enhanced due diligence is an essential element in programming and risk management for Global Affairs Canada's West Bank and Gaza development program. Responsibility for oversight of projects that receive Canadian funding is shared between Global Affairs Canada and the implementing organizations, through up-front due diligence, ongoing monitoring, and audits, evaluations and other reporting.

Most of the due diligence occurs at an early stage in the decision-making process by making strategic choices to engage experienced multilateral, international, and Canadian partner organizations, with an on-the-ground presence, and with strong anti-fraud, anti-corruption, monitoring, and audit and evaluation practices. They are neutral actors with non-political mandates and they adhere to humanitarian principles. As part of Global Affairs Canada's approach to risk management, a fiduciary risk assessment of the partner is conducted before recommending approval of a project. Potential operational and development risks are also assessed. All proposed programming is thoroughly examined to be consistent with Canadian values and to meet the highest standards of transparency and accountability.

For all assistance projects in the West Bank and Gaza, Global Affairs Canada follows enhanced due diligence procedures to ensure compliance with Canada's anti-terrorism policy and legislation. This includes the following measures: systematic screening of organizations and their key decision-makers against Government of Canada terrorist lists; clear anti-terrorism requirements and clauses within all funding instruments; clear definitions of the partner's obligations, roles, and accountabilities for selecting and screening sub-partner organizations; the identification, within each funding instrument, of all of the organizations involved in a project; and ensuring that Global Affairs Canada must approve any proposed changes to the partner organizations involved.

Once a project is operational, monitoring is conducted both by Global Affairs Canada officials in the West Bank and by implementing partners in the field. Global Affairs Canada officials based in Ramallah closely monitor project activities and results through regular site visits, including sites managed by sub-partner organizations; maintain dialogue with implementing partners; and engage with representatives of like-minded donor governments that support similar initiatives or work with the same organizations. Global Affairs Canada also contracts third-party professionals to provide monitoring services to departmental officials. Partner organizations are accountable to Global Affairs Canada for: monitoring their sub-contractors and local counterparts; validating end-use of materials; following authorized procurement procedures; providing regular reporting; and undertaking audits and evaluations.

Monitoring and oversight is conducted by Global Affairs Canada officials and implementing partners. Information collected through regular monitoring ensures that any necessary adjustments can be made immediately, that risks can be managed on an ongoing basis, and that results are being achieved for intended beneficiaries.

Routine Proceedings

Each funding instrument requires partner organizations to provide regular reporting on work plans and activities, financial records, and results achieved. As mentioned above, Global Affairs Canada officials closely monitor projects and partners, and reserve the right to request additional information or clarification from partners as needed, to ensure compliance with the terms of funding instruments, to manage risks, to assess results or to obtain further financial details.

Question No. 323—**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:**

With regard to Public Services and Procurement Canada: (a) what were the total costs incurred as a result of changing the Department's name; and (b) what related costs were incurred to reflect the Department's new name, and specifically, what was spent on (i) signage, (ii) stationary, (iii) business cards, (iv) promotional materials?

Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), the answer is \$545. With regard to (b)(i), it is \$545;

With regard to (ii) zero;

With regard to (iii) zero; and

With regard to (iv) zero.

Question No. 326—**Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to the government's projection presented on page 235 of Budget 2016 showing a 21% increase in Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues from 2015-2016 to 2020-2021: (a) upon what basis is the government's projection based; and (b) how much of this forecasted increase will result from an increase in the GST rate?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the government's projection of goods and services tax, GST, revenues published in Budget 2016 is based on projected growth in taxable consumption, projected growth in the GST/harmonized sales tax credit, and year-to-date results. Overall, GST revenues are projected to grow broadly in line with the outlook for nominal growth of the gross domestic product, GDP.

With regard to (b), the federal GST rate of 5% is maintained over the projection period; therefore, none of the increase in GST revenues is due to a change in the federal GST rate.

Question No. 328—**Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to the mandate letter to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and specifically, the section which called for the review of the previous government's changes to the Fisheries and Navigable Waters Protection Acts, upon what harms or assertions of harm attributed to the previous government's changes to these two Acts has the government drawn its motivation for mandating a review?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the legislative process leading up to and since the Fisheries Act was changed in 2012, indigenous groups, stakeholders, and the public have expressed concern with the changes and how they were implemented. Indigenous and environmental groups in particular have argued that the changes weakened fish habitat protections. In particular, many Canadians have raised concerns about the process for legislative change and the lack of consultations.

To address these concerns, the Government of Canada has committed to review the 2012 changes to the Fisheries Act and to hold an open discussion on how to protect the aquatic environment

and ensure the sustainability of Canada's fisheries. Consultation will be at the core of this review. The government believes that rebuilding trust begins with a coordinated, open, and transparent process that incorporates scientific evidence, engages parliamentarians, and takes into account input from indigenous people, provinces and territories, and a range of stakeholders, including the public, industry, and environmental groups.

Question No. 329—**Mr. Mel Arnold:**

With regard to the advice issued by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner which called for the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to refrain from participating in any discussions or decision-making processes and any communication with government officials regarding J.D. Irving Ltd., what current matters under the purview of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard will this prevent the Minister from overseeing on Canada's (i) eastern coast, (ii) western coast, (iii) and northern coasts?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the request of the minister, the minister's office and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, including the Canadian Coast Guard, working in conjunction with the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, have identified areas of possible intersection between departmental policy and operations and the application of the minister's conflict of interest screen pertaining to matters related to his friend James D. Irving and J.D. Irving Limited.

The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner's findings and the agreed upon compliance measures are posted on the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner's website at www.ciec-ccie.parl.gc.ca.

Question No. 334—**Mr. Larry Maguire:**

With regard to the ongoing Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus outbreak and scientific studies carried out by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency: (a) what are the details of the study which explicitly outlined the emergency regulatory protocols and measures with respect to washing hog transport trailers; and (b) what factors contributed to the statements by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada on June 2, 2016, that emergency regulatory protocols and measures with respect to washing hog transport trailers were no longer needed in Manitoba?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, it is a legislative requirement under the Health of Animals Regulations that certain swine trucks be cleaned and disinfected prior to entering Canada from the U.S. This science and risk-based requirement has been in place since the 1990s.

After an outbreak of porcine epidemic diarrhea virus, or PEDv, in 2014, several industry stakeholders in Manitoba raised concerns about the quality of truck-washing facilities in the U.S. In March 2014, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the CFIA, implemented a temporary exemption from the regulations at two specific border crossings in Manitoba. The exemption, or the "emergency regulatory protocols and measures" referred to in part (a), was not based on a study, but was implemented in order to allow time to evaluate industry's concerns.

Routine Proceedings

This exemption allowed the limited number of swine trucks entering Canada from the U.S. at these two crossings to be cleaned and disinfected post-entry. At all other border crossings into Canada, empty swine trucks returning from the U.S. still had to be cleaned and disinfected before entering Canada, as per the Health of Animals Regulations.

Regarding part (b), in June 2015, the CFIA performed a scientific review of documents provided by the swine industry. The evidence that was presented in these documents and in the published scientific literature was not sufficient to conclude that U.S. truck-wash facilities are inferior to Canadian facilities in reducing the probability of introduction of foreign animal diseases into Canadian swine farms.

As a result, the CFIA made a decision to discontinue the temporary exemption and require all trucks entering Canada to meet the cleaning and disinfection requirements in the regulations.

Question No. 336—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Business Risk Management Programs located within the electoral district of Perth—Wellington for each program year of Growing Forward 2: (a) what categories of participant information are tracked and retained in databases or other electronic methods of information storage by the government; (b) how many farms in Perth—Wellington participated in the AgriInvest program broken down by (i) program year, (ii) municipality, (iii) commodity group; (c) what was the total value of all deposits into the AgriInvest program by all participants; (d) how many farms participated in the AgriStability in Perth—Wellington program broken down by (i) program year, (ii) municipality, (iii) commodity group; (e) what is the median reference margin of AgriStability participants in Perth—Wellington broken down by (i) program year, (ii) municipality, (iii) commodity group; (f) how many farms in Perth—Wellington received payments from the AgriStability program broken down by (i) program year, (ii) municipality, (iii) commodity group; (g) what was the total value of payments from the AgriStability program; (h) how many farms in Perth—Wellington received payments from the AgriRecovery program broken down by (i) program year, (ii) municipality, (iii) commodity group; and (i) what was the total value of payments from the AgriRecovery program?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, including the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency, is unable to provide the detailed information requested as program delivery and financial systems do not record transactions by electoral district. Also, the agri-stability and agri-recovery programs are delivered by the provincial government in many jurisdictions, including Ontario. As such, AAFC does not have detailed program participant information related to those programs for the province. Where AAFC delivers business risk management programs, program delivery systems track and retain a participant's identification and contact information, their production and financial records as required for the program, along with the benefit calculations for the years they participate.

Question No. 340—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to judicial appointments: (a) how many candidates have been recommended for appointment by the independent advisory committees between November 4, 2015, and June 15, 2016; and (b) has the Minister of Justice given any formal direction to pause the process of considering potential candidates by advisory committees?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), 74 candidates were recommended by the independent advisory committees between November 4, 2015, and June 15, 2016.

Regarding part (b), the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs, which administers the federal judicial appointments process, has received no direction from the Minister of Justice to pause the process of considering potential candidates by advisory committees.

Question No. 342—Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to the announcement by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs on May 10, 2016, that the government intends to adopt and implement the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: (a) did the Minister undertake consultations prior to reaching this decision; (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, (i) which stakeholder groups were consulted, (ii) which individuals from these groups participated, (iii) where did the consultations occur, (iv) what travel costs did the government cover, broken down by stakeholder, (v) what per diem costs did the government cover, broken down by stakeholder, (vi) what accommodation costs did the government cover, broken down by stakeholder; (c) did the Minister receive any unsolicited views from stakeholder groups, and if so, from which stakeholders; and (d) has the Minister received communications from individual Canadians related to this decision?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC, is concerned, the response is as follows. The Government of Canada's decision to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples represents the fulfillment of a campaign promise, which was based on extensive engagement with indigenous peoples and other stakeholders from coast to coast both prior to and during the last election. Further, numerous indigenous organizations, communities, and people; industry leaders; and Canadians have publicly called upon the Government of Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Moreover, after eight years of extensive engagement with indigenous and non-indigenous organizations and people in Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued their final report and calls to action in 2015. On December 15, 2015, the Prime Minister accepted the final report and affirmed the government's commitment to implement all 94 calls to action, including the full adoption, without reservation, of the declaration.

The Government of Canada will work in full partnership with first nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, as well as with provinces and territories on an action plan to implement the declaration in accordance with Canada's Constitution.

Question No. 343—Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to the statement by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs on June 7, 2016 regarding audited statements of First Nations governments: (a) what is the process followed by Departmental staff once a request for audited statements has been received from a member of a First Nation; and (b) in what ways have First Nation band members been made aware of this process?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC, is concerned, with regard to the statement made by the minister on June 7, 2016, the response is as follows: for part (a) of the question. Prior to the implementation of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, FNFTA, if a first nation member did not know how to access their first nation's financial information, or if they were unable to obtain such information from their first nation directly, they would contact the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to request a copy of the first nation's audited consolidated financial statements. Where the individual confirmed that access to the audited financial statements was requested and denied, and provided proof of their membership, the departmental official would provide the audited financial statements directly to the member of the first nation. After the introduction of the FNFTA, if a member of a first nation submitted a request to the department for the audited consolidated financial statements of their first nation, INAC would refer them to the departmental website, where all audited consolidated financial statements are posted when they are received by the department, as per the requirements of the FNFTA.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the funding agreement outlined both the requirement for first nations to make the audited consolidated financial statements and other financial schedules required by INAC available to its membership, and the provision for Canada to make the documents available to members where the first nation did not meet its disclosure requirements. The funding agreement model was published on the departmental website, and first nations were also obliged to share the funding agreement with their members. Over the last two years that the act has been in place, INAC has communicated with first nations and first nation members on the act's various requirements and processes. In addition, this information has been posted on INAC's website at www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1399312715586/1399312880474.

Question No. 347—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regards to full-time, part-time, contract, and casual employees of Foreign Affairs Canada working abroad, including local and third-country cooperants and advisors, as of June 15, 2016: how many employees did not have a valid security clearance broken down by the country in which they are working?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as of June 15, 2016, all Global Affairs Canada full-time, part-time contract, and casual employees working abroad, including local and third-country co-operants and advisers, had a valid security clearance.

Contractors are not employees of the Government of Canada.

* * *

• (1515)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 191, 192, 195 to 198, 200, 203 to 219, 222, 223, 226 to 240, 242, 244 to 252, 256 to 261, 264 to 266, 268, 270 to 275, 278 to 283, 285, 287, 289 to 297, 301 to 306, 310, 311, 315 to 318, 320, 324, 325, 327, 330 to 333, 335, 337 to 339,

341, 344 to 346, 348 to 352 and Starred Questions Nos. 224, 225 and 253 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Just to clarify, the member is asking that all the questions starting with Question No. 191 be made orders for return. Could he clarify that? I think that is what he has in mind.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker I believe that to be the case.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 191—MR. Wayne Stetski:

With respect to fines charged under the Canada National Parks Act: (a) how many people have been fined in the last ten years, broken down by park; (b) what was the average fine amount over the last ten years, broken down by park; (c) what were the ten most common offences under the Canada National Parks Act that resulted in fines being charged; (d) what measures does the government have in place to deter people from committing each of the offences identified in (c); (e) what analysis has the government undertaken of the effectiveness of penalties for offences charged under the Canada National Parks Act, and what were the results of this analysis; and (f) how often does the government review its policies and procedures regarding fines and penalties for offences charged under the Canada National Parks Act?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 192—Mr. Gérard Deltell:

With regard to all the contracts entered into by a Minister's office or the funds from the budget allocated to a Minister's office, other than for the salaries of employees in that office, between November 4, 2015, and April 22, 2016, what are (i) the names of the beneficiaries, (ii) the amounts, (iii) the contract dates, (iv) the funding dates and time lines, (v) the person who signed the contract on behalf of the minister's office, (vi) the description of its purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 195—Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:

With regard to materials prepared for past or current deputy heads of departments, Crown Corporations, agencies, or their staff since October 19, 2015: for every briefing document or docket prepared, what is (i) the date, (ii) the title or subject matter, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 196—Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:

With regard to materials prepared for ministers or their staff since November 1, 2015: for every briefing document or docket prepared: what is (i) the date, (ii) the title or subject matter, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 197—Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:

With regard to Employment and Social Development Canada and the Social Security Tribunal: (a) how many appeals are currently waiting to be heard by the Income Security Section (ISS), in total and broken down by (i) Canada Pension Plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (ii) Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits, (iii) Old Age Security; (b) how many appeals currently waiting to be heard by the ISS are legacy appeals that pre-date the Tribunal, in total and broken down by (i) Canada Pension Plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (ii) Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits, (iii) Old Age Security; (c) how many appeals currently waiting to be heard by the ISS date from prior to December 2014, in total and broken down by (i) Canada Pension Plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (ii) Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits, (iii) Old Age Security; (d) how many appeals were heard by the ISS in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, in total and broken down by (i) month, (ii) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (iii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iv) Old Age Security; (e) how many appeals heard by the ISS were allowed in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, in total and broken down by (i) month, (ii) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (iii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iv) Old Age Security; (f) how many appeals heard by the ISS were dismissed in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, in total and broken down by (i) month, (ii) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (iii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iv) Old Age Security; (g) how many appeals to the ISS were summarily dismissed in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, in total and broken down by (i) month, (ii) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (iii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iv) Old Age Security;

(h) how many appeals at the ISS have been heard in person in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (i) how many appeals to the ISS have been heard by teleconference in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (j) how many appeals at the ISS have been heard by videoconference in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (k) how many appeals at the ISS have been heard in writing in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (l) how many appeals at the ISS have been decided on the record in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (m) how many members hired in the Employment Insurance Section (EIS) are currently assigned to the ISS; (n) what is the current average caseload of members in the ISS; (o) what is the average number of decisions per month by members in the ISS; (p) what is the average time between the filing of an appeal and receipt of a decision at the ISS; (q) what is the average time between Notice of Readiness and receipt of a decision at the ISS; (r) since September 1, 2015, how many ISS cases have met the Tribunal's new service standard of being decided within five months of the appeal becoming ready to proceed, broken down by (i) month, (ii) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (iii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iv) Old Age Security;

(s) how many income security appeals are currently waiting to be heard by the Appeal Division (AD), in total and broken down by (i) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (ii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iii) Old Age Security; (t) how many income security appeals waiting to be heard by the AD are legacy appeals that predate the Tribunal, in total and broken down by (i) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (ii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iii) Old Age Security; (u) how many income security appeals waiting to be heard by the AD date from prior to December 2014, in total and broken down by (i) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (ii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iii) Old Age Security; (v) how many applicants were not given leave to appeal on income security cases in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) month, (ii) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (iii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iv) Old Age Security; (w) how many income security appeals were heard by the AD in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, in total and broken down by (i) month, (ii) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (iii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iv) Old Age Security; (x) how many income security appeals heard by the AD were allowed in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, in total and broken down by (i) month, (ii) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (iii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iv) Old Age Security; (y) how many income security appeals heard by the AD were dismissed in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, in total and broken down by (i) month, (ii) Canada Pension plan retirement pensions and survivors benefits, (iii) Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, (iv) Old Age Security; (z) how many

income security appeals at the AD have been heard in person in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed;

(aa) how many income security appeals at the AD have been heard in by videoconference in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (bb) how many income security appeals at the AD have been heard by teleconference in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (cc) how many income security appeals at the AD have been heard in writing in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (dd) how many appeals are currently waiting to be heard at the Employment Insurance Section (EIS), in total and broken down by (i) legacy appeals that predate the creation of the Tribunal, (ii) appeals that date from prior to December 2014; (ee) how many appeals have been heard by the EIS in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, in total and broken down by month; (ff) in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, how many appeals were (i) allowed, (ii) dismissed, (iii) summarily dismissed; (gg) how many appeals at the EIS have been heard in person in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed;

(hh) how many appeals at the EIS have been heard by videoconference in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (ii) how many appeals at the EIS have been heard by teleconference in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (jj) how many appeals at the EIS have been heard in writing in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (kk) how many appeals at the EIS have been decided on the record in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (ll) what is the current average caseload of members in the EIS; (mm) what is the average number of decisions per month by members in the EIS; (nn) what is the average time between the filing of an appeal and receipt of a decision at the EIS; (oo) since September 1, 2015, how many EIS cases have met the Tribunal's new service standard of final decisions being made within 90 days of the appeal being filed, broken down by month; (pp) how many EI appeals are currently waiting to be heard by the AD, in total and broken down by (i) legacy appeals that predate the creation of the Tribunal, (ii) appeals that date prior to December 2014; (qq) how many applicants were not given leave to appeal EI cases in December 2015 and in 2016, to date;

(rr) in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, how many EI appeals have been (i) heard, (ii) allowed, (iii) dismissed; (ss) how many EI appeals at the AD have been heard in person in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (tt) how many EI appeals at the AD have been heard by videoconference in December 2015 and in 2016, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (uu) how many EI appeals at the AD have been heard by teleconference in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (vv) how many EI appeals at the AD have been heard in writing in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) appeals allowed, (ii) appeals dismissed; (ww) what is the current average caseload of members in the AD; (xx) what is the average number of decisions per month by members in the AD; (yy) what is the average time between the filing of leave to appeal and receipt of a final decision at the AD; (zz) what is the average time between the granting of leave to appeal and receipt of a final decision at the AD;

Routine Proceedings

(*aaa*) since September 1, 2015, how many appeals at the AD have met the Tribunal's new service standard of a decision on leave to appeal being granted within 60 days, broken down by month; (*bbb*) since September 1, 2015, how many appeals at the AD have met the Tribunal's new service standard of a final decision being granted within seven months of leave to appeal being granted, broken down by month; (*ccc*) how many requests has the Tribunal received for an expedited hearing due to terminal illness in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) month, (ii) requests granted, (iii) requests not granted; (*ddd*) how many requests has the Tribunal received for an expedited hearing due to financial hardship in December 2015 and in 2016, to date, broken down by (i) month, (ii) section, (iii) requests granted, (iv) requests not granted; (*eee*) of the more than 60 recommendations made to the Tribunal in March 2015 for ways to improve operations, how many have been implemented; and (*fff*) is the special unit within the Department still functioning and if so, what is its expected end date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 198—**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:**

With regard to the Ship Source Oil Pollution Fund: (*a*) what is the current dollar amount in the fund, broken down by (i) government contributions, (ii) industry contributions, (iii) funds allocated for direct emergency action and remedial action; (*b*) based on the information provided in (*a*)(i) and (*a*)(ii), how many contributions have been made to the fund over the past ten years, broken down by (i) name of contributor, (ii) amount of contribution, (iii) date of contribution, (iv) total amount of contribution for the lifetime of the fund; (*c*) what criteria are used to determine how funds are used for abandoned vessels, broken down by (i) environmental risk, (ii) monetary amount that can be accessed, (iii) time-limits for disbursements from the fund; (*d*) for each of the items identified in (*c*), what is the (i) definition of the comprehensive solution regulation, (ii) process for which the Canadian Coast Guard can access the fund, (iii) process for which it is reimbursed; (*e*) for each of the items identified in (*c*), when was the fund accessed for vessels along the entirety of the east coast of Vancouver Island and for which vessels or events was the fund accessed, broken down by (i) the amount of funds accessed, (ii) the date the fund was accessed, (iii) the outcome of the event, (iv) the status of the vessel, (v) the next plans for the vessel; and (*f*) was the fund in (*e*) accessed for the vessel the Viki Lynne 2, and, if so, (i) what was the amount of funds accessed, (ii) when were the funds disbursed, (iii) what were all of the expenses related to the fund, broken down by type of work done, (iv) what comprehensive plans exist to remove the remaining oil and solvents, (v) can the fund be used to remove, decommission and destroy the Viki Lynne 2?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 200—**Mr. Wayne Stetski:**

With respect to the impacts of climate change on National Parks and Marine Conservation Areas: (*a*) what analysis has the government undertaken of the potential impacts of climate change on National Parks and Marine Conservation Areas, and what were the results of this analysis; (*b*) what plans does the government have in place to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change on National Parks and Marine Conservation Areas; (*c*) what analysis has the government undertaken of the potential impacts of climate change on fire management in National Parks, and what were the results of this analysis; (*d*) what plans does the government have in place to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change on fire management in National Parks; (*e*) what analysis has the government undertaken of the potential impacts of climate change on the water supply in National Parks and Marine Conservation Areas, and what were the results of this analysis; (*f*) what plans does the government have in place to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change on the water supply in National Parks and Marine Conservation Areas; (*g*) what analysis has the government undertaken of the potential impacts of climate change on species at risk, and what were the results of this analysis; (*h*) what plans does the government have in place to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change on species at risk; (*i*) how many animals normally originating from warmer climates have been stranded in Canada, by year, over the past 15 years; (*j*) what kinds of warmer-climate animals have been stranded and where have they stranded, by year, over the past 15 years; (*k*) what policies and procedures does the government have in place regarding warmer climate animals that are stranded in Canada; (*l*) what has been the cost of rescuing and treating these animals, by year, over the past 15 years; (*m*) what analysis has the government undertaken of the cumulative impacts of environmental threats to Wood Buffalo National Park, as per the request of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, and what were the results of this analysis; and (*n*) how often does the government review its policies and procedures regarding climate change adaptation in National Parks and Marine Conservation Areas?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 203—**Ms. Karine Trudel:**

With regard to the Canada Summer Jobs program: (*a*) what has been the program's total budget since 2013, inclusively, broken down by (i) calendar year, (ii) electoral district; (*b*) what is the program's total budget in each electoral district for the summer of 2016; (*c*) what criteria are used to determine the amount allocated to a district; and (*d*) what are the details of the figures that were used to determine the allocation for the district of Jonquière?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 204—**Ms. Irene Mathysen:**

With regard to requests made by veterans to access their own military records: what is the number of requests, made by veterans or veterans' representatives, since January 1, 2013, broken down by year, which were made to (i) the Department of National Defence for service records, (ii) Library and Archives Canada for medical or dental records?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 205—**Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With respect to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement: (*a*) what is the number of appeals for decisions and what is the rate of success for these appeals, broken down by year and region; (*b*) how many cases have been re-opened and how many of these have been successful; and (*c*) with regard to the monitoring and reporting by the government of financial commitments of the Catholic Church, (i) how much of the \$29 million in cash donations owed was given to the survivors, (ii) how much of the \$25 million dollars that was supposed to be fundraised, was fundraised, and of that money how much was donated to the survivors, (iii) what was the line by line account for the \$25 million of in kind donations, (iv) how much of the total compensation owed was not distributed to survivors, as it was considered an expense, legal cost, or administrative fee of the Church, (v) did government lawyers negotiate with other churches in order to waive their legal obligations, and, if so, when did these negotiations occur?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 206—**Mr. Guy Caron:**

With regard to the 25 ports or wharves that the government wants to divest in the regions of the Lower St. Lawrence, the Gaspé and the North Shore (specifically in the communities of Baie-Comeau, Baie-Johan-Beetz, Blanc-Sablon, Cap-aux-Meules, Carleton, Chandler, Gaspé, Gros-Cacoua, Harrington Harbour, Kégaska, La Romaine, La Tabatière, Les Méchins, Matane, Miguasha, Mont-Louis, Natashquan, Paspébiac, Pointe-au-Père (breakwater), Rimouski, Saint-Augustin, Tête-à-la-Baleine, and Vieux-Fort): what are the estimated costs of repairing each of these 25 ports or wharves, broken down by port or wharf?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 207—**Mr. Brad Trost:**

With regard to federal government spending within the City of Saskatoon, for each fiscal year since 2010-2011, inclusively: (*a*) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose; and (*b*) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (*a*), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 208—Mr. Brad Trost:

With regard to the implementation or levy of a carbon tax, by the government, its departments and agencies: (a) have studies been conducted to determine how much global warming will be prevented by the imposition of a carbon tax over, (i) the next five years, (ii) the next ten years, (iii) the next 15 years, (iv) the next 20 years, (v) the next 25 years, (vi) the next 50 years, (vii) the next 75 years, (viii) the next 100 years; (b) what is meant by a carbon tax; (c) what does a carbon tax cover; (d) will a carbon tax levied be a straightforward tax levied on any emissions of carbon dioxide when they occur; (e) will a carbon tax levied be a straightforward tax levied on any emissions of carbon dioxide when they occur, regardless of where in Canada they occur; (f) does the carbon tax cover natural resource operations, and, if so, to what extent; (g) does the carbon tax cover oil extraction, and, if so, to what extent; (h) does the carbon tax cover natural gas extraction, and, if so, to what extent; (i) does the carbon tax cover coal mining or coal generation, and, if so, to what extent; (j) does the carbon tax cover the generation of electricity, and, if so, to what extent; (k) does the carbon tax cover agricultural activities and, if so, to what extent; (l) does the carbon tax cover carbon stored in soils; (m) how does the government plan to deal with measurement issues during implementation of a carbon tax; (n) how does the government plan to deal with measurement issues regarding the slow release of carbon dioxide over time; (o) how will carbon dioxide emissions be measured as this gas slowly leaks out of formations where carbon dioxide is sequestered; (p) will a carbon tax be applied to the type of emissions identified in (o); (q) does the carbon tax cover forestry operations, and, if so, to what extent; (r) does the carbon tax cover timber; (s) how will a carbon tax be levied on the content of carbon in timber; (t) how will a carbon tax be levied on the content of carbon in timber when it is harvested; (u) how will a carbon tax take in account carbon stored in wood products; (v) once trees reach maturity, how will the government prevent or delay harvest, broken down by each forest, and whether it is public or private; (w) how will carbon taxes be contracted; (x) how will carbon taxes be measured; (y) how will carbon taxes be monitored for compliance; and (z) what information, including the details of all documents, briefing notes and correspondence, has the government complied on implementing a mileage tax?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 209—Mr. Brad Trost:

With regard to a carbon tax, a mileage tax, or a tax on greenhouse gas emissions: (a) what are the details of all correspondence and briefing materials between all government departments, Crown Corporations and agencies, that were sent or received since October 19, 2015, including but not limited to, (i) the sender, (ii) the recipient, (iii) the dates that correspondence was sent or received; and (b) what are the details of any briefings to ministers or staff which contain mention of a carbon tax, a mileage tax, or a tax on greenhouse gas emissions, that were sent or received since October 19, 2015?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 210—Mr. Alupa Clarke:

With regard to the six ministerial advisory groups at Veterans Affairs Canada: (a) what is each group's mandate; (b) who are the members, (i) what are each member's qualifications, (ii) are they being paid, (iii) do they have to sign a non-disclosure agreement; (c) what topics are discussed during these meetings and what are the details of the proceedings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 211—Mr. Alupa Clarke:

With regard to applications for financial benefits for physical injuries by Canadian Armed Forces members in the Quebec City region: for the 2015–2016 fiscal year, what is the percentage of applications for each type of injury (to the knee, to the ear, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 212—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to gifts received by ministers and parliamentary secretaries from November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) for each minister and each parliamentary secretary, how many gifts were received; and (b) for each gift identified in (a), what is (i) the detailed description, (ii) the name of the person or organization that gave the gift, (iii) the value of the gift?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 213—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to electronic devices, from November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: for each minister and parliamentary secretary, how many separate electronic devices were received, and how many were replaced, broken down by (i) BlackBerry, (ii) iPhone, (iii) iPad, (iv) other smart telephones or tablets, (v) cellular telephones other than those listed in (i) to (iv)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 214—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to the ongoing litigation between the federal government and other levels of government (provincial or municipal), as of April 22, 2016: (a) what is the file number for each case; (b) what is the summary for each case; and (c) how much money has the government spent to date on each case?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 215—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to passports for ministers, parliamentary secretaries, and staff, for the period from November 4, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) what are the details of all the related expenses; (b) what is the specific breakdown of costs that were written off; and (c) for what trips or potential trips were the passport fees incurred?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 216—Mr. Mark Strahl:

With regard to the recommendations of the Cohen Commission on restoring salmon stocks in the Fraser River, for each recommendation that falls under the responsibility of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans: (a) what recommendations have been implemented in whole or in part; (b) of the recommendations identified in (a), what action was taken to implement the recommendation; (c) of the recommendations identified in (a), what date was the recommendation implemented; (d) when will the remaining recommendations of the Cohen Commission, in whole or in part, be implemented; and (e) what recommendations, if any, does the department not intend to implement, and why?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 217—Mr. Pierre Nantel:

With regard to the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of Nature, the National Museum of Science and Technology, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, for each contract or instance when external legal services were provided to national museums since fiscal year 2010-2011, listed by museum, year and firm or individual providing the service: (a) which firms or individuals provided these legal services; (b) when; (c) for how long; (d) what was the nature of these services, and (e) what was the total cost, per contract, instance, firm or individual providing the service?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 218—Mr. Pierre Nantel:

With regard to the Canadian Museum of History, for each contract or instance when external legal services were provided to national museums since fiscal year 2010-2011, listed by museum, year and firm or individual providing the service: (a) which firms or individuals provided these legal services; (b) when; (c) for how long; (d) what was the nature of these services; and (e) what was the total cost, per contract, instance, firm or individual providing the service?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 219—Ms. Christine Moore:

With regard to each program of Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, since 2002: (a) what are the various programs; (b) what are the criteria for each program; (c) what project evaluation grid is used by program managers; and (d) what changes have been made to the evaluation grids identified in (c), since 2002, and broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 222—**Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regard to Transport Canada's use of a database called GradeX to predict potential accident hot spots at railway crossings: (a) how long has Transport Canada maintained this database; (b) who is consulted in preparing and updating the lists on this database; (c) what metrics are used by Transport Canada to assess potential accident hot spots; (d) how does Transport Canada measure whether a crossing poses a high risk for collisions; (e) what are the 500 highest risk railway crossings as of May 10, 2016; (f) for each of the crossings listed in (e), and since the government began collecting this data in the database, how many (i) accidents have occurred, (ii) fatalities have occurred; (g) how many public complaints have been received about each of the crossings listed in (e) since the government began collecting this data in the database; and (h) does the government have any plans to make this database available to the public and municipalities, and, if so, when and how does it intend to do so?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 223—**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:**

With regard to the Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities between the federal government and provincial governments: what are each of the initiatives funded under each agreement?

(Return tabled)

*Question No. 224—**Mr. Kennedy Stewart:**

With regard to the government's consultations on establishing a Chief Science Officer and the Minister of Science's testimony on April 14, 2016 at the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology: (a) what is the complete and detailed list of all individuals and organizations that were contacted as part of the consultations; (b) what is the complete and detailed list of all individuals and organizations that provided a written response as part of the consultations; (c) what is the complete and total list of organizations and individuals that the Minister met with in person as part of the consultations; (d) what questions were asked to consultation participants regarding the Chief Science Officer; (e) what is the summary of the input and responses received as part of the consultations; (f) how many responses mentioned that the Chief Science Officer should be independent; (g) how many responses mentioned that the Chief Science Officer should be permanent; (h) how many responses mentioned that the Chief Science Officer should be established through legislation; (i) how many responses mentioned that the Chief Science Officer should report or provide advice to all Members of Parliament; (j) how many responses mentioned that the government should establish a Parliamentary Science Officer; (k) what is the exact method the government is using to analyze and evaluate the consultation results; (l) will the government be releasing these consultation results, including analysis and conclusions, to the public; and (m) apart from the consultations, what are the other factors that the government is considering in the creation of the Chief Science Officer?

(Return tabled)

*Question No. 225—**Mr. Kennedy Stewart:**

With regard to funding for basic scientific research and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Main Science and Technology Indicators: what was Canada's "basic research expenditure as a percentage of GDP" for each year since 2000?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 226—**Mr. Richard Cannings:**

With regard to the operations and rail holdings in British Columbia of the Kettle Falls International Railway: (a) under current legislation, does the Kettle Falls International Railway require permission from Transport Canada or the government to remove existing rail lines that it services; (b) has Kettle Falls International Railway been grandfathered in any previous changes to legislation that would have exempted it from any such requirements; (c) has Kettle Falls International Railway requested any permission to remove rail lines it holds in and around the community of Grand Forks, British Columbia, and if so, have they received such approval and when did they receive this approval; and (d) what are the criteria that must be met in order for a railway to receive permission to pull up rails servicing a community or business?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 227—**Mr. Richard Cannings:**

With regard to the Species at Risk Act, where are the following species in the listing process: (a) Meadowlark, Eastern - *Sturnella magna*; Swallow, Barn - *Hirundo rustica*; Sturgeon, Atlantic - *Acipenser oxyrinchus*; Lamprey, Silver - *Ichthyomyzon unicuspis*; Bluefin Tuna, Atlantic - *Thunnus thynnus*; Eulachon - *Thaleichthys pacificus*; Clubtail Olive - *Stylurus olivaceus*; Crawling Water Beetle, Hungerford's - *Brychius hungerfordi*; Cuckoo Bee, Macropis - *Epeoloides pilosulus*; Emerald, Hine's - *Somatochlora hineana*; Tachinid Fly, Dune - *Germaria angustata*; Hickorynut - *Obovaria olivaria*; Lichen, Batwing Vinyl - *Leptogium platynum*; Lichen, Peacock Vinyl - *Leptogium polycarpum*; Sandpiper, Buff-breasted - *Tryngites subruficollis*; Minnow, Plains - *Hybognathus placitus*; Skate, Smooth - *Malacoraja senta*; Skate, Thorny - *Amblyraja radiata*; Mantleslug, Magnum - *Magnipelta mycophaga*; Swallow, Bank - *Riparia riparia*; Tiger Moth, Island - *Grammia complicata*; Lilliput - *Toxolasma parvum*; Wartyback, Threehorn - *Obliquaria reflexa*; Slug, Haida Gwaii - *Staalaa gwaii*; Braya, Hairy - *Braya pilosa*; Pea, Silky Beach - *Lathyrus littoralis*; Grebe, Western - *Aechmophorus occidentalis*; Salamander, Wandering - *Aneides vagrans*; Trout, Rainbow - *Oncorhynchus mykiss*; Bumble Bee, Gypsy Cuckoo - *Bombus bohemicus*; Bumble Bee occidentalis subspecies, Western - *Bombus occidentalis occidentalis*; Bumble Bee mckayi subspecies, Western - *Bombus occidentalis mckayi*; Aster, Nahanni - *Symphotrichum nahanniense*; Swift, Black - *Cypseloides niger*; Rattlesnake, Prairie - *Crotalus viridis*; Bumble Bee, Yellow-banded - *Bombus terricola*; Dancer, Vivid - *Argia vivida*; Globelet, Proud - *Patera pennsylvanica*; Lichen, Black-foam - *Anzia colpodes*; Pika, Collared - *Ochotona collaris*; Dogfish, North Pacific Spiny - *Squalus suckleyi*; Burying Beetle, American - *Nicrophorus americanus*; Efferia, Okanagan - *Efferia okanagan*; Draba, Yukon - *Draba yukonensis*; Baccharis, Eastern - *Baccharis halimifolia*; Thrush, Wood - *Hylocichla mustelina*; Wood-pewee, Eastern - *Contopus virens*; Trout, Bull - *Salvelinus confluentus*; Clubtail, Riverine - *Stylurus amnicola*; Duskywing, Mottled - *Erynnis martialis*; Tiger Beetle, Gibson's Big Sand - *Cicindela formosa gibsoni*; Grasshopper, Greenish-white - *Hypochlora alba*; Spider, Georgia Basin Bog - *Gnaphosa snohomish*; Sparrow pratensis subspecies, Grasshopper - *Ammodramus savannarum pratensis*; Hake, White - *Urophycis tenuis*; Skipper, Oregon Branded - *Hesperia colorado oregonia*; Tiger Beetle, Audouin's Night-stalking - *Omus audouini*; Lewisia, Tweedy's - *Lewisiopsis tweedyi*; Waterfan, Eastern - *Peltigera hydrothyria*; Waterfan, Western - *Peltigera gowardii*; Auklet, Cassin's - *Ptychorampus aleuticus*; Phalarope, Red-necked - *Phalaropus lobatus*; Sweat Bee, Sable Island - *Lasioglossum sablense*; Forestsnail, Broad-banded - *Allogona profunda*; Beakrush, Tall - *Rhynchospora macrostachya*; Ironweed, Fascicled - *Vernonia fasciculata*; Pine, Limber - *Pinus flexilis*; Arnica, Griscom's - *Arnica griscomii* ssp. *Griscomii*; Podistera, Yukon - *Podistera yukonensis*; Tassel, Tiny - *Crossidium seriatum*; Stickleback, Little Quarry Lake Benthic Threespine - *Gasterosteus aculeatus*; Borer, Hoptree - *Prays atomocella*; Sheep Moth, Nuttall's - *Hemileuca nuttalli*; Grasshopper, Lake Huron - *Trimerotropis huroniana*; and (b) has the Minister responsible committed to the nine month deadline for the listing of species at risk and followed the letter and intent of the law in starting the nine month period with the receipt of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada assessment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 228—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to the 2016 Census: (a) which departments and agencies have access to individual responses; (b) how many people have access to individual census responses, broken down by (i) department, (ii) agency; and (c) what are the positions and levels of staff that have access to individual census responses, broken down by (i) department, (ii) agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 229—**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:**

With regard to the videos posted on the Prime Minister's YouTube channel and linked to and from the Prime Minister's website: (a) what are the development, preparation, design, production, editing, and uploading costs for each video; (b) what are the costs for staff and contractors involved, broken down by salary, overtime, and other expenses; (c) how many people are working on this project and what are their titles; (d) what equipment is used to produce and edit the videos and how much did this equipment cost; and (e) what are the travel, accommodation, and other expenses involved in filming and producing these videos?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 230—Ms. Karine Trudel:**

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Jonquière, and for each fiscal year since 2010-2011, inclusively: what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 231—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to government advertising between November 4, 2015, and May 12, 2016: (a) what campaigns have been undertaken, broken down by department; and (b) for each campaign listed in (a), what was the (i) budget, (ii) topic, (iii) date it was launched?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 232—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the 2016-2017 Main Estimates and the increase of \$600 000 in funding to modernize the Prime Minister's digital presence: (a) what will the additional funding be used for, broken down by item and expense; (b) how many current full-time equivalents (FTE) are being used to maintain the Prime Minister's website; (c) what will the new proposed FTE count be with the additional funding; (d) what are the current and proposed working hours for staff dedicated to the website; (e) what are the position titles of the staff dedicated to the website; (f) will website staff perform other duties that are not related to the website; (g) what is the current budget for the website; (h) what will be the new proposed budget for the Prime Minister's website, with the additional funding; (i) what are the costs for the website, broken down by labour costs and any other costs; (j) what are the non-labour costs identified in (i); (k) was any one person specifically responsible for directing the changes to the website, in particular those related to modernization, and is this what resulted in the need for the additional funding; (l) if the answer to (k) is in the affirmative, what is this person's title and position; (m) when will the modernization of the website be completed; and (n) how much of the \$600 000 in additional funding will be dedicated to structural or maintenance costs and, therefore, would need to be continued in the future?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 233—Mr. Mark Strahl:

With regard to a Special Report on Wild Atlantic Salmon in Eastern Canada prepared by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans' Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon: (a) what recommendations have been implemented in whole or in part; (b) of those recommendations in (a), what action was taken to implement each recommendation; (c) of those recommendations identified in (a), by what date was each recommendation implemented; (d) when will the remaining recommendations of the Advisory Committee, in whole or in part, be implemented; and (e) what recommendations, if any, does the Department not intend to implement, and why?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 234—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regard to the property named Harrington Lake, bestowed to the Prime Minister of Canada: (a) what is the total cost of all groceries for all residential structures on the property since October 20, 2015; (b) what is the number of staff working on a full-time or part-time basis since October 20, 2015; (c) what is the total operational annual budget, including all residences and utilities; (d) what is the total cost of landscaping and snow removal since October 20, 2015, broken down by month; (e) what was the budget for 2015-2016, and what is the proposed budget for 2016-2017 to maintain and operate it and all associated costs; (f) what is the cost of recent renovations; (g) what was renovated during recent renovations; and (h) what is the cost of any flooring renovations and any furnishing purchases?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 235—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regard to the Minister of International Trade's trip to Washington to attend a State dinner with President Obama: (a) what is the total cost incurred by the

Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development for all persons, staff included, who attended the trip; (b) who was part of the trip and what are the positions and levels of all staff that traveled to Washington employed by the Department; (c) what was the cost of all accommodation, as well as the names of hotels and the per diem included for those attending; (d) what is the total amount of any outstanding claims; (e) what is the total number of outstanding claims; and (f) what are the positions and levels of those people who have outstanding claims?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 236—Mr. Blaine Calkins:

With regard to the Government House Leaders' comments on May 12, 2016, concerning agreements signed during the Washington visit to attend a State dinner with President Obama: (a) how many agreements were signed; (b) when will the agreements be tabled in the House; and (c) what departments signed agreements in Washington?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 237—Mr. David Yurdiga:

With regard to the Nutrition North Canada subsidy program, as of the end of 2015, what businesses and organizations received subsidy, broken down by (i) their names, (ii) the amount of their subsidy, (iii) the municipality they serve?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 238—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to employment levels at the National Research Council, for each year since 2005: (a) what was the total number of employees (full-time equivalents); (b) what was the total number of researchers, scientists, or engineers; (c) what was the total number of employees with doctorates, broken down by job category; and (d) what was the total number of project managers or business support staff?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 239—Mr. Kennedy Stewart:

With regard to the statements made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions during Private Members' Business on May 10, 2016: has the government received a legal opinion or analysis regarding the constitutionality of Bill C-237, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (gender equity), and, if so, (i) by whom was it written, (ii) on what date was it prepared, (iii) on what date was it received by the Office of the Minister of Democratic Institutions and the Office of the Minister of Status of Women?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 240—**Mr. Murray Rankin:**

With regard to the statement made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on May 12, 2016, in relation to the Magnitsky case: (a) what information has been made available to Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) staff doing border checks, so they are able to identify during a border check a person involved in the Magnitsky case, and therefore able to prevent their entry into Canada; (b) has there been a precedent, since the killing of Sergei Magnitsky, whereby a person has been refused entry to Canada at the border as a result of their role in this case; (c) has there been a precedent, since the killing of Sergei Magnitsky, where a person with a role in this case has been allowed entry into Canada; (d) from 2009-2016, how many people have been refused entry at the border on the grounds of their involvement in the Magnitsky case; (e) from 2009-2016, how many people with a role in the Magnitsky case have been allowed entry into Canada; (f) how many people would presently not be eligible to enter Canada under the terms of the current Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (S.C. 2001, c. 27) because of their role in the Magnitsky case; (g) how many people with a role in the Magnitsky case currently hold Canadian visas; (h) how many trips to Canada have been made by people with a role in the Magnitsky case since November 16, 2009; (i) does CBSA currently screen people at the border on the basis of their inclusion on the United States (US) Magnitsky list to prevent their entry into Canada; (j) does CBSA currently screen people at the border on the basis of their inclusion on the European Parliament's list to prevent their entry into Canada; (k) does CBSA currently screen people at the border on the basis of information from the Magnitsky family to prevent the possibility of entry into Canada of people who were involved in the Magnitsky case; (l) from November 16, 2009, to present, has the CBSA screened people at the border on the basis of all publicly available information (including information in Russian) to prevent entry into Canada by persons with a role in the Magnitsky case; (m) how many people with a role in the Magnitsky case have applied for a Canadian visa since November 16, 2009; (n) if the government does not have the information requested in (m), what is the explanation; (o) how many people with a role in the Magnitsky case have been refused Canadian visas since November 16, 2009; and (p) does the government or the Consulate General of Canada in Russia currently screen applications to deny visas to people (i) included on the US Magnitsky list, (ii) included on the European Magnitsky list, (iii) based on information from Magnitsky family, (iv) based on all publicly available information, including information in Russian?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 242—**Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to the \$26 million available through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada for fire protection services for First Nations communities: (a) how much of the \$8.2 million allocated for capital spending (equipment and infrastructure) has been used since 2006, broken down by year; (b) which First Nations communities have used this fund to update firefighting equipment; (c) how much of the \$8.2 million was used for fire protection infrastructure; (d) what is the surplus remaining annually since 2006, broken down by year; and (e) how is the surplus, if there is one, to be distributed in the year that follows?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 244—**Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to Infrastructure Canada: (a) what amounts of announced infrastructure funds have gone unspent in the previous five years (2011-2015), broken down by year; (b) where have the unspent infrastructure funds been transferred; and (c) how much of these unspent infrastructure funds have been transferred to top up the Gas Tax Fund in each of the previous five years (2011-2015), broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 245—**Mr. David Yurdiga:**

With regard to improving primary and secondary education for First Nations Children, as indicated in the 2016 Budget: (a) what targets and criteria has the government identified as components of improving primary and secondary education for First Nations children; (b) for each target or criteria in (a), what consultations were undertaken to identify these as components leading to improvement for primary and secondary education of First Nations children; (c) for each consultation in (b), (i) what was the date, (ii) what was the location, (iii) what organizations and individuals were consulted, (iv) what briefings or submissions were included as part of the consultation process; (d) what are the components of the anticipated program growth costs associated with the government's investment in the current on reserve primary

and secondary education system from \$226.3 million in 2016-2017 to \$465.5 million in 2020-2021; (e) for each component in (d), what are the details of the program growth costs, broken down by (i) the department or agency providing the funding, (ii) the program to which the funding will be provided, (iii) the nature or purpose of the program, (iv) the amount of funds the program is anticipated to receive for each fiscal year from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021 inclusively; (f) what are the components of the anticipated program growth costs associated with the government's investment in the supporting system transformation to improve education outcomes from \$60.1 million in 2016-2017 to \$332.5 million in 2020-2021; (g) for each component in (f), what are the details of the program growth costs broken down by (i) the department or agency providing the funding, (ii) the program to which the funding will be provided, (iii) the nature or purpose of the program, (iv) the amount of funds the program is anticipated to receive for each fiscal year from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021 inclusively; (h) what are the components of the anticipated program growth costs associated with the government's investment in the fostering better learning environments in First Nations schools from \$96.6 million in 2016-2017 to \$208.8 million in 2020-2021; (i) for each component in (h), what are the details of the program growth costs, broken down by, (i) the department or agency providing the funding, (ii) the program to which the funding will be provided, (iii) the nature or purpose of the program, (iv) the amount of funds the program is anticipated to receive for each fiscal year from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021 inclusively?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 246—**Mr. Andrew Scheer:**

With respect to all government owned aircraft and helicopters, since November 4, 2015: what is the complete and detailed list of all instances where the aircraft was used to transport Ministers or their staff, and for each instance, (i) what was the origin of the flight, (ii) what was the final destination, (iii) were there any intermediary stops, and, if so, what were they (iv) which passengers were on the flight, (v) who authorized the flight, (vi) what was the total cost, (vii) what was the cost for the flight crew, (viii) what was the cost for fuel, (ix) what was the cost for food and beverages?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 247—**Mr. Guy Caron:**

With regard to the Canada Summer Jobs program, in 2016: what is the total amount of funding allocated, broken down by constituency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 248—**Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to the Columbia River Treaty (CRT): (a) who is expected to lead the Canadian delegation for the CRT renegotiations; (b) what steps has the government taken to appoint a negotiator to renegotiate for the CRT; (c) what steps has the government undergone to date to facilitate a renegotiation of the CRT or strengthen its bargaining position; (d) has the government identified the required scope of a renegotiation of the CRT; (e) how many briefings were made available to Canadian ministers and what were the titles and dates of these briefings; (f) what kind of funding has been allocated to fill in knowledge gaps in advance of renegotiation, whether in the form of studies, reports, consultations, or otherwise; (g) is the International Joint Commission expected to provide advice to negotiators; (h) does the government plan to respond to the letter sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on March 18, 2016, by some individuals from British Columbia and titled 'Re: Columbia River Treaty Renegotiations' and, if so, when; (i) has any analysis or study been done to see if Environment and Climate Change Canada has the necessary resources to deal effectively with this issue; and (j) has any funding been set aside specifically for Environment and Climate Change Canada to deal with this issue, and if so, how much?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 249—**Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to the Canadian trade office in Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq: (a) what is the total annual operational cost, including, but not limited to, (i) salaries, (ii) security, (iii) building and supply costs; (b) what is the estimated cost to upgrade this trade office to a full consulate; (c) what is the estimated total annual cost of running a full consulate in Erbil; and (d) what is the total annual operational cost of other consulates, broken down by salaries, security, building, and supply costs, in the Middle East, including but not limited to (i) Jeddah, (ii) Istanbul, (iii) Dubai?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 250—**Mr. Blaine Calkins:**

With regard to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities and the decision to renovate and refurbish his office: (a) was the contract for renovations, including flooring and painting, for the Minister and the Deputy Ministers offices, as well as for all staff, openly tendered and, if so, on what date was (i) the tender first posted, (ii) the winner selected, (iii) the work begun; (b) was the contract for a furniture supplier openly tendered and, if so, on what date was (i) the tender first posted, (ii) the winner selected, (iii) the work begun; and (c) what were the total number and the names of all bidders for both renovations and furniture?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 251—**Mr. Andrew Scheer:**

With regard to all public service employees who are currently on leave from their departmental positions but have received appointments as exempt staff: (a) what are the group, classification, level and department from which each individual is on leave; and (b) what are their titles and for which Minister's office do they currently work, including the Prime Minister's Office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 252—**Mr. Guy Caron:**

With regard to the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program from the time it was launched until June 1, 2016, inclusively: (a) what amounts were allocated to each constituency; and (b) which projects were approved and which were not in the first round of calls for proposals, broken down by constituency?

(Return tabled)

*Question No. 253—**Mr. Kennedy Stewart:**

With regard to the Ministerial Panel examining the proposed Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) Project: (a) what process was used to select panel members; (b) what salary is each panel member receiving; (c) what per diem is each panel member receiving; (d) what is the total amount budgeted to support the work of the panel from now until November 2016; (e) of the total budget in (d), what amount is allocated to support the panel to (i) review and consider input from the public via an on-line portal, (ii) meet with local stakeholder representatives in communities along the pipeline and shipping route, (iii) meet with Indigenous groups who wish to share their views with the panel, (iv) submit a report to the Minister of Natural Resources no later than November 1, 2016; (f) how much funding will be made available to local stakeholder representatives who wish to share their views with the panel; (g) how much funding will be made available to Indigenous groups who wish to share their views with the panel; (h) what measures will the panel take to seek and include the views of those who were previously rejected from participating as commentators or intervenors in the National Energy Board's review of the project; (i) what measures will the government take to promote and advertise the online questionnaire for Canadians to submit their feedback on the TMX Project; (j) will the raw data and results from the online questionnaire be released to the public; (k) what statistical methods will the panel use to analyze the input received from the online questionnaire and decide how to weigh the results in their final report; (l) does the panel's mandate include providing a recommendation, as part of their final report to the Minister, regarding whether the government should approve or reject Kinder Morgan's application; and (m) what is the government's definition of "social license"?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 256—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to Service Canada's national in-person service delivery network, for each Service Canada Centre: (a) how many full-time employees (FTEs) were there on October 19, 2015; (b) how many FTEs are there today; (c) which offices have changed their hours of service, and for each office that has changed its hours of service, what are the new hours; (d) what is the service standard metric (number of client visits) that determine whether or not a Service Canada Centre changes its hours of service or closes altogether; (e) what is the forward looking strategic in-person footprint service delivery strategy and which locations plan to close in the next four years; and (f) how many FTEs are planning to be working in Citizen Service Branch, directly for in-person on October 1, 2019?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 257—**Mr. Larry Miller:**

With regard to government credit cards that have been assigned to exempt staff, Parliamentary Secretaries, and Ministers since November 4, 2015: (a) what is the total amount charged to these cards; and (b) for each assigned credit card, what is the (i) department, (ii) title of the individual card holder, (iii) date the card was assigned, (iv) current outstanding balance?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 258—**Mr. Larry Miller:**

With regard to relocation costs for exempt staff moving to Ottawa since October 19, 2015: (a) what is the total cost paid by the government for relocation services and hotel stays related to moving these staff to Ottawa; and (b) for each individual reimbursement, what is the (i) total payout, (ii) cost for moving services, (iii) cost for hotel stays?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 259—**Mr. Larry Miller:**

With regard to overtime pay for departmental communications staff since November 4, 2015: what is the total cost of this overtime, broken down by (i) department, (ii) individual communication staff title?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 260—**Mr. Ted Falk:**

With regard to the organization Canada 2020: (a) since November 4, 2015, how much money has the government provided to Canada 2020 in contracts, grants, or in the sponsorship of events, broken down by item; and (b) has the government agreed to work with Canada 2020 in any future projects, and if so, which ones?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 261—**Mr. Ted Falk:**

With regard to staffing at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO): how many people are employed in the PMO at the salary rate of (i) \$150 000 or more, (ii) \$100 000 - \$149 999.99, (iii) \$65 000 - \$99 999.99, (iv) \$45 000 - \$64 999.99, (v) less than \$45 000?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 264—**Mr. Phil McColeman:**

With regard to compensation of exempt staff in Ministerial offices: for each Minister's office, including the Office of the Prime Minister, what is the number of exempt staff being paid a salary above the maximum for their position as given in section 3.3.1.1 of the Treasure Board Policies for Ministers' Offices?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 265—**Hon. Peter Kent:**

With regard to Global Affairs Canada's International Development Program: (a) what is the total amount of international humanitarian aid allocated to (i) the West Bank, (ii) the Gaza Strip; (b) who is in charge of managing Canada's contributions once inside these territories; (c) how does Global Affairs Canada ensure the aid gets to the civilians who need it; and (d) does Global Affairs Canada follow up with these parties to inquire on how these funds were spent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 266—**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:**

With regard to existing or planned government IT projects over \$1 million: (a) what is the list of each project including a brief description; and (b) for each project listed in (a), what is the (i) total budget, (ii) estimated completion date?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 268—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:**

With regard to spending by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council: (a) what is the total spent since November 1, 2015; and (b) what is the breakdown of its spending by sector, and specifically for (i) agriculture, (ii) forestry, (iii) mining, (iv) fossil fuels?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 270—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to federal spending on the prevention of violence against Aboriginal women and girls: (a) how much money has been spent so far on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls; (b) how much has been invested into Indigenous communities to provide education in order to prevent violence against women and children; and (c) how many additional front line resources has the government contributed to Indigenous communities to address the issue of violence against women and children?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 271—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the \$1.4 million requested by the Privy Council for the new Senate appointment process: (a) how many positions does the Privy Council plan to create in order to assist the secretariat with the Senate Appointment Advisory Board; (b) of the positions in (a), how many have been filled, and for each one of the positions what is the (i) job title, (ii) pay range, (iii) date upon which it was filled; (c) for the positions in (a), what was the cost to acquire new office space for those people, as well as related costs including (i) furniture, (ii) moving costs, (iii) IT costs, (iv) other costs; (d) for the positions in (a), how many are full-time permanent positions; (e) how much has been budgeted for the website and is this included in the \$1.4 million requested; (f) with regard to the creation of the new website, (i) when will it be ready, (ii) who is designing the website, (iii) who is doing the work to create the site, (iv) on what template is this website being created?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 272—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the new application process for Senate appointments: (a) how many applications were received for the first Senate appointments; (b) of the applications in (a), how many of those were unsolicited applications and how many were nominated by (i) government employees, (ii) parliamentary staff, (iii) Members of Parliament within the governing party; and (c) how were the applications received, and specifically, how many were received by (i) e-mail, (ii) phone?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 273—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to costs associated with renovating, redesigning, and re-furnishing the Prime Minister's residence at Harrington Lake, since November 4, 2015: what is the total cost of any spending on renovating, redesigning, and re-furnishing the residence, broken down by (i) total cost, (ii) moving services, (iii) renovating services, (iv) painting, (v) flooring, (vi) furniture, (vii) appliances, (viii) art installation, (ix) all other expenditures?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 274—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 that have been approved by the Minister of Democratic Institutions or her officials, what are the details of these contracts, broken down by contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 275—Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to inspections conducted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency: (a) what is the total number of inspections conducted since November 4, 2015, broken down by province; (b) of the inspections in (a), how many revealed (i) listeria, (ii) E. coli, (iii) salmonella; and (c) of the inspections in (b), how many led to recalls?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 278—Mr. Robert Kitchen:

With regard to Global Affairs Canada: (a) what were the total costs incurred as a result of changing the department's name; (b) what related costs were incurred to the reflect the department's new name, and specifically what was spent on (i) signage, (ii) stationary, (iii) business cards, (iv) promotional materials?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 279—Mr. Robert Kitchen:

With regard to Environment and Climate Change Canada: (a) what were the total costs incurred as a result of changing the department's name; (b) what related costs were incurred to reflect the department's new name, and specifically what was spent on (i) signage, (ii) stationary, (iii) business cards, (iv) promotional materials?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 280—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to the Cabinet retreat in Kananaskis, Alberta: (a) what was the total cost for the retreat; (b) for any government employees with expenses related to the retreat, what were their departments and titles, and their costs for (i) accommodations, (ii) airfare, (iii) land transport, including taxis, (iii) meals, (iv) all other claims; and (c) what were the costs related to individuals not employed by the government who were invited to attend the retreat?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 281—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to the Cabinet retreat in St. Andrew's, New Brunswick: (a) what was the total cost for the retreat; (b) for any government employees with expenses related to the retreat, what were their departments and titles, and their costs for (i) accommodations, (ii) airfare, (iii) land transport, including taxis, (iii) meals, (iv) all other claims; and (c) what were the costs related to individuals not employed by the government who were invited to attend the retreat?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 282—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to exempt staff working out of Minister's regional offices: (a) how many exempt staff currently use the Minister's regional offices as their primary office, broken down by department and regional office; and (b) what is the current budget for those staff, broken down by department and regional office?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 283—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to government spending since November 4, 2015: how much money has been spent, broken down by department, on (i) taxi services, (ii) promotional materials, including but not limited to pens, stationary, mugs, and stickers, (iii) floral arrangements?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 285—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to companies on the Temporary Foreign Worker Ineligible Employers list: how many companies were listed as of (i) current day, (ii) prior to November 4, 2015?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 287—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:**

With regard to the Global Affairs Canada Heads of Mission Conference that occurred on June 9 and 10, 2016: (a) what was the total cost of the conference; (b) how many Heads of Mission attended the conference, broken down by each individual country; (c) for each attendee, what was the cost associated with attending the conference including (i) travel, (ii) accommodations, (iii) vehicle rentals, (iv) per diems, (v) all other expenses; (d) how many hospitality events were hosted during the conference, and for each one what was the cost (i) in total, (ii) for food, (iii) for alcohol, (iv) for renting the venue; (e) did the government consider doing an online web conference, and if not, why; and (f) if the government did consider doing an online web conference, what was the estimated cost?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 289—Hon. Ed Fast:

With regard to Canada's efforts to prevent further pine beetle infestations: (a) what is the total amount of government funding allocated for pine beetle prevention research for each of the fiscal years from 2014 to present; (b) what is the total amount of government funding allocated for pine beetle mitigation and prevention; and (c) what strategy is in place to prevent the eastward spread of the pine beetle?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 290—Hon. Ed Fast:

With regard to Canada's current commitment to combat climate change in foreign countries: (a) what projects are currently receiving funding from the government to combat or mitigate climate change in foreign countries; and (b) for each project listed in (a), (i) how much funding will it receive, (ii) which organizations are dispersing the funds, (iii) does the government plan to conduct audits on the money allocated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 291—Hon. Ed Fast:

With regard to meeting Canada's 2020 Aichi conservation targets: (a) which geographic areas are currently being examined by the government for protection; and (b) for each geographic area listed in (a), (i) what is the size of the geographic area under examination, (ii) what classification is proposed for each protected area, (iii) what selection criteria have been used by the government to determine the priority areas, (iv) what are the projected costs for the protection of each area?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 292—Hon. Ed Fast:

With regard to Canada's provision for critical infrastructure to prevent floods: (a) what steps has the federal government taken to work with municipal and provincial authorities in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley to develop disaster management plans; (b) how much federal infrastructure funding will be provided in the next fiscal year to address flood management in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley; and (c) what projects are slated to receive federal funding in the 2017-2018 fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 293—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to federal funding in the riding of Lethbridge, between January 1, 2012, and June 1, 2016: what funding has been provided to organizations, institutions or projects (i) in the current riding of Lethbridge, (ii) in the previous riding of Lethbridge, (iii) for the towns and cities of Lethbridge, Picture Butte, Coaldale, and Coalhurst, if the information is not available by constituency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 294—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to the Youth Employment Program: what projects were approved under all streams, from October 18, 2015 to June 9, 2016?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 295—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to Minister's Offices within the national capital region: (a) what fit-up, renovation, information technology, or furniture purchases were authorized by the Minister, broken down by department; (b) what fit-up, renovation, information technology, or furniture purchases were authorized by the Deputy Minister or other departmental officials, broken down by department; and (c) what are all expenses related to the purchase of bottled water, broken down by department?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 296—Ms. Rachael Harder:

With regard to the Employment Insurance (EI) Benchmarking study that was done for Employment and Social Development Canada: (a) what are the details of the final report and presentation that were shared with the Minister's office or the Deputy Minister's office; and (b) what is the total amount and percentage of the total budget that the EI fund pays for each of the following divisions within the department, (i) the Deputy Minister's office budget, (ii) Income Security, (iii) Social Development, (iv) Skills and Employment, (v) Integrity and Processing, (vi) Citizen-centred Services, (vii) Labour, (viii) Internal Services, (ix) Executive Services, (x) Strategic Services?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 297—Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to the Canada Summer Jobs Program for the summer of 2016: (a) how much funding has been approved, broken down by riding; (b) how much funding was requested, broken down by riding; (c) how many program requests were turned down, broken down by riding; (d) how much funding was allocated, broken down by riding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 301—Mr. Alexander Nuttall:

With regard to every meeting between department-specific Treasury Board analysts and Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Infrastructure Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada between October 19, 2015, and June 30, 2016: (i) what was the date, (ii) what topics were discussed during the meeting, (iii) which individuals were present, (iv) were the results reported to senior staff (Director General or higher)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 302—Mr. Alexander Nuttall:

With regard to each meeting between the Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and external stakeholders related to the government's "Innovation Strategy" between October 19, 2015, and June 30, 2016: (i) what was the date, (ii) which people from which organizations were present, (iii) which were reported in subsequent briefings to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 303—Mr. Blake Richards:

With regard to external stakeholder meetings on softwood lumber negotiations with the United States between October 19, 2015, and June 30, 2016, for each consultation: (i) what was the date, (ii) which people from which organizations were present, (iii) what topics were discussed during the meeting, (iv) did it result in a briefing to the Minister of International Trade?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 304—Mr. Blake Richards:

With regard to each meeting with external stakeholders about Canada's trade relationship with China between October 19, 2015, and June 30, 2016: (i) what was the date, (ii) which people from which organizations were present, (iii) what topics were discussed during the meeting, (iv) did it result in a briefing to the Minister of International Trade?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 305—Mr. Mark Warawa:**

With regard to taxes for small businesses: (a) which stakeholders did the government consult on its decision to reverse the planned small business tax reductions; and (b) which stakeholders have met with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Small Business and Tourism, or members of their staff to discuss this change?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 306—Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to the Advisory Council on Economic Growth: (a) what is the planned budget for the panel; (b) what is the number of meetings taking place with stakeholders; (c) what is the number of meetings taking place that are open to the public and for each meeting what advertising was undertaken to make the public aware of the meeting; (d) for each meeting, what are the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) number of people attending, (iv) organizations represented by attendees and contributors, (v) costs associated with the attendance of a minister or ministerial staff member, if applicable, (vi) travel-related costs associated with the attendance of departmental staff, (vii) aggregated costs dispersed to organizations or individuals in order to support their attendance at or contribution to the meeting, (viii) total cost associated with the meeting not already listed, for example, for room rentals, catering, translation, provision of documentation, and other related costs; and (e) what is the total spending to date on the Council?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 310—Mr. Len Webber:

With regard to the government-appointed panel which will conduct a formal review of Canada Post: (a) what is the planned budget for the panel; (b) how many meetings will take place with stakeholders; (c) how many of its meetings will be open to the public, and for each one, what advertising was undertaken to make the public aware of the meeting; (d) for each meeting of the panel, what are the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) number of people attending, (iv) organizations represented by attendees and contributors, (v) costs associated with the attendance of a minister or ministerial staff member, (vi) travel-related costs associated with the attendance of departmental staff, (vii) aggregated costs dispersed to organizations or individuals in order to support their attendance at or contribution to the meeting, (viii) total cost associated with the meeting not already listed, including room rentals, catering, translation, provision of documentation, and other related costs; and (e) what is the total spending to date on the panel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 311—Mr. Len Webber:

With regard to the status of all Canada First Defence Strategy projects: (a) what are the detailed cost estimates and estimated timelines for completion for all projects listed under this National Defence initiative as of June 10, 2016; and (b) which of the cost estimates or timelines have been adjusted since November 4, 2015?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 315—Hon. Tony Clement:

With regard to the visit of the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, Wang Yi, to Ottawa on June 1, 2016, to meet the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister: (a) on what date was the request made to the government of Canada by the government of the People's Republic of China for a meeting between the Prime Minister of Canada and the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China; (b) was the request mentioned in (a) granted immediately; (c) if the answer to (b) is in the negative, how many further requests were made before a meeting was arranged; (d) if the answer to (b) is in the affirmative, are these requests common practise; (e) what was discussed at the meeting between the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China and the Prime Minister; (f) were the cases of Kevin and Julia Garratt brought to the attention of China's Foreign Minister by the Prime Minister of Canada; (g) if the answer to (f) is in the affirmative, what was the response from China; (h) if the answer to (f) is in the negative, why was the subject not mentioned; (i) what topics were discussed during the meeting between the Prime Minister of Canada and the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China; (j) what was the total cost of the visit by the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China; (k) did the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Prime Minister speak to the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China regarding the incident between the Chinese Foreign Minister and journalist Amanda Connolly after the News

Conference to express Canada's concerns; (l) were the cases of Kevin and Julia Garratt brought to the attention of Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China by the Minister of Foreign Affairs; (m) if the answer to (l) is in the affirmative, what was the response from China; (n) if the answer to (l) is in the negative, why was the subject not mentioned; (o) were human rights discussed at the meeting between the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China and the Minister of Global Affairs; and (p) what topics were discussed during the meeting between the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China and the Minister of Foreign Affairs?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 316—Hon. Tony Clement:

With regard to statements made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs regarding the Sergei Magnitsky case: (a) have persons identified as having a role in the detention and murder of Sergei Magnitsky been denied entry into Canada under existing laws; (b) does the Canada Border Services Agency currently have a list of those persons identified as having a role in the detention and murder of Sergei Magnitsky available to its agents; (c) how do existing laws prevent the entry of those identified as having a role in the detention and murder of Sergei Magnitsky from entering Canada; (d) is the government consulting with other jurisdictions who have passed legislation related to the Sergei Magnitsky case; (e) if the answer to (d) is in the affirmative, how detailed is the information sharing; (f) if the answer to (d) is in the negative, how does the government plan to refuse entry to those responsible in the Magnitsky case without detailed information; (g) does the government plan to draft regulations to accompany existing laws specific to those identified in the Magnitsky case; (i) on what date was it determined that existing laws are sufficient enough to refuse entry into Canada to those identified in the Magnitsky case; (j) for the determination made in (i), at what level at Global Affairs Canada was this determination made; (k) what information was taken into consideration in making determinations related to (i) and (j); (l) what are the details of any documents related to the determination mentioned in (i), (j) and (k)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 317—Hon. Gerry Ritz:

With regard to stakeholder consultations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership: (a) how many meetings were held between the government and Canadian stakeholders on this topic between January 1, 2012, and October 19, 2015; (b) of the meetings in (a), what was the breakdown of those meetings by type and name of organization; (c) how many meetings were held between the government and Canadian stakeholders on this topic between October 19, 2015, and June 30, 2016; (d) of the meetings in (c), what was the breakdown of those meetings by type and name of organization; (e) how many written or electronic submissions did the government receive on this topic from Canadian stakeholders between January 1, 2012, and October 19, 2015; (f) of the submissions in (e), what was the breakdown of these submissions by type and name of organization; (g) how many written or electronic submissions on this topic did the government receive from Canadian stakeholders between October 19, 2015, and June 30, 2016; (h) of the submissions in (g) what was the breakdown of these submissions by type and name of organization?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 318—Hon. Pierre Poilievre:

With regard to federal buildings and properties on Sparks Street, between Elgin Street and Bay Street, in Ottawa, held by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Public Works and Government Services Canada, and the National Capital Commission: (a) how many retail units are available for commercial lease, and for each one (i) what is its street address, (ii) what is the cost to lease it, (iii) is it vacant or occupied; (b) for the units in (a), what is the total number of vacant and occupied units; and (c) including, but not limited to the Wellington Building, how many of these federal buildings and properties are currently undergoing renovations, and for each project, (i) what is the expected total cost, (ii) when was the start date of work, (iii) when is the expected date of completion?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 320—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Global Affairs Canada since November 1, 2015: what are the (i) vendors names, (ii) contract reference numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contract values, (vii) final contract values, if different from the original contract's value?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 324—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the government's leased property in the National Capital Region (NCR): (a) what is the square footage of all property leased or owned by the government in the NCR, broken down by occupied and vacant properties; and (b) for items that were not in use as of June 14, 2016, but were located at one of these properties, what is the total inventory of all (i) furniture, (ii) appliances?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 325—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:

With regard to lifelong disability pensions: (a) what is the Department of Veterans Affairs' current projection for returning to lifelong disability pensions; (b) which stakeholders have been consulted directly by the government on providing advice to the implementation of lifelong disability pensions; (c) has the government hired any consultants to provide recommendations on returning to life-long disability pensions, and, if yes, (i) who, (ii) which firms, (iii) at what cost; (d) have any policy reports on disability pensions been provided to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, and, if so, what are the names of the reports; (e) has the Department of Finance provided any recommendations to the Department of Veterans Affairs on financing lifelong pensions; (f) has the Department of Veterans Affairs established a unit or team to study lifelong pensions, and, if so, how many people are on the team and what are their pay levels; (g) has the Privy Council Office or the Department of Veterans Affairs established a deliverology unit to implement lifelong pensions; and (h) what is the recommendation of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the Minister of Veterans Affairs on the cost of implementing lifelong disability pensions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 327—Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to the collection of taxes in the constituency of North Okanagan—Shuswap: (a) what was the total amount of taxes collected by the government in the constituency; and (b) what were the individual contributions to this amount, broken down by (i) specific commercial sectors, (ii) individual tax payers?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 330—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to Operation IMPACT and the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) support for the international coalition against ISIS: (a) who was consulted in the government's decision to change Canada's contribution; (b) how many Canadian troops are currently deployed, broken down by (i) location, (ii) occupation; (c) how many groups of Canadian troops, including the group size, have been deployed on or since February 8, 2016; (d) what has been the additional cost incurred as a result of withdrawing Canada's CF-18s from theatre; (e) what is the planned cost for increasing the number of personnel on the ground; (f) have any changes been made to the force protection measures since February 8, 2016; (g) were the rules of engagement changed on or since February 8, 2016; and (h) are the support crews for the Royal Canadian Air Force's contribution of one CC-150 Polarix, up to two CC-140 Aurora, and three CH-146 Griffon helicopters included in the total number of CAF members deployed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 331—Mr. James Bezan:

With respect to the Future Fighter Capability program at the Department of National Defence: (a) with respect to flying a mixed fleet of CF-18 Hornets and Boeing F/A Super Hornets, what are the (i) anticipated additional training costs, (ii) anticipated additional maintenance costs, (iii) total cost estimates for flying a mixed fleet of CF-18 Hornets and Boeing F-18 Super Hornets; (b) what is the anticipated life cycle of the F-18 Super Hornet; (c) who has been consulted regarding the possible purchase of the F-18 Super Hornet, and how were they consulted; (d) what

is the current status of the CF-18 life extension project; (e) how much funding has been allocated to the CF-18 life extension project; (f) have any contracts or memorandums of understanding been signed for the CF-18 life extension project; (g) what is the current timeline for the Department's study of the CF-18 life extension project; (h) what aspects of the CF-18 life extension project are being studied, and how will these aspects be measured; (i) what is the estimated cost of the study identified in (h); (j) is the cost of the study identified in (h) accounted for in the overall cost of the CF-18 replacement project; (k) how much has been spent on the CF-18 life extension project to date; (l) how much was spent on the CF-18 life extension project from November 3, 2015, to present; (m) what is the Department's current estimated per unit cost for (i) a Boeing F-18 Super Hornet, (ii) a F-35A Lightning, (iii) a Saab Grippen, (iv) a Dassault Rafale, (v) a Eurofighter Typhoon; and (n) what rationale does the Department have for an interim purchase of F-18 Super Hornets?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 332—Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to the Canada Summer Jobs Program from 2006-2016 for the federal electoral districts which make up the Waterloo region: (a) how much funding was provided, broken down by year and electoral district; and (b) how many jobs were created, broken down by year and electoral district?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 333—Mr. Larry Maguire:

With regard to Voter Information Cards distributed by Elections Canada during the 2015 federal election: (a) how many cards were printed; (b) how many cards were distributed; (c) how many cards distributed to individuals whose information was later revised; (d) how many cards were distributed to individuals who were ineligible to cast a ballot; (e) of the individuals identified in (d), how many of the were ineligible to vote due to (i) non-citizenship, (ii) death, (iii) age, (iv) other reason; (f) how many cards were returned as undeliverable; (g) how many cards were used by individuals as primary identification at the polls; (h) what methodology was used to determine the responses in (a) through (g); (i) what process is used by Elections Canada to determine which individuals are eligible to receive a card; (j) what security features were included on each card; (k) what features were included on the card to ensure that any individual using the card as a means of identification is the person listed on the card; (l) how many individuals who received a card advised Elections Canada of incorrect information listed on the card; (m) how many cards were mailed to addresses where all or part of the voter's name was unavailable; (n) how many cards were sent to "occupant", "tenant", or any other generic term; and (o) what is the general Canada Post delivery error rate for addresses ad mail and first class mail?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 335—Mr. Larry Maguire:

With regard to government funding for the constituency of Brandon—Souris for each fiscal year since 2006-2007, inclusively: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality in which the recipient is located, (iii) date on which funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency providing the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 337—Mr. Randall Garrison:**

With regard to human rights concerns in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) of China and in Tibetan areas of China including in Sichuan, Qinghai, Yunnan, and Gansu: (a) how many requests have been made by Canadian officials and diplomats for access to the TAR and Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Qinghai, Yunnan, and Gansu since 2008, and of those requests, how many were (i) rejected by the Government of China and on what basis, (ii) accepted, and on what dates did Canadian officials and diplomats visit Tibet or Tibetan areas since 2008, (iii) accepted and what restrictions, if any, were imposed by Chinese authorities on these visits; (b) of the requests made by Canadian officials and diplomats for access to the TAR and Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Qinghai, Yunnan, and Gansu since 2008, how many were made for the explicit purpose of monitoring or investigating reports about human rights violations and, of those requests, how many were (i) rejected by the Government of China and on what basis, (ii) accepted, on what dates did Canadian officials and diplomats visit Tibet or Tibetan areas for human rights-related purposes since 2008, (iii) accepted and what restrictions, if any, were imposed by Chinese authorities during those visits; and (c) how many visas to visit Canada have been requested by Chinese or Tibetan officials and diplomats representing the TAR or Tibetan areas of China since 2008 and, of those, how many were (i) rejected by the Government of Canada, (ii) accepted, on what dates did Chinese or Tibetan officials and diplomats representing the TAR or Tibetan areas of China visit Canada, (iii) accepted and what restrictions, if any, were imposed by Canadian authorities during those visits?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 338—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to communications contracts issued by Ministers offices: what contracts have been issued for the provision of communications support, including, but not limited to, speechwriting or media training?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 339—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to government polling and research: (a) how much money has the government spent on polling from November 4, 2015, to June 15, 2016, broken down by (i) department and agencies, (ii) companies contracted to provide polling, (iii) topic of the research; and (b) how much money has the government spent on focus groups from November 4, 2015, to June 15, 2016, broken down by (i) department and agencies, (ii) companies contracted to provide polling, (iii) topic of the research?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 341—Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: what was the total cost incurred by the government for any related spending in the period from February 29, 2016, to present, broken down by (i) total cost, (ii) travel, (iii) accommodations, (iv) room rentals, (v) meals, (vi) all other expenses?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 344—Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to the government's pledged investment in primary and secondary education on-reserve: (a) how are funds to be distributed; (b) when are funds to be distributed; (c) to which reserves are funds to be distributed; and (d) what new accountability measures have been introduced to ensure funds are spent for the purpose designated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 345—Mr. Alupa Clarke:

With regard to the government's decision to resume proceedings in the *Equitas* class action lawsuit, *Scott v. Canada* (Attorney General): (a) what criteria was used to determine that Paul Vickery be reappointed as counsel; (b) since November 3, 2015, if it is a matter of public record, how many meetings has the Minister of Veterans Affairs held with Jim Scott and any other representatives of *Equitas*; (c) when did the Minister of Veterans Affairs give instructions to the Department of Justice in the matter of *Scott v. Canada* (Attorney General); (d) when did the Attorney General give instructions to the Department of Justice in the matter of *Scott v. Canada* (Attorney

General); (e) with respect to costs, since November 3, 2015, (i) what are the total legal costs incurred by the government in the matter of *Scott v. Canada* (Attorney General), (ii) what are the total costs incurred by the Department of Veterans Affairs for research into the matter of *Scott v. Canada* (Attorney General); and (f) what criteria were used by the government to determine that Dan Scott be provided a lump-sum payment of \$41,000 for the injuries he suffered while serving Canada in Afghanistan in 2010?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 346—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regard to government procurement: what are the details of all contracts for the provision of research or speechwriting services to Ministers since November 5, 2015: (a) providing for each such contract (i) the start and end dates, (ii) contracting parties, (iii) file number, (iv) nature or description of the work; and (b) providing, in the case of a contract for speechwriting, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) audience or event at which the speech was, or was intended to be, delivered?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 348—Hon. Gerry Ritz:

With regard to correspondence between the government and the Liberal Party of Canada, what are the file numbers of all ministerial briefings or departmental correspondence between the government and the Liberal Party of Canada since November 5, 2015 broken down by (i) minister or department, (ii) relevant file number, (iii) correspondence or file type, (iv) date, (v) purpose, (vi) origin, (vii) intended destination, (viii) other officials copied or involved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 349—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to government advertising: (a) how much has each department, agency, or Crown corporation spent to purchase advertising on Facebook for each fiscal year since November 5, 2015; (b) what was the (i) nature, (ii) purpose, (iii) target audience or demographic, (iv) cost of each individual advertising purchase; (c) what was the Media Authorization Number for each advertising purchase; and (d) what are the file numbers of all documents, reports, or memoranda concerning each advertising purchase or of any post-campaign assessment or evaluation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 350—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to government-wide advertising activities, broken down by department, agency, and institution, since December 1, 2015: (a) how many advertisements have been (i) created in total, broken down by type (cinema, internet, out-of-home, print dailies, print magazine, weekly/community newspapers, radio, television), and also broken down by year, (ii) given an identification number, a name or a Media Authorization Number (ADV number); (b) what is the identification number, name or ADV number for each advertisement listed in (a)(ii); and (c) for the answers to (a)(i) and (a)(ii), what is (i) the length (in seconds or minutes) of each radio advertisement, television advertisement, cinema advertisement, internet advertisement, (ii) the cost for the production or creation of each advertisement, (iii) the companies used to produce or create each advertisement, (iv) the number of times each advertisement has aired or been published, specifying the total number of times and the total length of time (in seconds or minutes), broken down by month for each advertisement, (v) the total cost to air or publish each advertisement, broken down by year and month, (vi) the criteria used to select each of the advertisement placements, (vii) media outlets used to air or publish each advertisement, broken down by month, (viii) the total amount spent per outlet, broken down by month?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 351—Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to the disposition of government assets since January 1, 2016: (a) on how many occasions has the government repurchased or reacquired a lot which had been disposed of in accordance with the Treasury Board Directive on the Disposal of Surplus Materiel; and (b) for each occasion in (a), what was the (i) description or nature of the item or items which constituted the lot, (ii) sale account number or other reference number, (iii) date on which the sale closed, (iv) price at which the item was disposed of to the buyer, (v) price at which the item was repurchased from the buyer, if applicable?

Privilege

(Return tabled)

Question No. 352—**Mr. Martin Shields:**

With regard to materials prepared for Deputy Ministers from November 5, 2015, to present: for every briefing document prepared, what is (i) the date on the document, (ii) the title or subject matter of the document, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a question of privilege to address the matter of two ministers of the crown misleading this House.

On April 28, 2016, I gave notice, pursuant to Standing Order 39, of a written question seeking information regarding the use of rented limousines by ministers on official business.

Question No. 152 reads as follows:

With regard to government travel, for the period of November 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016: (a) which ministers have used rented limousines while on official business, within Canada or elsewhere; and (b) for each use identified in (a), what was (i) the date of the rental, (ii) the location of the rental, (iii) the nature of the official business, (iv) the cost of the rental?

The Department of Health responded to this question saying,

With regard to government travel, for the period of Nov. 3, 2015, to April 22, 2016, the Minister of Health did not use rented limousines while on official business, within Canada or elsewhere.

This answer was personally signed by the Minister of Health.

Likewise, the Department of Natural Resources replied, stating:

Insofar as Natural Resources Canada is concerned, the Minister of Natural Resources did not use rented limousines while on official business.

This answer was personally signed by the Minister of Natural Resources.

On page 15 of the 24th edition of Erskine May, it describes a contempt as follows:

Generally speaking, any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results, may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence.

On page 77 of the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, Joseph Maingot addresses the issue of privilege in this current context like this:

...any "report, paper, votes or proceedings" that are printed or published by order or under the authority of the House of Commons or Senate pursuant to s. 7, 8, and 9 of the Parliament of Canada Act are protected by absolute privilege when

printed and published in toto, and by a qualified privilege when printed and published as extracts or abstracts.

Specifically to the issue of questions, he continues on page 80, saying:

Since two of Parliament's constituent elements, the House of Commons and the Senate, were established for the enactment of laws, those events necessarily incidental to the enactment of laws are part of the "proceedings in Parliament." However, Parliament has also always been a forum to receive petitions, and the Crown's satisfying the grievances of Members before granting supply eventually led to straightforward requests for information. Therefore, the events necessarily incidental to petitions, questions, and notices of motions in Parliament in the seventeenth century and today are all events that are part of "proceedings in Parliament."

On December 16, 1980, at page 5797 of *Hansard*, the Speaker ruled, and I quote:

While it is correct to say that the government is not required by our rules to answer written or oral questions, it would be bold to suggest that no circumstances could ever exist for a prima facie question of privilege to be made where there was a deliberate attempt to deny answers to an hon. member...

The Minister of Health used an executive limo service called Executive Sedan Livery Service Inc. In response to the allegations that she misled Parliament, she explained to the Canadian Press on August 21, 2016 the following:

I don't want to get into the semantics of definitions of types of vehicles.... Again, in retrospect, we could have obviously been much more specific and clarified exactly what car service was used in some of my work.

The minister has admitted that the answer she provided the House regarding her use of car services omitted important details by saying that she could have been more clear. This omission, as Erskine May would argue, is a contempt of the House. My ability as a member to assess whether or not taxpayers are getting value for their money was impeded.

The Minister of Natural Resources signed off on a statement by his department saying he "did not use rented limousines while on official business." However, he actually did use a car service called London Limos, which provides "limo transportation and chauffeur services in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada" during the time frame in question.

● (1520)

The company boasts on its website that "As Winnipeg's favourite source for limo transportation services, London Limos offers premium personal transport services." Semantics aside and simply put, the minister rented limousines and boldly and deliberately told Parliament that he did not.

On page 234 of the second edition of Joseph Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, it states:

[In order for the Speaker to] find a prima facie question of privilege...an admission by someone in authority, such as a Minister of the Crown or an officer of a department, an instrument of government policy, or a government agency, either that a Member of the House of Commons was intentionally misled or an admission of facts that leads naturally to the conclusion that a Member was intentionally misled...

The Minister of Natural Resources has not denied the fact that he used a service called London Limos, yet he told Parliament he did not rent a limo. The Minister of Health has admitted to omitting important details when she responded to my question, information that would have led a reasonable person to conclude that she did indeed rent a limo.

Privilege

For the record, lest there be an attempt to use wiggle room on the definition of a limousine, I submit the following definitions, which were compiled by an Ottawa area columnist. The definition of limousine according to the *Merriam-Webster* North American edition is “a very large and comfortable car usually driven by a professional driver (called a chauffeur)”. The *Oxford Dictionary*, also North American edition, states “A large, luxurious [automobile], especially one driven by a chauffeur who is separated from the passengers by a partition.” Also in the same dictionary, it states, “A car licensed to transport passengers in return for payment, typically more luxurious than a taxi and not fitted with a taximeter.” In the same dictionary it states, “A passenger vehicle carrying people to and from an airport.” Webster’s dictionary states, “any large, luxurious automobile, especially one driven by a chauffeur”, and “a large sedan or small bus, especially one for transporting passengers to and from an airport, between train stations, etc.”

In conclusion, I have two more precedents to offer. Despite the fact that it is crystal clear to the opposition, the media, and the Canadian public that these two ministers rented limos, the ministers insisted on splitting hairs over the meaning of limos and whether or not they should have provided this information to Parliament. When it comes to providing accurate information to Parliament, these ministers have missed the mark and have come in well below the standards expected of them. These ministers must be held to account for their dismissive use of this place.

On March 21, 1978, at page 3975 of *Debates*, which is also referred in Maingot’s *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, second edition, at page 227, Speaker Jerome quoted a British procedure committee report of 1967, which states in part:

...the Speaker should ask himself, when he has to decide whether to grant precedence over other public business to a motion which a Member who has complained of some act or conduct as constituting a breach of privilege desires to move, should be, not—do I consider that, assuming that the facts are as stated, the act or conduct constitutes a breach of privilege, but could it reasonably be held to be a breach of privilege, or to put it shortly, has the Member an arguable point? If the Speaker feels any doubt on the question, he should, in my view, leave it to the House.

● (1525)

On December 13, 2010, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood rose on a question of privilege with respect to the minister of international co-operation’s deliberate misleading of the House with respect to a funding application to the Canadian International Development Agency and the insertion of the word “not” into a letter. The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader argued that it was not contradictory for the minister to state that, while she did not know who inserted the word “not”, it had indeed been done on her instruction. The Speaker ruled on March 9, 2011, and found that there was indeed a *prima facie* question of privilege. He noted that the sixth report of the standing committee had made available materials not previously before the House. He explained that he had taken its findings into consideration and measured them against other material, including statements in the House and answers to oral and written questions. He concluded that the information provided to Parliament by the minister had at the very least caused confusion. The ministers’ answer to my question and their statements in the media have clearly caused confusion.

I have saved the final and most important detail for last. As you will know, Mr. Speaker, a question of privilege must be brought to the attention of the House at the earliest opportunity. In this case when the Order Paper questions were answered, I, like every member of this place, had every reason to believe in the truthfulness and accuracy of those documents. It was only during the summer months that a well-respected member of our parliamentary press gallery discovered, through an access to information and privacy request, that in fact the information provided by the ministers in question on the Order Paper was at odds with the facts clearly illustrated by the access to information and privacy request documents.

I raise this for two points. First, because of how I learned of the matter, I would like to point out that this is the very first opportunity I have had to raise this question of privilege in the House. The second and I think the most important point is this. If there is not a finding of privilege in this matter, then Order Paper questions essentially become meaningless, as they are essentially trumped by access to information requests. If we allow that to occur, then in essence we are collectively allowing an erosion of Parliament and eliminating one of the few tools of democratically elected members—and I mean this not only for opposition members but also for the members not in cabinet on the government side—that allow all of us collectively to hold the government to account. That is the main issue here at play.

The question we as parliamentarians have to ask is this. Are we going to allow the erosion of the one tool that we all can use to establish clearly the facts of a matter, that we can use to be able to do our jobs? I know for a fact that my constituents, all of the citizens in my riding, are counting on me to do my job. I know, looking at all of these members of Parliament here, that each one of you was sent here with a purpose to do your job as elected members of Parliament, whether you are in the government or not.

● (1530)

The Speaker: I would remind the member to direct his comments to the Chair, of course, and not to use the word “you”, unless he is speaking about the Speaker, of course, as the member knows.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry about that and I do appreciate the advice. Again, I am not one for passion, but I think this is an area that each one of us should be engaged in, and I appreciate your point.

Above all, beyond individual members of Parliament, I believe that your role as Speaker is to protect the integrity of the House, and not just to preserve but to protect the parliamentary procedures that have evolved over many decades to allow this place to help build the greatest country of them all.

For this reason I have raised my question of privilege. I would add that while this matter and the sums of money involved may be relatively trivial for some, the principle of protecting Parliament, including the Order Paper questions, is a very important one that I believe we should all take very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you leave this matter to the House to decide. If you find this to be a *prima facie* breach of privilege, I am prepared to move the appropriate corresponding motion.

Privilege

Thank you for your time and I thank the House for its attention.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that all questions of privilege raised and brought before the House, we take very seriously.

With regard to the two members that the member referenced, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Natural Resources, I will have to return to provide further comment on the Minister of Natural Resources at a later time, but with regard to the Minister of Health, I have a few thoughts that I would like to share.

I listened very carefully to the member's intervention and I am confident that this is a matter of debate and does not constitute a prima facie breach of privilege. The member is arguing that the minister deliberately misled the House in response to Order Paper question 152. As members of the House know, responses to the Order Paper questions are not to be used as opportunity for debate.

Page 522 of O'Brien and Bosc states:

...no argument or opinion is to be given and only the information needed to respond to the question is to be provided in an effort to maintain the process of written questions as an exchange of information rather than an opportunity for debate.

I submit this is precisely what the member is attempting to do.

The government tabled its response to Order Paper question 152 on June 14, 2016, within the prescribed time provided for it in the rules. The response to the question reflected the question asked and contained the information requested. It is a well-established fact that the Speaker is not authorized to judge the content or quality of answers provided in the House, including responses in Order Paper questions.

Speaker Jeanne Sauvé, in her February 28, 1983 ruling, stated that it is not the Chair's responsibility "to determine whether or not the contents of documents tabled in the House are accurate". This sentiment was again echoed in Speaker Milliken's ruling on December 12, 2002, when he stated, "the Speaker has no role in reviewing the content of responses to written questions".

The minister has publicly stated that she followed all proper procedures to determine the appropriate answer. This answer was then tabled in response to the Order Paper question. She has even stated that in the future she will endeavour to disclose additional information, should that aid in providing more clarity.

I believe the member is trying to conflate two issues. The member referred to comments the minister made outside of the House, including an apology regarding her expenses, as evidence that the minister has misled Parliament. However, we must be clear that the comments made were in relation to her travel expenses. It did not speak to the response to the Order Paper question. The minister's comment regarding her travel expenses and the content of the Order Paper response are two separate issues. While the Minister has addressed her expenses related to travel, we cannot confuse that with the accuracy of the response tabled.

Furthermore, a disagreement over the content of a response is merely that, a disagreement over the facts, and not a question of privilege. Speaker Fraser, in his May 15, 1991 ruling, stated:

The difficulty that is always with the Chair in these cases is that there are often very great differences of interpretation on the answers given. It is not a question of privilege; it is a question of disagreement over certain facts and answers that were given.

This is precisely what we have before us today. I submit that this is not a question of privilege, but a dispute over the facts.

● (1535)

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to support the comments made by my Conservative colleague. I would also like to respond to what we just heard and add my voice to the debate, if I may.

We are discussing past speakers' rulings and the quality of responses. It is very important to note that, in the case at hand, the facts put forward are not at issue, but rather the fact that some were omitted. It is very difficult to obtain a ruling on a non-existent answer.

That is the issue on which we are calling the government to account for having misled Parliament.

[English]

It is really important to note what we have seen in the past, and we have seen some doozies, especially in the last number of years since I have been a member of Parliament. However, we are not talking about interpretation or partisan difference, as the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader alludes. We are talking about the omission of information, which prevents us from even having that debate to begin with over how we interpret the facts that are presented to us.

[Translation]

When it comes to questions on the Order Paper, I believe you have an extremely important decision to make because it is a tool that allows parliamentarians to get very precise information at times. Accordingly, it is of the utmost importance that all the facts be included.

● (1540)

[English]

On that note, if needed, we may come back to this on behalf of the NDP. We will look over what has been said by both our colleague in the Liberal Party as well as our Conservative colleague, and if needed, offer a further response.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola for raising this question of privilege. I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader for his response.

[Translation]

I also want to thank the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly for his comments. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons indicated that he wants to add some comments. The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly also indicated he wanted to make other comments. We will set the question aside for now and I anticipate that the hon. members will come back with other comments in due time, perhaps later this week.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***FOOD AND DRUGS ACT**

The House resumed from June 15 consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act, the Hazardous Products Act, the Radiation Emitting Devices Act, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, the Pest Control Products Act and the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act and to make related amendments to another Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Essex has 11 minutes remaining on debate.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to conclude my remarks on Bill C-13, a bill we began debating before the summer about implementing a WTO agreement on trade facilitation, or the TFA as it is called.

This agreement is largely about harmonizing border rules around the world in order to expedite the flow of goods and to give businesses greater certainty. We know how important it is to Canadian producers that they have predictability when exporting their goods. Many of these producers are the small businesses that create jobs and drive our economy.

Canadian SMEs stand to benefit from this TFA through greater predictability of customs and border procedures for exports to developing countries. It could increase Canadian SMEs' access to markets in emerging economies, assuming they are equipped to do so. We want to see the government assist SMEs in realizing the potential benefits of the TFA, as well as address other weaknesses in Canada's SME export performance. With a sluggish economy, it is absolutely imperative that the federal government be looking at ways to better support Canadian small businesses.

The Liberal government made a lot of promises last election to small businesses. It promised to reduce the tax rate to 9%, but broke that promise in its first budget.

There is a lot the government can do to support SMEs who export their goods abroad. In the previous Parliament, the Standing Committee on International Trade adopted an NDP motion to undertake a study of the global markets access plan and how the government can better support Canadian SMEs with accessing international markets. The committee's report outlines recommendations for how the federal government can pursue consistent and ambitious policies that further secure SME success in international markets. The NDP wants to see the government implement the study's recommendations and the recommendations outlined in the NDP's supplementary report.

The committee heard that Canadian SMEs have not reached their full potential in terms of accessing international markets. Only 10.4% of SMEs exported in 2011, and most of this trade was done with the United States. There is so much opportunity for them to increase trade with emerging economies, which is what we are essentially talking about today. However, our SMEs face a lot of challenges in terms of difficulties and inefficiencies with border clearance, as well as accessing capital to expand and grow.

In my riding of Essex, so much of our economic prosperity depends on the ability to move goods efficiently through the border with the United States. Having the necessary infrastructure in place is critical, which is why the NDP is such a strong supporter of the new bridge crossing between Windsor and Detroit. For people in Windsor-Essex, a strong Canada-U.S. relationship is a big priority. We're directly impacted by border and customs issues. We watch closely when the Prime Minister and the president meet, as we have a lot riding on seeing concrete outcomes from these meetings.

Last time the leader of the Liberal Party went to Washington, he met with the president about pre-clearance at the border, which is welcome but is not new. The general agreement on this was signed a year ago.

Earlier this year, I participated in the Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance conference. There were a lot of excellent discussions focused on how to make cross-border trade more efficient and streamlined. With increasingly integrated supply chains, we know how important it is for Canadian businesses to have simplified, harmonized, and standardized controls to govern the movement of goods across national borders. Canada is on the cutting edge of these discussions, because we are a trading nation. Many of our livelihoods depend on trade.

Around the world, we are seeing growing criticism and dissatisfaction with the kinds of lopsided trade deals many right-wing governments have been focused on negotiating. This rising anti-trade sentiment can be extremely hurtful for Canada, but I also understand that some of this sentiment is rooted in the realities we see around the world. The gap between the world's wealthiest and everyone else is bigger than it has ever been before, and the world's trade and investment liberalization agenda is not trickling down the way we were all told it would.

Deals like the TPP are not focused on creating jobs for the working class. They are focused on granting corporate rights and privileges that trample on the public good. We know that if the TPP comes into force, it would cost Canadian jobs. It would create a culture of fear among our governments of legislating in the public interest. It would hurt our ability to legislate action on climate change. It could mean no national pharmacare program in Canada.

Over the summer, I held a series of town hall meetings on the TPP. I also spoke with a lot of people in my riding about the kind of trade they want to see.

Government Orders

• (1545)

Canadians want to see solutions to the trade issues that matter in their communities. Steelworkers want to see an end to the unfair steel dumping practices that directly threaten good Canadian jobs. Forestry workers want a solution to the softwood lumber issue, not a renewed trade war. Farmers want a payment protection program so they can export with confidence. Dairy farmers want a fair system in place for dealing with improperly labelled imports. Grain farmers want greater access to markets such as Japan, and canola farmers want to export to China with confidence.

These are the bread and butter trade issues that matter to working Canadians, and I will be working hard to hold the Liberal government to account. I believe strengthening trade opportunities for Canadian SMEs is a bread and butter issue too. It matters to a lot of Canadian families and communities.

I will be supporting Bill C-13 at second reading, and I want to hear more at the committee about how Canadians might benefit from the TFA.

According to the WTO, the TFA could boost global merchandise exports by around \$1 trillion, with up to \$730 billion accruing to developing countries. It also estimates that the agreement will benefit women entrepreneurs in developing countries who head up many of the SMEs that could benefit from the TFA. The average growth of women-run enterprises is significantly lower than those run by men. I would like to hear more about how the WTO will support developing countries in implementing the TFA and how it will support women in the least developed countries as beneficiaries of increased trade.

The WTO makes big claims about how beneficial the TFA will be. It seems quite common for proponents of trade deals to produce extremely optimistic studies. Just the other week, the Liberal government released a TPP economic study that many say overstated the benefits and understated the losses.

In conclusion, I see some potential benefits in this agreement for Canadians, including for the people in my riding of Essex. The bill deserves further study at committee, which is why I will be supporting it at second reading.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the member's speech earlier on today, she talked about goods flowing through Canada and the possibility of goods being diverted. Does she have any clear examples of how that could possibly happen?

We understand that goods coming into and flowing through Canada have to leave Canada, and we have all the policies and procedures in place to make sure that happens. Therefore, I would like some clarification on the statement that the member made in her presentation.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, some examples of the goods in transit that the member is speaking about in Bill C-13 appear when we talk about enabling Health Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada to comply with article 11(8) of the TFA, which essentially prohibits the application of technical regulations to goods moving through the WTO member's territory. It definitely speaks to transit through Canada of goods that do not comply with Canadian technical regulations, and Bill C-13 would create the legal authority

to allow the government to exempt goods in transit through Canada through these technical regulations.

At the end of the day, we want to identify that the goods in transit are safe. We want assurances from Health Canada that we will not be endangering any Canadians in the transit of these particular goods through our country. That is incredibly important to the NDP. Again, we will be watching closely the study that will happen at the committee level.

• (1550)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear that the NDP will be supporting the bill at this stage. I think it is an important bill for facilitating trade for Canada and in Canada's interest.

I want to ask the member about the trans-Pacific partnership.

President Obama has championed the trans-Pacific partnership as a progressive trade deal with important protections for the environment and workers' rights. Clearly, the member disagrees with him. Therefore, I would ask her who she thinks should be setting the rules of trade in the Asia-Pacific region. Should it be like-minded nations, western democracies, or should it be China?

If we do not move forward with the TPP, we put ourselves in a situation where much more likely the rules of trade are going to be shaped to a greater extent by China. I would be concerned with that. I think we are better off with the TPP negotiated by President Obama and others, which protects environmental issues and workers' rights. Does the member not agree that is in fact a better way to go?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised to hear that my colleague is in favour of this deal, because essentially, this is a Conservative deal that was negotiated behind closed doors and that did not include large numbers of groups. There were many people in Canada who were not included. Labour was not part of the conversation, nor were environmentalists, seniors, or our youth. The list goes on. Those who protect public health in our country were not part of the conversation on the negotiation of the trans-Pacific partnership.

It is not good enough for Canada to sit and watch what is happening in the U.S. We need to take leadership on this. We need to ensure that we are protecting Canadian jobs.

At the end of the day, what we see of this trade deal is 60,000 jobs lost. We have the economic impact study that came out last week. Again we see negligible growth being projected for the next 24 years. If the amount promised to our supply management sectors, \$4.3 billion, is actually realized, we will see no net benefit from the trans-Pacific partnership, according to the report that was released.

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Again, the report released by our own government says nothing about jobs. It actually says in the study that it does not take labour into account. It does not talk about digital rights. It does not talk about many of the chapters included in the trans-Pacific partnership that need to be part of the conversation Canadians are having.

I can also let the member know that I travelled across this country this summer talking about the trans-Pacific partnership, and I have yet to find an average Canadian who thinks that this trade deal is good for our jobs, our economy, and our communities.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to meet average Canadians who support this trade deal, I invite her to come to my riding at any time. I can introduce her to many of them.

The member is selective in the studies she quotes. I want to ask her this very directly. She said that this is a Conservative trade deal. I am certainly proud of the role our Conservative government played in negotiating the trade deal. Of course, it was a deal that involved many countries. Would she not at least recognize the leadership that President Obama showed on this issue, pushing it forward and pushing the negotiations? Would she consider it a Conservative trade deal on the basis of the many different nations, representing different political philosophies and different political parties, that considered this an important deal for global trade?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, I can only extend to the member down the bench that I am more concerned about our Prime Minister looking at this trade deal. I am more concerned about his lack of leadership with respect to this trade deal than I am about what is happening with our neighbour to the south. Our trade with the U. S. is incredibly important. I come from a region that relies on that. I certainly understand the benefit of that, but we need to look at this deal.

When we look at the report that came out a couple of weeks ago, we see that we already have TFAs with countries that are in the trans-Pacific partnership. Even the chief economist said that trade with those countries will go down. We will actually see a loss in trade with countries we already have TFAs with.

It is time in Canada to look at the way we are engaging in trade. We have heard the minister opposite mention a progressive trade agenda. I would love to explore that further and understand what exactly she means by that. We need to look at these trade deals, on balance. There have been 60,000 jobs lost in our country, and negligible growth, by all reports. Regardless of who we are looking at on the economic impact study, it shows negligible growth for our country. Yet we will see a depletion of jobs, which is something we certainly cannot have happen in our communities. I would venture that the member down the bench cannot afford to have those jobs lost in his community, either. Therefore, I encourage him to have a town hall in his riding. I will be following up to ensure that he does so, so that he can actually engage with people in his riding on the trans-Pacific partnership. I look forward to hearing the results of that town hall.

• (1555)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the problem with a number of the statements the member made is that the NDP traditionally have just said an outright

“no” to agreements, including the TPP, even before there has been any sort of real discussion. Our government has been very clear about working with Canadians and stakeholders, whereas the New Democrats have a foregone conclusion on all trade agreements, and that is to oppose them. It does not matter what the content is. I have not seen them actually stand in their places and vote in favour of a trade agreement.

I am glad to hear that it appears that they will be supporting Bill C-13. The Conservatives and the NDP are building a consensus to vote for it, and I am appreciative of that.

Does the member not believe that Bill C-13 allows for the type of consultation that is necessary to ensure that Canadians are protected within our different trade corridors?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, in Bill C-13 I would like to see a further exploration of the technical changes that are happening to this TFA so that ultimately we can determine whether this would be good for Canadians.

As far as the trans-Pacific partnership goes, the NDP has voted in favour of trade deals in the past, and I think the member is well aware of that. What I would like to say about this particular deal is that as vice-chairperson of the trade committee, I have listened to hundreds of people who have come before the trade committee as well as to hundreds of people out in communities across Canada. It is something the Liberal government has promised to do as well. When the resounding message from Canadians is that this deal will not be good for their jobs, for their families, and for their communities, I hope I will see the member opposite standing up and representing those people in Canada and voting against the trans-Pacific partnership.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her incredible leadership on this issue in standing up for not just us as New Democrats but for Canadians on the issue of the TPP.

I wonder if once again the member could talk about how important it is to have a federal government that defends good Canadian jobs rather than the interests of investors and some of the most wealthy CEOs around the world. Can she speak to the sentiment that she is hearing on the ground from Canadians who are concerned about the lack of leadership from the current government and its willingness to sell us out?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, one particular point I would like to hit on is that Canadians understand the inability to afford medication. The trans-Pacific partnership would extend the patents, which would mean that it would cost Canadians more money to take the medication necessary for a pathway to health. That alone is egregious in the trans-Pacific partnership, and people understand the impact of that on their lives.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Laurentides—Labelle.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today about Bill C-13, the legislation that would allow Canada to implement the World Trade Organization agreement on trade facilitation, otherwise known as TFA.

Government Orders

As members may know, the TFA is the first multilateral trade agreement finalized since the establishment of the World Trade Organization, in 1995. It is truly a landmark achievement. The TFA focuses on streamlining, harmonizing, and modernizing customs procedures. It has enormous potential for reducing trade costs and time, particularly in developing and the least-developed countries. In fact, the WTO estimates that full TFA implementation has the potential to increase global merchandise exports by up to \$1 trillion, and it could reduce global trade costs by an average of over 14%. In the event that not all WTO members fully implement the TFA, the real-world impact will be significant.

Domestically, implementation of the TFA will provide Canada with the unique opportunity to promote inclusive growth. It will do this by making cross-border trade easier for businesses of all sizes, particularly SMEs.

I would like to speak today about some of the legislative amendments that are required for Canada to join the ranks of 92 other World Trade Organization members, including the EU, the U. S., and China, which have already ratified the TFA.

While Canada's customs regime is compliant with the vast majority of the provisions in the TFA, certain statutes require amendments for Canada to fully implement the TFA and to maintain safeguards for the health and safety of Canadians and our environment. These amendments relate to two provisions of the TFA: article 10.8.1, rejected goods, and article 11.8, goods in transit.

Today I would like to talk about amendments related to article 11.8 on goods in transit.

Article 11.8 prohibits the application of technical regulations to goods moving through a WTO member's territory from a point outside its territory to another foreign point, which are known as "goods in transit". This provision will allow foreign goods to move through Canada—for example, from Europe to the United States—without complying with our technical regulations.

The transit through Canada of some goods, such as pharmaceutical drugs, cleaning products, and pesticides, which do not comply with the technical regulations, is currently prohibited by certain federal statutes: the Food and Drugs Act, the Pest Control Products Act, the Radiation Emitting Devices Act, and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999.

While most importers are aware of the prohibitions on the transit of unregistered or unauthorized products, from time to time companies request one-off permission to transit such products through Canada. Such activities are expressly prohibited by legislative or regulatory requirements and are routinely denied.

Preventing products that do not comply with technical regulations from transiting through Canada can be considered a trade barrier. This is because the health and safety of Canadians and the environment can, in fact, be protected in an equally effective, less trade-restrictive manner.

The legislative amendments proposed in the bill would specify that Canada's technical regulations would not apply to goods in transit through Canada as long as certain requirements for protecting health, safety, and the environment were met.

● (1600)

More specifically, Bill C-13 includes requirements designated to mitigate the risk that certain goods in transit could be diverted in the Canadian market or compromise the health and safety of Canadians, or the environment as a result of accidents or spills. For example, labelling requirements for certain goods in transit will enable inspectors, border officers, handlers, and sellers to distinguish between goods destined for import and those just passing through. Such labelling could denote the origin, intended destination, and product safety and handling procedure for goods in transit.

By implementing the proposed amendments to the Food and Drugs Act, the Pest Control Products Act, the Radiation Emitting Device Act, and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, Canada would improve the flow of goods and services to its border.

The world is more connected than ever before, yet all too often outdated and uncoordinated customs procedures slow down the movement of goods and raise trade costs. Bill C-13 would enable Canada to facilitate custom procedures at home. The TFA will do the same around the world and bring considerable economic benefits to Canada and other World Trade Organization members.

I support Bill C-13 and all the benefits it would bring to Canadians. More specifically, I support it because it would benefit the many small and medium enterprises in my riding of Richmond Hill, such as those in the construction industry, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, service delivery, agriculture, transport, and others.

Although it is a small suburban town, Richmond Hill has huge export and import potential and the residents of Richmond Hill can stand to benefit significantly from the removal of these trade barriers.

I urge hon. members to support this legislation, which would enable Canada to do its part to bring the agreement into force and ensure the health and safety of Canadians and the continued protection of the environment.

● (1605)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, members of the Conservative Party support this legislation as well. It is important and we need to move forward on it.

We are at a critical time internationally, when there are many voices criticizing the idea of open trade and an open economy. Now would be a good time for the government to make up its mind on critical trade deals like the trans-Pacific partnership. We have no leadership from the government on that. People know where the Conservatives stand. People know where New Democrats stand on this trade deal. The Liberals have been in office for close to a year and have continually been punting on this important deal. They refuse to take a position and show any leadership.

Government Orders

Consultations have gone on. It has been a long time. The government has had plenty of time to become familiar with the deal. What is that member's position on the trans-Pacific partnership? When will the government finally decide whether it is going to speak for the idea of open trade or not?

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that you and your party are supporting Bill C-13.

On the matter of the TPP, as our government has stated and clearly demonstrated, we continually conduct consultations, and a report on those consultations will be provided. We have clearly stated that this bill or agreement needs to be shared, discussed, analyzed, and its impact on all sectors made clear. We made a commitment to do that and we continue to do that.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before moving on to the next question, I would remind hon. members not to address one another directly, but to do so through the chair.

The hon. member for Essex.

[*English*]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, something the member brought up in his speech this afternoon is of particular interest to me, that being the CBSA. Amazing women and men work for the Canada Border Services Agency. They protect our borders and are on the front lines of facilitating trade while enforcing regulations and keeping our country safe. They have an incredibly difficult and challenging job and I thank them for the job they do.

That said, it is clear that they bear the majority of responsibility for imports and exports, as they should, but the agency is severely understaffed. The agency needs more men and women at the border to be able to prevent the importation of things like diafiltered milk, and the issue we are having around that in particular. When we are talking about expanding the dangerous goods that will be travelling through our country, we need to ensure that the CBSA has all of the tools it needs to be able to do so safely, as the member mentioned in his speech.

Do you believe that the CBSA requires additional support to make our borders more efficient and secure?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before the hon. member for Richmond Hill answers, I am sure the hon. member for Essex did not mean the Speaker, because she was speaking through the Speaker. She did not mean "you", meaning me. She meant the hon. member for Richmond Hill. I want him to take that into account when he answers that question.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, as we know, the budget cut by the Conservative government put us in the position we are in. Having said that, our commitment to Bill C-13 is to bring the visibility and oversight that is needed. Actually, we are dealing with the process first. Once the legislation is in place and there is an alignment with the other 92 members, we will take it into consideration for the 2017 budget to ensure that those legislative amendments are supported with the proper resources.

• (1610)

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak today

about Bill C-13, legislation that would allow Canada to implement the WTO agreement on trade facilitation, otherwise known as the TFA.

As members may know, Canada played a key role in the negotiation of the TFA at the WTO.

The TFA would enhance the predictability and transparency of customs decisions for traders; expedite the release of goods through the use of modern technologies, such as electronic payment; and increase the efficiency of customs procedures through improved coordination between border agencies. Canada ensured that the TFA would provide a full range of trade facilitation measures while preserving our ability to protect the health and safety of Canadians and the environment.

Today I would like to speak about some of the legislative amendments that are required for Canada to join the ranks of 92 other WTO members, including the EU, the U.S., and China, that have ratified the TFA. The TFA will enter into force once two-thirds of WTO members, or 110 out of 164 WTO members, have ratified it. Canada needs to do its part to make this happen.

While Canada's customs regime is compliant with the vast majority of provisions in the TFA, certain statutes require amendments in order for Canada to fully implement the TFA and maintain safeguards for the health and safety of Canadians and the environment. These amendments relate to two provisions of the TFA: article 10.8.1, on rejected goods; and article 11.8, on goods in transit, which my colleague addressed.

Today I would like to talk about the amendments required to implement article 10.8.1 on rejected goods. Article 10.8.1 requires WTO members to allow importers to return to the exporter goods that were rejected on account of their failure to meet certain health and other technical requirements unless another means of dealing with the rejected goods is provided for in that country's laws, such as seizure and disposal.

Governments that wish to retain the ability to treat goods other than by allowing their return will need to be able to point to specific provisions in their laws or regulations that provide the authority to do so.

To ensure that the Government of Canada's statutes and regulations comply with this provision while not increasing risk to the health and safety of Canadians and the environment, amendments to five statutes administered by Health Canada are required. Those statutes are the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act, the Food and Drugs Act, the Hazardous Products Act, the Pest Control Products Act, and the Radiation Emitting Devices Act. Specifically, Bill C-13 identifies criteria under which non-compliant goods could be either returned to the exporter, re-consigned, or seized, detained, forfeited, and/or disposed of by customs.

Government Orders

Bill C-13 would enable Health Canada to deal with seized goods more effectively and in a more harmonized way. What exactly does this mean? It means that non-compliant goods arriving at the border, goods such as drugs, medical devices, cosmetics, food, tanning equipment, children's toys, hazardous products, and pesticides, could be seized and not returned in certain cases. For example, when products pose unacceptable health and safety risks, they could be seized and not returned. In other cases, products could be returned or reconditioned.

These amendments would enhance predictability and transparency in how rejected goods were treated at the border and would help ensure that the health and safety of Canadians and the environment continued to be protected.

By making the proposed amendments, Canada will meet its international obligations under the TFA in respect of article 10.8.1 in dealing with the treatment of rejected non-compliant goods. Bill C-13 would also enable Canada to avoid having to maintain indefinite care and control of non-compliant goods. It would enable Canada to take action to recover costs and to avoid having to maintain indefinite control of non-compliant goods.

I support Bill C-13 and all the benefits it would bring to Canadians. I urge all hon. members to support this bill, which would enable Canada to do its part in bringing this agreement into force and in ensuring that the health and safety of Canadians and the environment remains protected.

•(1615)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to touch a bit on what the member across the way talked about in terms of hazardous products and pest control products. It is important for us to understand that it is not just that these products travel safely; it is that communities are protected from any potential damage during transport. It is also that the people who work to transport these products across our country are protected and that their health and safety is ensured.

Because Bill C-13 would make some changes in how we would deal with goods in transit and with non-compliant goods, is the member confident that the changes in Bill C-13 would maintain existing health and safety standards for workers who might come into contact with these products?

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. I honestly do not know that detail. The member mentioned in her speech the importance of looking at this in committee. I expect that any concerns will be brought to light in that environment. Overall, the bill is well worthwhile and will protect the environment in the ways we need to do so.

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for this bill. We will probably support this, mainly because we all know that one in five jobs is created by trade. The Asia-Pacific gateway is in my riding of Richmond Centre in British Columbia, so trade is very important to my riding and also to British Columbia.

We support the bill because it would enable Canada to implement the trade facilitation agreement, the TFA, which was concluded under the previous Conservative government. Canadian investors, importers, and exporters of goods, including small and medium-

sized businesses, the SMEs, which I have listened to, would benefit from the implementation of the TFA. Also the inactivity of many SMEs as players in international trade has more to do with red tape than with tariff barriers.

Will the Liberals adhere to the recent G7 leaders' declaration and the economic impact report by the Office of the Chief Economist and commit to ratifying the trans-Pacific partnership, independent of the United States?

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to hear that the Conservatives support one of our bills. The TPP is an issue that is still under consultation. My riding is certainly affected. There are a lot of exports coming from my riding, even though we are not anywhere near the border, and I will be following this very closely.

I appreciate the question. There is more to come.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to hear that opposition parties seem to be in support and maybe we could even see it passed, given the comments we have heard. There are 162 countries in the World Trade Organization. Two-thirds need to pass the agreement for it to be ratified. We are getting closer to 108, which then would put it into place. I think just over 80 countries have already ratified it.

Could the member comment on how important it is that Canada ratify it as soon as it is most appropriate for the House to pass it?

Mr. David de Burgh Graham: Mr. Speaker, it is obviously very important to pass this bill and ratify the agreement. We need 140 out of 184 countries to agree to it before it can move forward. Until it is ratified, it is up in the air. It is important that we pass this bill and get on with it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, the Environment; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Employment; the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, Rail Transportation.

•(1620)

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on Bill C-13, which would ensure that Canada meets its obligations under the WTO's trade facilitation agreement. This is something that our party will fully support.

Government Orders

Our previous Conservative government concluded the trade facilitation agreement. We value whatever makes it easier for Canadian companies to conduct their business both here and abroad, because they are our country's best job creators. We value simplifying custom procedures and cutting red tape. We value expediting the release on clearance of goods and reducing the cost associated with processing. Trade must be predictable for Canadian businesses, and this is something that the WTO is good at and which the trade facilitation agreement furthers.

Canadian investors, importers and exporters, and especially small and medium-sized enterprises would greatly benefit from the passage of the bill. Our party will vote in favour of it, because Conservatives know that small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of the Canadian economy. We saw it as our duty in government to give the support they needed to do business, not just within Canada but also internationally. We understood that our SMEs were doing very well, and Canada prospers when they do well.

International trade is vital to the Canadian economy. It represents more than 60% of our GDP, and one out of five jobs are linked to exports. Without international trade, there would be 3.3 million fewer jobs in Canada, meaning our unemployment rate would skyrocket to 25%. This is why it is absolutely vital that we support our business community. It is also why it is vital for Canada to look beyond the WTO to further our market access around the world.

Before the House rose for the summer, my colleague, the hon. member for Abbotsford, spoke during this debate and gave us a history of the agreement at the WTO. The trade facilitation agreement is part of the Bali package which is a group of outcomes that took about 15 years for well over 100 countries to negotiate, agree, and now to ratify in our respective legislative chambers. It is 15 years and counting, I should probably say, since over 20 countries have yet to pass this agreement after us.

While the timeline for accomplishing anything at the WTO is concerning, it does serve a purpose, the highest of which is the common set of rules it sets that govern international trade. The WTO holds countries to account when they are suspected and found guilty of breaking the rules, and Canada has certainly benefited from this oversight.

Take the softwood lumber dispute for example, or the United States' country-of-origin labelling requirements for beef and pork. Rulings on these issues by the WTO ensured Canada was able to hold the United States to account for its cross-border trade indiscretions and give us the moral authority to demand nothing less than favourable outcomes for the Canadian industry. However, 15 years is a tremendously long time to negotiate an agreement like this, which largely deals with measures with which our own customs regimes already comply.

My colleague, the hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster, also spoke earlier in this debate before the summer recess and alluded to some reasons of why the WTO was a difficult body in which to accomplish anything meaningful in a period of time. It is a large group of countries of very diverse interests and everyone has a veto. It is an organization that values and protects the free flow of goods around the world, but its limitations are evident. That is why

the government should follow in the steps of its predecessor and continue to build on Canada's legacy as it supports job-creating industries by pursuing bilateral and smaller multilateral agreements that hold real promise for Canadian exporters and are achievable in the not too distant future.

I have in mind three things: the continuation of the global markets action plan, the ratification of the comprehensive economic and trade agreement with the European Union, and the ratification of the trans-Pacific partnership.

The global markets action plan, or GMAP for short, was a revolutionary yet simple way to think and go about doing international trade with the ultimate goal of nearly doubling the number of Canadian SMEs exporting to emerging markets from 11,000 to 21,000. To do this, the plan called for the government to concentrate its efforts on determining the markets that held the greatest promise for Canadian business by engaging in vigorous trade promotion and ambitious trade policy.

At the heart of GMAP was that it played to the strengths of the business community. A strength of GMAP itself was that it was methodically based on the insight of the businesses themselves that would be the government's partners in the plan.

In order to ensure that the program was built in a way that served Canadian SMEs best, our previous government created an advisory panel comprised of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Canaccord Genuity Group, the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, Alliance Grain Traders, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Cenovus Energy, CGI Group and the University of Alberta.

• (1625)

Contrary to what the current government might think, it does not have a monopoly on the act of consulting. Perhaps the difference is that our previous government consulted in meaningful ways that gave those affected by a policy real input into its creation.

The results of the GMAP exercise with the identification of three party market types with engagement by Canadian officials in each of the countries identified as having potential for Canadian businesses, two of these market types target emerging markets.

As past chair of the Canadian ParlAmericas group, I was able to see first-hand what GMAP meant to Canadian business in trying to expand into the Americas.

When I went to Peru in the late 2000's, officials were talking about how the increase in wheat exports were happening there. It showed what happened when all of a sudden farmers were allowed to sell their grain, but also when there were trade agreements in place so they had bankability and knew exactly how to go about selling their grain into Peru and thus the exports approved drastically increased.

Government Orders

To my knowledge, the government has not expressed its intent to work toward growing the engagement of Canadian SMEs in emerging markets under GMAP, and it would be a shame for the government to let down those who actually do trade and export around the world. These are the same people who resoundingly endorsed GMAP. I look forward to hearing from the Minister of International Trade on her plans for this highly valued policy framework.

The second thing the government should do to help our exporters create jobs is ratify the comprehensive economic and trade agreement. This agreement is huge for Canadian exporters because it would give them access to over 500 million affluent customers ready to buy whatever Canada has to offer. It is estimated that CETA could help grow the Canadian economy by adding \$12 billion annually to our GDP, which is the equivalent of 80,000 jobs or raising the average family's income by \$1,000 annually.

It is imperative that the Liberal government get this agreement across the finish line, and to be frank I am concerned about its action on this file so far.

If reports out of Europe are to be believed, it looks like the agreement is coming apart at the seams and the actions of the government seem to corroborate this, first with the secret reopening of the negotiations to revise the section on investor-state dispute settlement to appeal more to some European interests, and now with the appointment of a new CETA envoy to help get it done. Both of these developments do not beget a lot of confidence within the Canadian business community, but I join with our exporters in hoping that the government meets its target to have the deal signed in October. Perhaps the good news out of Germany today that its chancellor has the necessary votes to proceed with the deal will be a sign of positive things to come for CETA.

The third thing that the government must do to continue to build Canada's economy and create more jobs is join with our allies in preparing to ratify the trans-Pacific partnership this fall. The TPP is arguably the most important trade agreement of the 21st century. Indeed it is the largest free trade agreement in Canadian history as it would give our exporters access to 800 million customers from 11 different countries. Notably, it would grant us free trade access to the Japanese market which, as the world's third largest economy, is possibly the biggest advantage of the TPP.

The other large advantage of the TPP is that it is good and safe strategy for increased engagement with Asia because it sets the rules of engagement for that region. Increasing our business relationships in that part of the world is imperative for Canada so that we do not fall behind in the global marketplace. A report by the Asia-Pacific Foundation on Canada's Asia strategy says that by 2020, almost two billion people, 1.7 billion to be exact, or 54% of the world's middle class, are projected to spend almost \$15 billion annually. That is 42% of the world's total consumption and Canada would be remiss to not prepare for the massive growth that is projected for Asia in the future.

China is undeniably a large part of increasing growth in Asia as a 2011 Asian Development Bank estimation suggests that China will contain about 20% of the world's middle class by 2030. It is also

clear that what China demands, Canada has to offer, with our energy and agricultural resources being particularly in demand.

The TPP was developed with the express purpose in mind of some day bringing China into the fold of freer trade on our own terms, with our allies and the force of precedent on our side. Importantly, it treats issues that Canada should be wary of when looking to engage further with China.

Take for example the issue of China's state-owned enterprises. Now let me be clear. Our party does not disagree with foreign investment in Canadian industry. Quite the contrary, in fact. However, we do insist that it must occur under the right conditions. Following the purchase of Nexen by the China National Offshore Oil Company in 2012, the previous Conservative government announced a new policy consisting of two elements: limiting further acquisitions of oil sands assets by state-owned enterprises; and requiring additional scrutiny of acquisitions by state-owned enterprises in other sectors.

• (1630)

China has asked Canada to loosen these restrictions, which should be concerning for Canadian companies, which would face unfair competition within Canada as a result, in addition to other international companies that do business here under globally established laws and norms.

Chapter 17 of the TPP tackles the issue of state-owned enterprises as the partner countries agree to ensure that their SOEs operate on the basis of commercial considerations and act in a non-discriminatory manner when making purchases and sales. The chapter commits countries to fair competition and includes rules to generate better transparency with respect to government control over commercial state-owned enterprises. By ratifying the TPP before pursuing a free trade agreement with China, Canada will have some clout to ensure that we can achieve outcomes that do not infringe on fair competition within our own economy.

Another area that those pursuing a freer trade with China should be wary of is labour rights. Chapter 19 of the TPP deals with this head on as it contains enforceable commitments to protect and promote internationally recognized labour principles and rights. It ensures that TPP partner countries provide acceptable working conditions in terms of minimum wages, hours of work, and occupational health and safety, and includes commitments to ensuring that national laws and policies provide protection of these fundamental principles and rights.

Government Orders

Non-tariff barriers are also a concern when it comes to doing business with China. Canadian farmers know all too well about the damage non-tariff barriers can cause to our industry. Our canola farmers are still operating under an immense amount of uncertainty as to whether they will be able to continue to sell their crops into China. China has been threatening to block our canola exports, supposedly over concerns of blackleg, and it claims the matter can be resolved if Canadian exporters lower the amount of extraneous plant material in its shipments to below 1%. Our Canadian industry has been telling us that this ruling is not based on solid science and that the current limit of 2.5% is a number that already poses an extraordinarily low risk for blackleg transmission.

The increased time and cost that would have to go into preparing a shipment of canola to be sold in China with a dockage rate of less than 1% is prohibitive for Canadian farmers. Though the Prime Minister announced that the September 1 deadline for this new Chinese regulation had been delayed, this has done nothing the alleviate the future uncertainty for western Canadian canola farmers who are harvesting their co-ops right now as we speak.

Around 40%, or \$2 billion, of Canada's canola seed exports go to China, so non-tariffs of this sort can have real consequences for our economy. China has been known to use regulatory barriers in the past to block other Canadian agricultural products, including beef, pork and biotech crops, whether to protect its domestic industry or to strengthen its negotiating position on other issues.

Chapter 7 of the TPP combats non-tariff barriers by affirming each country's rights and obligations under the WTO sanitary and phytosanitary Agreement and by establishing a series of new commitments regarding regionalization, equivalence and science-based analysis. Most important, it also provides increased transparency in the application of each country's SPS regulations, including a requirement that TPP countries notify others of all regulations that may have an effect on trade.

Indeed, the government should really consider the benefits of using the TPP as a springboard towards further trade with China, given the Canadian public's deeply divided sentiment on the matter. Polling numbers released by the Asia-Pacific Foundation to coincide with the Prime Minister's recent trip to China show that an equal number of Canadians both oppose and support a free trade agreement with China at 46% each. We know that those who are hesitant to support more engagement with China do so largely for concerns involving security, human rights and the rule of law. By ratifying the TPP before pursuing free trade with China, the government can begin to negotiate from a position of increased coordination among our allies in the Asia-Pacific region. They say there is safety in numbers, and the TPP means exactly that.

Beyond giving us access to the Japanese market and the tools it offers in preparing for further trade with China, the most compelling reason for ratifying the TPP this fall is that this is an agreement that Canadian businesses want. Our businesses create jobs in Canada and ratifying the TPP will help them create even more. Across the board, in every region of the country, we will find businesses that support increased trade in Asia through the TPP. Those who are supportive include companies in aerospace, agriculture, food processing, auto manufacturing, wine and spirits, fish and seafood, forestry,

information technology, pharmaceuticals, medical technology, mining and extractives, financial services and transportation.

By ratifying the TPP, Canadian businesses would be the only G7 exporters to have free trade access to all of the U.S. and Americas, Europe and the Asia-Pacific continents. That is over 60% of the world's economy and every industry and region in Canada would have access to these customers. It is lost on me why the government is continuously delaying the ratification of the TPP.

● (1635)

Besides having Canadian industry tell them to get this deal done, Global Affairs Canada's own chief economist has found that joining the TPP would provide a net advantage to Canada by creating significant new export opportunities, particularly in Japan, while warning of the loss in opportunity Canada would suffer by staying out of the agreement. With the private sector and her own chief economist all touting the benefits of the TPP, it is a mystery as to why the Minister of International Trade continues to go out of her way to avoid ratifying this deal.

International trade is about jobs in Canada. The more markets we have to sell into, the more jobs are created here at home to satisfy the global demand for what Canada has to offer. With our economy losing some 110,000 jobs in June and July, and with the unemployment rate creeping up another tenth of a point in August to 7.0%, the government should be spending more time thinking about ways it can facilitate more trade for Canadian goods and services. It cannot afford not to.

This brings me back to Bill C-13. Canada must continue to work within the WTO framework and support the efforts there towards freer trade around the world. That is why I and my party will be voting in favour of the bill, because in doing so we vote in favour of the Canadian economy and Canadian jobs.

I would also urge the government to use this as an opportunity to seize the international trade file with more vigour than it has shown thus far. The government must be smart about its trade policy and only pursue those agreements that will benefit and create opportunity for those actually practising international trade and employing Canadians. Continuing the important work set out in the global markets action plan, getting CETA across the finish line, and ratifying the TPP before pursuing free trade talks with China will set our economy up for continued growth and prosperity through the years to come.

Government Orders

These are all things that I hope our trade minister gets and understands. As we look forward and look at what is going on in the Canadian economy, we have heard a lot of promises from the Liberal government, promises I think it intends to keep, at least I hope it does. We all remember the commercial with the Prime Minister going down the escalator, talking about how he had a plan for creating jobs here in Canada. That is very important, because we need to create jobs here in Canada.

However, the results have been somewhat lacklustre. They are not there. We have lost jobs here in Canada. Our inability to show a clear direction on what we are doing on the trade file has Canadian companies really confused about what their future holds.

A good example is that on TPP the Liberals are dragging their feet, waiting to see what happens in the U.S. However, when it comes to the Asian development bank, they go in headstrong, full steam ahead, with a commitment of close to \$1 billion, with no agreement from our allies. The U.S. and Japan are telling us not to be a part of that. Looking at that consideration, Australia belongs to that bank and only gets 4% of the benefit.

There is no commitment for that \$1 billion to be spent on any company that generates jobs here in Canada. It is doing what we should not be doing. What we should be doing is working with our allies on all fronts, setting up the proper tools and regulations.

It just creates inconsistency in how businesses are supposed to plan for the future. If we see a consistent message by their ratifying the TPP now, and a strong argument for CETA, and getting that done here in October, that would tell the business community here in Canada to invest. It tells the business community that it will have market access and not just in Europe but in Asia. That is pretty exciting. We will see job growth happening from that. We will see the benefit almost instantaneously.

Why the Liberals are hesitating on this file is beyond me, unless they just do not have a clear vision of what to do in the future.

I am going to conclude my remarks by saying that Bill C-13 is an interesting bill. It is something that should probably go through the House in a matter of 30 seconds. It is a no-brainer.

We are doing the stuff that is required in this bill already at the Canada Border Services Agency, so it is not like we are adding new expertise or new procedures and processes. We will be spending money in other countries to help them get up to the level of conduct that we expect, which is a good thing. As we improve their regulatory processes and combine them or harmonize them with Canadian processes, it makes it easier for our companies to do business in those countries.

I look forward to seeing this ratified and moving forward. I look forward to seeing legislation on TPP, hopefully this fall. I look forward to legislation on CETA so that we can get these trade deals done and move forward with things like the Pacific Alliance and other opportunities that await us in the trade file.

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the comments made by the member opposite. I have to admit, as the member stated when he was observing what the government is doing to add incentive and to add co-operation,

especially with those folks at the municipal, regional, and provincial levels, we are doing just that.

In my riding in the past month, we announced the groundbreaking for General Electric, 220 jobs in the Niagara region, and that was based on the co-operation that the Prime Minister was directly involved in, as well as Minister Freeland, to ensure that GE understood the package we had available in Niagara, the province of Ontario, and therefore our great nation.

My question has to do with a level playing field and fair trade. Does the member in fact believe that the TPP offers that fair trade, especially when looking through a triple bottom line lens of environment, economics and social, and in comparison to and in competition with those countries that we do trade with? Is that equality actually there? Is it actually fair trade? Is Canada actually on a level playing field? Does the member opposite truly believe that the TPP offers our business community fair trade and that our workforce to be able to compete within that market throughout the globe, as well as its being fair to this great nation?

• (1640)

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. If we look at what we have today, we have nothing. There is no agreement. There is nothing in place. There is no ability to get a dispute solved. Is TPP perfect? Probably not. Will it need some improvements down the road? We can bet on it. However, it is a basis to build upon. It gives some bankability and stability. It addresses things like labour rights and the environment that do not exist today in any agreement with those countries.

When we ask, "Is this good for Canada?", there is no question that this is good for Canada. I would rather have the rules set by these 11 countries as we deal in the Asian basket than trying to do a bilateral deal with China and have rules such that in fact we would not be able to enforce non-tariff trade barriers. This would allow us to do that.

My suggestion, as has been consistent in my speech, is to get TPP done. That would allow the door to open, under TPP, to negotiate with China in a situation that is beneficial for Canada and keeps everything even fairer going into the future.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before I go on, I would like to remind hon. members not to mention other members' names, only their title, their rank, or their riding.

The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a few counterpoints to make to my hon. colleague's remarks before I ask my question. One of them is that Canada already has free trade agreements with four of the major economies in the TPP: the United States, Mexico, Chile, and Peru. The other countries that make up the balance of it are actually relatively small economies.

Government Orders

It has been shown that the average tariff in the world right now, without any tariff agreement, is in the single digits, and of course Canada already can trade with countries like Vietnam and Malaysia, and does so every week without any real problems.

The question I want to pick up on has to do with the question my hon. colleague on the government side asked about human rights. One of the countries involved in the TPP is Brunei. Brunei has adopted a form of sharia law that makes homosexuality punishable by being stoned to death, as well as adultery, for that matter. I know that John Baird, when he was the foreign minister, said that Canada would never tolerate any country that dealt with homosexuality in that way, and he singled out Iran at that time.

I wonder what the Conservative Party position would be, in terms of why he would be advocating giving preferential economic treatment to a country that kills people based upon their sexual orientation. Does he think that is sending the right message from a human rights perspective?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I did enjoy my time when the member was on committee. Actually, I will say that when he was on committee, the NDP was pro-trade and went forward on the Korea trade agreement and he was quite helpful in getting that through the legislation. We had a unanimous report out of committee suggesting that we approve that agreement.

With respect to his question, any of those are not acceptable. Canadians will not accept them and the Conservative Party will not accept those things either. However, we need a mechanism to deal with them and economics is one mechanism to deal with them, to basically lay out the line and say, "No, we won't accept that". We have the ability to work with 10 other countries to tell them that, to raise that standard, to say these are what acceptable human rights are. However, if we do not have an agreement, we have no influence, we have no say, we have no sway.

With respect to the small tariffs, those small tariffs put us at a disadvantage in a huge number of areas. When we look at it and say, "It's just small tariffs. We already have a trade agreement with four of the bigger countries", what about these emerging countries like Vietnam? They are emerging. They are going to be big players somewhere down the road. Their middle-class economies are growing. Do we not want to have our companies in there, growing with them? They are going to do business with somebody around the world. Would we not rather have them do business with Canada than somebody else?

• (1645)

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the summer I had a chance to hold a round table within my riding, where I had the opportunity to talk with small business owners and medium-sized business owners and really hear what mattered to them. One of the things they brought up was the obstacles in their way with respect to trade.

I also took the opportunity to look at a study that was done across Canada by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. There was a survey that was completed, and again, this was one of their top barriers with respect to generating capital and creating jobs.

I would like the hon. member to comment on how the TPP might actually help solve this problem. Specifically, I am interested in my context, where Lethbridge, Alberta, is a fairly rural area, largely agrarian in nature or agriculture-based. How would the TPP go about facilitating further developments and business capital within our region?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I know the Lethbridge area very well and I thank the member for her question. She does a great job and we are proud to have her here.

I was lucky enough to travel in that region for a company called Flexi-Coil back in my other life, in earlier days, and it is a very astonishing area. Its ability with irrigation, ability with the feed sector, the cattle sector is just phenomenal.

Let us look at the cattle sector, for example. Let us look at stability in the market in Japan so that we have access to that market and a stable process. Let us look at the fact that if there was a dispute, we would have a mechanism that we could go to settle those disputes. Those are things that are necessary in order to maintain a steady trade balance or trade into Japan. We do okay in canola and other crops, but when there is a dispute it is hard to resolve that dispute because we do not have a panel to help resolve it.

When we have TPP in place, we will have bankable access into that market. We can develop those market chains. We take big feedlots that are located south of Lethbridge, in Picture Butte and up to Nanton, Claresholm, and that country. They can look at it and say they have the opportunity to maybe add a few more thousand head to their feedlots in that part, which means more barley sales, which means more green sales. Again, the economic activity just flourishes from that point.

Then when we throw that economic activity into Lethbridge, it goes throughout the rest of Alberta and Saskatchewan, because they buy a lot of goods from other provinces and other areas. They buy a new truck, a new tractor, and a new combine, and we see that economic activity all generated because they had the ability to sell beef to Japan. That is what trade can do.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my comment to my colleague is that the more we delay the decision on TPP, the more hesitant business is. In our province, our premier is currently over in South Korea trying to get business to Saskatchewan.

Could the hon. member talk about the Premier of Saskatchewan, Brad Wall, over in South Korea today signing agreements, hoping to ensure some prosperous business with South Korea?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his hard work and his great questions.

Saskatchewan is a trading province. It has over a million people who grow a lot of grain and a lot of beef. We have resources like potash and uranium.

We have a trade deal now with Korea. We can actually go into that market with confidence knowing that the premier has an agreement in place that he can use for backup in case of any disputes. He also has preferential treatment going to that market, depending on whatever goods he is choosing to promote and sell.

Government Orders

Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership has been around for many years, and that is what they are very good at. When they see a market opening up, they are very good at taking Canada's small and medium-sized enterprises, introducing them to those markets, and helping them go through the process of selling goods in those markets. I think GMAP has also done a great job in identifying and helping SMEs look for those markets.

When we look at this, it is so good for our western economy, so good for the Canadian economy. We see this being promoted by all the premiers and leaders. They are asking for this deal to be done too, so I would encourage the government to just get on with it and get it ratified.

• (1650)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague and friend, the member for Mount Royal. Having said that, let me get right into the debate and pick up on the member's last comment where he was trying to encourage the Government of Canada to in fact speed up on it.

There was an agreement that was signed off by different ministers at the World Trade Organization in December 2013. We are talking about 162 countries that make up the World Trade Organization. Once it was signed off, in order for it to be implemented, two-thirds, or 108 of those countries, have to ratify it. That is what we are talking about today. We have legislation before us and we want to be one of the countries to ratify it. Right now there are just over 80 countries that have ratified it in one form or another. The essence is there and it has been ratified. We are hoping to demonstrate some leadership by moving it forward.

It is important to recognize that it was not that long ago that we had a change in administration. The Harper government was replaced with the current government, and I would suggest that there has been a new attitude and tone. It is one that has a very aggressive approach in dealing with trade, and it goes far beyond Bill C-13. We have seen that in some of the comments that have been made today by opposition members. However, here we are months later, and now we have Bill C-13 before us. It would appear that all parties are at the very least prepared to see it pass second reading, and it would be most encouraging, as a sign and gesture of goodwill and understanding of the legislation. As one of the New Democratic members of Parliament said, let us get it to committee where we can look at possible amendments or changes.

There is a different attitude once we get to committees. We have a Prime Minister who has been very candid, saying that if members have ideas and thought it through, an amendment that can get the support of a committee is a welcome amendment. I do not know what the restrictions might be specifically on Bill C-13 and what might not be an acceptable amendment, but that is not for me to decide. All I know is that it seems that the Conservatives and the New Democrats would like to see this bill pass. It would be a wonderful thing to see it pass through to committee today. If in fact the opposition members are true to what they are talking about, we would advance it to a committee. It would be nice, and I would suggest it is in fact quite doable. As I indicated, 108 countries need to ratify it in order for it to take effect. Many colleagues, on all sides of

this House, have talked about the benefits when this piece of legislation not only passes but the law is in fact administered by the trading organizations or different countries.

In listening to a number of the comments, especially from the Conservatives, I made mention that this government has an aggressive approach to trade. We recognize the value of trade. Trade is what creates good jobs in many different ways. One of my colleagues just made reference to General Electric. There are examples today, and hopefully there will be many more examples into the future, as we look at ways in which that we can enhance trade with countries, whether it is on a multilateral basis or in a very general way. I was quite pleased that the Minister of International Trade signed off on an agreement over the summer in Ukraine. That agreement was not a done deal by the previous administration. There were a number of outstanding issues that had to be resolved, just like CETA. CETA is not a done deal, and we are seeing a lot of problems.

• (1655)

Those problems are not coming from Canada; they are coming from European countries that are having second thoughts. One of the most invited and able-minded individuals at the table is trying to ensure that not only the interests primarily of Canada—we have a bit of a bias—but of the European Union as well are being served to see that this agreement gets back on track. Hopefully through the efforts of this government and other like-minded governments, we will see that pan out.

It is interesting to hear members on all sides of the House talk about the TPP. This is an issue that came up during the election. We were aware of the Conservatives' position during the election. It was clear. It did not matter. Earlier today, I talked about the Conservative Party losing touch with Canadians. The TPP is yet another example of how those members have lost touch with Canadians.

Some might suggest that New Democrats have always been out of touch, but that would be rather harsh. I would suggest that their conclusions on the TPP are premature at best. They have taken the position that we should vote against it no matter what the content, no matter how it might benefit or draw back Canada.

Prior to being elected as the government, we told Canadians that we would review the TPP thoroughly before any sort of decision or vote took place in the House. This government is committed to doing that.

Bill C-13 seems to have substantial support. I do not know where the Bloc or the Green Party stand on it, but it seems to have substantial support. I am encouraged by that, because I recognize, as I am sure most people in the chamber recognize, the value of trade. Canada is a trading nation. That is not new to the Liberal Party. Liberal governments have always made major strides toward enhancing trade. In the dying days of the Paul Martin government, we had a multi-billion dollar trade surplus. In the sixties, we had the auto pact agreement, which generated thousands of jobs. Many of the industries that are here today are because of that trade agreement. We understand and appreciate the importance of trade to Canada's economy, to the vitality and strength of our middle class. This is one of the reasons we are pursuing it aggressively. It would enhance the strength of Canada's middle class and those who want to be a part of it.

Government Orders

I look at industries in my own province, whether it be the pharmaceutical industry, or one of my favourites, the pork industry. Manitoba has more pigs than people. Manitoba exports pork, which is one of many other commodities. This is an industry with which I am quite familiar. I have had the tours and I have seen the wealth that has been created as a direct result of that particular industry. That industry would not be where it is today if it were not for the ability to export. That basic principle applies to every region of our great nation in terms of our ability to export. It is critically important.

We are just months into a new session and we have an important piece of legislation. I understand and appreciate the support that is being offered. I would suggest that the House might even want to see it pass shortly.

I thank the House for the opportunity to share my thoughts. It is always a privilege to share my thoughts on issues such as trade, which is important to all Canadians.

• (1700)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe that I went three months without hearing from the member for Winnipeg North. All now seems to be right in the world.

I want to ask the member a question about TPP. This is from Global Affairs Canada's website, from the office of the chief economist. It states:

According to our modelling results, should Canada choose to remain outside the TPP Agreement, and all other current TPP members are parties to it, this is projected to lead to GDP losses of \$5.3 billion (US\$ 4.2 billion).

In light of that information that his government is making available about the economic losses if Canada does not join TPP, will his government finally be ready to state its position on TPP? If not, would he at least be prepared to tell us when it will make a decision on this important trade agreement?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is in due time, after we have had the opportunity to do what we promised Canadians.

We have been very aggressive on the trade file. All we have to do is look at the summer, where we signed off on the Ukraine trade agreement. The Minister of International Trade has been spending an immense amount of time outside of our country, promoting and encouraging and trying to broker trade agreements, or promoting all of those valuable export opportunities we have here in Canada.

We are very aggressive at defending and selling Canada's potential for exports. A part of that is trade. That is why we have Bill C-13. How many sitting days have we had since the election? There have been 80 or 90 days of actual sitting, and we are already dealing with a bill that the Harper government sat on for a period of time. It was not a long time, in fairness; it was December 2013, but it could have brought in something in 2014 and chose not to.

We have seen a change of attitude, and it ultimately shows that there is more transparency and accountability. We want to make sure that when it comes time to have the debate on TPP in the House that members like me, my colleagues, stakeholders, and Canadians will have had the opportunity to participate extensively in making sure that the right thing is done on the TPP.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the trade minister has promised a rigorous debate on the trans-Pacific partnership. She has been out there consulting with Canadians, meeting with people, and listening to pretty much every dissenting voice that is out there. I am wondering where those meetings and the feedback are leading to. I did a town hall on TPP in my riding of Courtenay—Alberni, and people clearly did not want to see the TPP move forward as it stands.

My question for the member is this. Is he going to hold a TPP consultation town hall in his riding to hear from people in Winnipeg North? If people in Winnipeg North do not want to see the TPP move forward as it stands, is he going to support it and push it forward? From what I am hearing from people across Canada, there is not support for the TPP as it stands. The member could perhaps tell us a little more, whether he has read the text of the agreement, and how that might affect the decision-making.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I have an advantage over the member; I have the opportunity to have a choice. He, as a member of Parliament, has no choice on this issue because the NDP, even before there was any real consultation, had already decided it was in opposition to it.

The answer to his question is that I have already had some public meetings, and I will be having another public meeting, in part dealing specifically with the TPP. However, there are other ways that I consult and work with my constituents that go beyond public meetings, even though I have just had two public meetings in the last week or 10 days.

The point is, I have confidence and faith in the government, in particular the minister and the Prime Minister, that they know what they are doing on the TPP. They are allowing Canadians and different stakeholders to provide the input necessary for us to make a smart decision on it.

I am looking forward to an active debate. At least there will be one party in the House that will be open to an actual debate on the issue.

• (1705)

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be speaking today on Bill C-13. Indeed, it has been very difficult not hearing from the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for three months. I have been missing both the members for Winnipeg North and Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan; imagine how difficult it has been for me for several months.

I am very glad to have the opportunity to speak about a bill that in layman's terms would be motherhood and apple pie. There has been a lot of discussion about broader trade deals like the TPP, and this bill would allow us to comply with whatever World Trade Organization agreement on trade facilitation, TFA, provisions we are not currently compliant with respecting non-compliant goods and goods in transit.

Government Orders

I have not heard yet today any arguments against the specific provisions being discussed in Bill C-13. We should all accept that this is a bill that should go through, regardless of one's position in the end on trade deals. Regardless of our position on trade deals, we should make sure that Health Canada has the means by which to ensure that all non-compliant goods fall within the exemption that exists in the TFA, and that we allow ourselves to exempt goods in transit from the technical requirements that we need to exempt them from for the TFA. Regardless of whether we think the TPP is good, not good, or whether we do not know yet, it sounds to me that the Bill C-13 is something that should pass. Hopefully, we will get all parties in the House to agree to pass Bill C-13.

I am also pleased to talk a bit about trade and the TFA, partly because I cannot spend 10 minutes on Bill C-13 itself. It sounds like most of us could not do that, so we are jumping to other trade issues that are related to Bill C-13 but are not exactly Bill C-13. I am someone who deeply believes in free trade and is very disturbed about some of the language coming from south of the border. There is protectionist rhetoric being used in the American election that I think is triggering all kinds of fears about trade. I am happy to stand and essentially defend trade.

I believe that trade can be a transformative force. A balanced and open rules-based system creates new economic opportunities and drives productivity. More open trade can create jobs, help spread innovative technologies, and help economies integrate into the global workplace. Closer to home, trade benefits Canadian producers, manufacturers, exporters, investors, and consumers. It also contributes to sustainable development and poverty reduction abroad.

Multilateral trade negotiations can, of course, sometimes be difficult to relate to the day-to-day work of doing business. That is not so for trade facilitation, though, under the TFA. The TFA is not a theoretical agreement; it is about making trade work better for everyone. It is important that Canada become the 93rd or 94th nation as soon as we can, to aim for the 108 nations so that the TFA can be ratified. For traders, the TFA would help ensure faster, simpler, and more predictable cross-border trade, which would translate into lower trade costs.

The WTO estimates that full implementation of the TFA could boost global merchandise exports by up to \$1 trillion, including up to \$730 billion in export opportunities for developing countries. Even in the event that some WTO members do not move forward to fully implement the TFA, the real-world impact will be significant.

The WTO also estimates that the TFA would reduce trade costs, averaging over 14% globally, including reductions of over 17% for the least-developed countries. Lowering trade costs can increase trade, contribute to a higher national income, and reduce poverty. It can drive the growing participation of developing nations and small and medium-sized enterprises in the world economy. In fact, countries that do more to lower trade costs, for instance by improving logistics, tend to grow more rapidly.

These lower trade costs, along with enhanced timeliness and predictability in the delivery of intermediate goods, would drive growing participation by SMEs in world trade, as the high costs of international trade disproportionately affect SMEs as well as

developing nations. Having worked for an SME for part of my career, I can attest to that. Helping SMEs reduce their trading costs would also benefit women in developing countries. The World Bank estimates that 8 to 10 million SMEs in the developing world have at least one female owner.

Implementation of the TFA is expected to deliver a significant stimulus to the world economy. These same factors would also make it easier for developing countries to participate in global value chains. The WTO estimates that this boost in global trade resulting from the entry into force of the TFA could create around 20 million jobs worldwide by 2030, with the majority located in developing countries.

• (1710)

Let me note, that is only five million jobs worldwide less than Donald Trump has promised that he will create in the American election. However, I will not speak to the reliability of either the WTO's statistics or Mr. Trump's.

The TFA may also help to reduce corruption. Let me explain.

Opportunities to engage in fraudulent practices at international borders increase with wait times. By simplifying trade procedures and reducing the time taken for goods to clear customs, the TFA is expected to decrease the incidence of trade-related corruption and increase the customs' duties collected.

The TFA, as I mentioned, will enter into force once 110 WTO members have ratified it. To date, 92 have already done so. I urge all hon. members to do their part by ratifying the TFA and bringing Bill C-13 into force as soon as possible so we meet the stipulations to allow us to move forward to ratify the TFA.

In short, I have listened a lot to the debate and I have heard it diverge to TPP quite a lot. I understand the tendency to move toward TPP as soon as we start discussing trade. It is an important trade agreement that is now before Canadians.

It is important that we learn as much as possible about the TPP, and in my view move toward its ratification. However, at the same point in time, I want to go back to Bill C-13, because so many times we have diverged from the legislation today. There are two simple things that we really need to adopt, and I hope we will have cross-party consensus to support the wonderfully lucky Bill C-13.

Government Orders

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the discussion here today and hope that I too will get the same treatment as the previous member, because I am going to talk about the many reasons to support this legislation, but with a little stylistic flair of my own.

It is an honour to be back in this place to do the work that Canadians expect of us, and more so given the recent economic indicators that are neither promising in terms of jobs nor economic growth. In fact, the only significant growth we are seeing these days is in the new debt being added, not just by our federal government but by many provincial governments as well. That is something that should trouble all of us, given that there will be less revenue available to pay for other much-needed government services as interest on the debt grows. That is why I believe that bills like Bill C-13 are very important and why I am here today to speak to this bill.

First, I think I already let the cat out of the bag by saying that I will be supporting this bill. It is well known that the World Trade Organization agreement was negotiated under the previous government. I would like to publicly commend the new Liberal government for seeing it through, given the political temptation to abandon legislation solely for the reason that a particular party did not come up with the idea originally. I would also like to explain why I strongly support the bill.

I am very concerned about Canada's future, as I believe all of us are. We know that our population is aging and that the fastest-growing segment of our population is over 65. In fact, over the next two decades the number of Canadian citizens over the age of 65 will basically double, from roughly 4.7 million citizens today to over 9.3 million by 2030. We also know that the ratio of workers remaining in the workforce to help pay for benefits like old age security and the guaranteed income supplement will basically fall in half over the same time frame. Let us also not ignore what this will do to our future health care costs, let alone what the interest costs will be on debt at that point.

What does all of that have to do with Bill C-13? I am glad you thought of that question, Mr. Speaker. I think the one thing we can all agree on is the importance of growing our economy, adding jobs, and creating new sources of revenue and opportunities for employers and investors. Obviously, we may disagree on how best to do that, but Bill C-13, in my view, is definitely an important step in the right direction.

The last Conservative government was a strong believer in the importance of trade. As much as some tried to falsely claim that all of our eggs were in the oil and gas basket, it should not be forgotten that when the Conservative government came to power, Canada had free trade agreements with just five countries. Over the course of the previous government and the under the leadership of our former prime minister, and of course his very capable minister of international trade, the member for Abbotsford, Canada concluded free trade agreements with an additional 39 countries. I should say there were other trade ministers as well, but the member for Abbotsford has my full attention.

That takes us back to this bill. While free trade agreements are a critical first step, the mechanics of getting goods smoothly across

international borders is a very important step. This is of particular concern to poor developing countries who lack the capacity to do so, which can lead to lost opportunity, increased costs, and delays. These things are what we often call “regulatory red tape”. One of the best ways we can combat red tape is to harmonize regulations and procedures so there is a more universal language with free flows of goods and services across borders, and that is essentially what Bill C-13 proposes to achieve.

We are fortunate here in Canada that we have always been a successful trading country. However, for the sake of example, let us take a moment to provide an example to better illustrate how increased efficiencies at the border can benefit other nations that traditionally may have lacked capacity and expertise. In Rwanda, the people introduced a single-window system in 2012, a very simple concept. This basically enabled customs documents to be submitted online. This not only cut processing time in half, it also saved an estimated \$10 million U.S. per year due to increased efficiency.

• (1715)

This means that the time it takes a shipping container to move from the Mombasa Port to Kigali has gone from 21 days to 6 days. For someone from an agricultural producing area, such as Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, any time we say that we can cut down the time it takes for a shipping container to be processed, that gets my attention. Why? It is because the longer that is, usually the less shelf life of the fruit and other agricultural products that we produce in the Okanagan. Therefore, this is why we need to look at measures within the WTO agreements and look to adopt them as important ways to increase our markets.

Keep in mind that for this TFA to come into force, two-thirds of the WTO membership must have this agreement ratified and adopted. I have mentioned why it is important to recognize that by supporting this bill, Canada is also fulfilling our international obligations, which will benefit not just our own trading relationship but those of other developing nations. In fact, a recent bank group research study suggests that full implementation of the TFA will promote global welfare gains in excess of \$200 billion per year.

Again, helping developing countries to become more self-sufficient raises the ability for them to enforce labour and environmental laws. It allows them to become more innovative and pay for important things like health care and education. I would imagine that would make them more competitive, which means we would have to be more competitive. These are things where the rising tide raises all boats, and Bill C-13 is one way to do that.

Government Orders

On a local level, I am also pleased that streamlining customs documents and procedures makes it easier for small business owners in my riding to access new and emerging markets outside of our local trading area. We heard earlier how the premier from Saskatchewan was in South Korea. My premier in British Columbia, Christy Clark, has made many visits to the Asia-Pacific area. She knows that British Columbia's future is in those markets.

For a small business owner, this can mean less time with these new markets where limited cash flow is tied up in a holding pattern waiting for goods to clear customs. As we witnessed with the port of Vancouver disruptions, many small business owners can become financially crippled when goods they depend on are tied up because they are sitting idle at port.

Decreased shipping times, in particular, are important for growers in my riding. As I said, they are shipping perishable goods. It is another important consideration, and one that benefits both B.C. agriculture and aquaculture producers as well.

As some members will know, I have been a strong advocate for reducing regulatory red tape and increasing trade opportunities at every opportunity since becoming elected as a member of this place. In my riding, many of the key private sector employers depend upon trade. That is a fact.

When the port of Vancouver shut down some time ago, it was not just small business that was impacted. Even large-scale employers such as lumber mills were potentially looking at shutdowns and layoffs, and that can devastate a small community like Princeton and Merritt. The largest municipality in my area wholly situated in the riding is West Kelowna, and its largest private employer is a mill called Gorman Bros. Therefore, the biggest private employer needs access to those markets.

Again, removing regulatory road blocks is generally not costly on government. In fact, in many cases increased efficiencies provide savings to taxpayers. That is why it is encouraging to see the Liberal government getting on board and supporting a trade-related measure that can help many Canadian business owners who are employers and job creators.

I mention this, of course, because the Liberals could have delayed the bill with the usual consultation, followed by reviews, followed by more consultation, followed by hopefully a decision at some yet to be determined point, much as the case with internal trade. Yes, I am going to go there. I have to raise internal trade for a moment.

While it is commendable that the Liberal government is finally moving one trade-related measure forward while so many sit on the consultation merry-go-round, let us not overlook that it is important to note that not every Canadian supports increased international trade. However, I have yet to find a Canadian who does not support the principle of buying Canadian.

• (1720)

In fact, when the official opposition tabled a motion calling on the government to elevate the Comeau decision to the Supreme Court for clarification that would help us to grow internal trade, both the NDP and Green Party joined with us in support of that motion. I thank those members for that support.

How often do these three parties agree on an economic measure? Yet, when it is a proposal that could support increased internal trade, that is precisely what occurred. Of course, it was the Liberal government, despite promising free votes, that instead whipped the vote and said no to that.

Let us recognize that despite turning their backs on internal trade and using the endless consultation routine to stall other trade-related agreement opportunities, at the very least Bill C-13 is being supported by the Liberal government, and in a timely manner. Given that it was the former Conservative government that made this agreement, we know how challenging it is for the Liberals to support it here in this place. Again, kudos to those who are seeking that this legislation move forward.

While I applaud the government for moving this bill forward, I remain confused on exactly what the Liberal position is on trade deals like the trans-Pacific partnership, as an example. In 2015, we know the Prime Minister said "The Trans-Pacific Partnership stands to remove trade barriers, widely expand free trade for Canada, and increase opportunities for our middle class and those working hard to join it."

In fact, one month later the President of the United States, when sitting with our Prime Minister, further stated, "We are both soon to be signatories to the TPP agreement..."

I believe that sounds positively clear, yet it has also been reported that the Prime Minister will not allow a free vote on the trans-Pacific partnership deal within his own government caucus. Our trade minister now states that even though the government has signed onto the TPP, it is not necessarily committed to it. I would submit that this position is not positively clear, positively clear as mud perhaps, but not positively clear.

To summarize, I believe Bill C-13 is an important bill. Reducing regulatory red tape and harmonizing regulations at our international borders will be of benefit to exporters and importers alike, and consumers will also benefit. This will streamline and create efficiencies for our fellow WTO members that will particularly benefit developing nations that are lacking capacity.

I also believe that decreasing shipping time is beneficial to shipping fresher produce and other agricultural products, something that my farmers are looking forward to.

We also know that there are significant cost savings, as well as other economic benefits that will help increase prosperity and the economies of World Trade Organization member nations.

It is also refreshing that in spite of the Liberal government fondness for cancelling initiatives they did not author, in this case, the good work of the former Conservative government is being recognized and supported. I am hopeful that the Liberal government will continue to recognize the value of trade, as is reflected by their support for this bill, and that they will continue to support other trade deals given our long-standing record as a trading nation.

Government Orders

Sometimes taking a stand and making a decision instead of kicking the can down the road through endless consultations and reviews may be politically unpopular with some. However, I submit that making difficult and unpopular decisions is necessary if we are to continue to build a stronger and more prosperous Canada.

In an era of stagnant economic growth and increasing job losses, our government needs to take decisive action and recognize that bills such as Bill C-13 are important steps to making trade work more efficiently. We also need to have trade agreements in place for bills like Bill C-13 to enhance the trading relationship.

Again, I am proud to support this bill and appreciate that members in government and opposition recognize the value of making trade between nations more affordable and efficient. Let us hope that this new-found support for trade will also extend into the government's agenda with more agreements announced in the near future.

In particular, rather than trying to force a national carbon tax on Canadians that will only increase costs to the very middle class the government covets the support of, if the government has a mindset to force anything on Canadian provinces, I would suggest that instead of a carbon tax, how about a true inter-provincial trade agreement that recognizes that free trade within Canada is a right as guaranteed by section 121, the free trade clause within our Constitution?

● (1725)

We know that this is a principle that all Canadians can get behind and support, much as I believe many will support the principles of Bill C-13 that help ensure trade agreements between nations are more prosperous, successful, efficient, and beneficial to all those involved. I am very pleased to be here representing my constituents. I thank everyone for their time and attention to this important bill.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I admire my colleague's passion and concern about trade. It is something we all share. Canada is a trading country. We all want to see us prosper in that regard.

I did sneak into his riding a few months ago to go to the meeting of the Council of Forest Industries, and I am bringing this around to the TPP since that seems to be the theme here this afternoon. At that meeting, a noted Conservative economist, Jock Finlayson, was speaking about the forest industry and trade throughout the world. He was asked about the TPP and how Canada would benefit. His very candid answer was that we are not really going to benefit at all, but it would be better to be on the inside looking out than on the outside looking in. I thought that was very tepid support for what other members in the House seem to think is a very beneficial bill, when data shows we will be losing jobs in Canada and above all we will have investor-state dispute mechanisms that reduce the sovereignty of the government, provincial governments, and even municipal governments like West Kelowna. I wonder if the member would comment on that.

● (1730)

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, the member will have a chance to go to the different mills in his riding, but most mills in British Columbia have what is called the J-grade of wood. That is the most perfected wood that is available and they charge an extreme amount to the customer who ultimately buys it. I asked what J-grade stood for. Originally when the Japanese first came to British Columbia

mills seeking new supplies for wood, they wanted to make sure that the wood could be displayed in their homes quite proudly and they were willing to pay large amounts for it. We benefit in British Columbia from a lot of sales to Japan of that highly rated wood, which is part of the trans-Pacific partnership that we are trying to get ratified. I am sure that consumption of that wood will only go up.

On the flip side, China does purchase quite a bit of wood from British Columbia. Oftentimes, though, it is for outside formations. That kind of wood does not supply high-paying jobs, but again, China is not part of the trans-Pacific partnership. From the perspective of wood, I would suggest that since Japan is such a major purchaser of British Columbian wood, we would benefit greatly and would see even more exports of our great Canadian British Columbia wood in Japanese stores and homes.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be back in the House. I hope you had a great summer and hope all my colleagues in Ottawa did as well.

As an Albertan, I have heard loud and clear the fact that through our trade agreements Albertans are having trouble right now. We have 10% unemployment in central Alberta and Red Deer. People are hurting. People are suffering. People are walking away from their homes. The Liberals have a tremendous opportunity and the opportunity does not cost the government anything. It is just a matter of making a decision in this place that we are going to do some nation-building and build some pipelines. Whether I talk to ambassadors, to consul generals, or trade commissioners from other countries, the question I always get, and also from a Japanese friendship society event in my riding just a couple of days ago, is when we are going to build a pipeline. That is because in Japan they are paying \$14 a gigajoule for LNG and we have it at \$3 a gigajoule in Canada. We should be into that marketplace.

I wonder if my colleague from beautiful British Columbia wants to comment about the similar types of problems they are having there.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I would love to ask a question of the member for Red Deer—Lacombe, but I am going to answer his question first.

Government Orders

I would simply point out what I said near the tail end of my speech, that sometimes it is important for governments to see a broader picture and to make decisions, not simply to kick them down the road. Pacific NorthWest LNG is a decision that the government will have to come to terms with. It is the greatest one-time investment that we have seen in Canadian history, billions of dollars in short-term construction and billions of dollars in the long term. That means revenue for British Columbians and taxes for the government to be able to pay for all the things we want.

I would simply suggest that the government needs to focus on growth. All of the outcomes, whether in terms of the environment or health, can be possible if we have growth. Right now we do not have growth. That concerns me, and I hope the government will take a bigger picture approach when it comes to some of these contentious decisions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in December 2013 the agreement itself was signed off on. As the member is likely aware, the World Trade Organization comprises about 160 countries, a certain percentage of whom have to ratify the agreement. It would appear as if there is support on all sides of the House to see Bill C-13 advance. I am wondering if my colleague might share his thoughts with members of the House on how he believes this legislation should ultimately go through. Does he see it consuming a great deal of time, or would he rather see it go through quickly, given that it appears that all parties support it and that the support of 108 countries, I believe, is required for its ratification?

• (1735)

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, that was a great question. As long as the member wants to rise and add to the debate, the government simply has to make a decision as to whether it wants to cease debate. There are a variety of different motions it could use, which member probably knows better than I to do, or it could simply hear us talk. It is up to our party leaders and other individual members of Parliament to confer and decide how much longer it should take.

There is a lot on the agenda that needs to be looked at. I want to reinforce that we do need growth. We need it for our long-term prosperity. We need it to address our short-term economic concerns. As the member for Red Deer—Lacombe previously pointed out, Albertans are hurting and British Columbians want growth. Premier Christy Clark wants to see things like the trans-Pacific partnership dealt with quickly and decisively with a positive outcome. She also wants to see Pacific NorthWest LNG taken care of by the Liberal government so we can get to yes in British Columbia and grow our economy.

All of the outcomes I have talked about come down to our being able to get to a yes. I would encourage the member across not just to look for yes on this legislation, but on all these other projects that are going to be good for all of us, not just in British Columbia, Manitoba, and Alberta, but right across this great country.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, after about 10 years of Conservative government and a Conservative trade agenda in this country, Canada experienced some of the largest trade deficits it has ever experienced in 2015. This spring, under a

Liberal government, that unfortunate record continued, with Canada setting new records for the largest trade deficits in Canadian history.

I am wondering if my colleague could tell the House why he thinks Canada is experiencing these record trade deficits after 10 years of his government's pursuit of these trade agreements, which are supposed to have helped Canada improve its trade conditions.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member asking a very clear question. I will try to give it as quick an answer as I can.

First, we have seen the drop of oil prices, energy prices. Energy exports are a major part of our GDP. Obviously, if we are sending less and receiving less for it, we are going to see a greater trade deficit because we still have a lot of manufacturing.

Also, in the case of globalization, we are now getting microchips and parts from other areas of the world, such as Asia, where it is sent to Canada. We draw it in, and then we repackage it in today's automobiles. That makes us competitive. It also allows for the benefits of trade to extend wider and further. Therefore, that raises the trade deficit.

However, if we talk to most macroeconomists in the area of international trade, they will say that a deficit is not a bad thing; it just has to do with the context surrounding it.

If the member wants a more concise answer, he should speak with a variety of economists and seek out whether this environment is suitable for that level of trade deficit. Again, if it is a large number and it cannot be accounted for, we should seek answers and clarity.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to stand in the House to speak for the first time since coming back. It is my first speech since the first election. I was asked to make this speech before we rose for the summer, and I think, like most of us here, when we saw the topic of the bill and were asked to speak for 20 minutes on it, we wondered what in tarnation we could speak about for 20 minutes on what seemed to be an insignificant bill. However, it is not. As many of us have discovered as we have continued this deliberation, there is more and more at stake and much more to be discussed when we speak about Bill C-13.

In essence, it is a bill to make some substantial small changes to the Food and Drugs Act and a number of other agencies. One could ask, why is it so important that the government pass this legislation? As was said, it is part of a trade facilitation that took place in 2004 when there was a movement toward freer trade.

Government Orders

When did that begin? I heard a number of dates tossed about. I think we could go back even further. I think 1949 was the first time that the WTO began the proceedings, because it saw, after the devastation of World War II, what could happen when nations begin to fight with one another, especially in the 20th century, and the damage and horrors that could be inflicted.

They also recognized, probably from men like Adam Smith, who wrote his book *The Wealth of Nations* in the 1700s, the profound and good things that can come about when nations begin to trade with one another.

That is the reason, I would presume, that as we continue these talks, we talk more and more about free trade. I would not be one to say that it is without controversy. There is much controversy. We heard that here in this House. I am on the trade committee and we have done consultations across the country. We heard some dire warnings about what could take place in a free trade atmosphere. Those are the things we need to discuss here. Not only do we need to discuss them here, but we also need to understand them thoroughly so that we can take them home to our constituents so they can understand them as well. There are decisions that the Liberal government and we as a country have to make.

I am the last Conservative speaker, so I guess that makes me clean-up. I hope I do not fare like the Blue Jays and strike out, but I would love just to talk about what has happened in these last few weeks, particularly today, what we are discussing, and why it is so important.

We are very fortunate in this country to be a nation that is involved with trade. It started right from the beginning with fur traders first came to this country. Prior to them, our first nations were traders, and we continued that tradition. We were not a large people. We did not have a big population, but collectively, we were able to do some amazing things. We were also very fortunate to border the largest economic powerhouse the world has ever seen, the United States of America with its 300 million people, compared to our 33 million people. I think it is actually 330 million—a ten to one ratio. We are able to bring our goods a relatively short distance. In my case, in Chatham-Kent—Leamington, it's about 50 miles or 80 kilometres, and in Chatham-Kent—Leamington, it is very important that we have this free trade agreement.

That took place earlier, in the 1990s, when the NAFTA agreement was formulated. We recognized at that time as a country that we needed to continue and to have in place rules and regulations so that we could continue to carry this out.

● (1740)

In Chatham-Kent—Leamington and in Windsor, and some of my colleagues are here today in the House who represent Windsor, we are involved in the auto trade industry. A lot of people do not realize this, but cars are not just made in a particular factory. Rather, they are pieced out in a number of factories. Sometimes those factories produce the product and have to bring them across to the other side of the border where there is added value. Then they come back to Chatham. They tell me that this is done many times over. Can members imagine if we did not have an agreement in place that allowed for those goods?

Canada and the United States are able to show just how well a free trade agreement can work. I do not want to digress because I only have 20 minutes, but I will say that there are some alarm bells that are going off at this particular time when we think about what is happening south of the border today. Actually, it is north of the border. Here is a little trivia for members. What is the country that is north of the border of Windsor? It is the United States. The United States has been rattling its chains and talking about rewriting NAFTA. That would have some catastrophic effects on us as a nation. Maybe we can talk about why that would happen.

The other great thing that we can be very proud of and are very fortunate to have are some incredible trade negotiators. Having had the privilege of serving on a number of committees of the House, the finance committee for four years and the trade committee for the past year, I got to meet some of those people. When we asked questions of the people who are involved in trade negotiations, they told us that we probably have the best trade negotiators in the world, people like Steve Verheul, Kirsten Hillman, and others, that marvellous team we have that has managed to do some incredible free trade agreements, such as with the Ukraine, as was mentioned here, Jordan, Colombia, South Korea, and the countries of the European Union, which is our biggest trade deal since NAFTA. Yes, there are some problems, but not on the Canadian side. It is not with respect to the negotiations that we did, which were excellent. However, there are always countries that see free trade as a threat.

I will take a little sidebar now because I want to talk about one of those countries. It was mentioned a number of times in the House. It is one of the BRIC countries. It is Brazil, which is the first letter of the BRIC: Brazil, Russia, India, China. When I travelled to Brazil a number of years ago, I saw something that was very disconcerting, something that just did not look right. What I saw was a nation that had built a protective wall around its economic borders. In so doing, it managed to produce pretty much all of the goods that it consumed. Some people would say that it is a wonderful idea and that is what we should be doing as well.

However, what happens is that there is a class of individuals, usually what we call the “one percenters”, who have the factories and produce these goods and have a captive audience. Brazil has a population of 200 million people. Then there is the class of people right below that who distribute those goods, sell those goods, or who may be in management positions. However, there is a huge underlying class of people who live in poverty because inevitably what happens when a country does not have access to trade in goods, when it is not involved in free trade and the good economic practices of competition in the workplace and the marketplace, the price begins to go up. That is precisely what happened in Brazil.

For instance, I know there are those who say that we should produce our own cars in this country. We know we cannot do that. I can say the auto manufacturers have told me that a manufacturing facility must produce at least 300,000 cars a year in order to be economically viable. We would quickly consume that in this country. In Brazil, with 200 million people, it thought it would be able to do that. Therefore, when Ford wanted to sell a car in Brazil it had to produce it there. If General Motors wanted to sell one, Brazil had to produce it. If Volkswagen wanted to, it had to be produced there as well.

Government Orders

• (1745)

As a result, if we watch the economic news, we see that Brazil is in a real tight spot. For that reason, because Brazil saw that position challenged, it put opposition against that free trade agreement.

As I said before, we are a nation of traders. I talked about our history. When we envision Canada, when we think about the map, for instance, we see these huge agricultural areas. We travelled, as I said, across the country to a number of provinces, right from the west to the end of Quebec. In my riding, for instance, Chatham-Kent—Leamington, we are number one in counties for wheat, I think for soybean, and number two for corn. I am bragging, but I think we can all brag about our ridings, especially those who come from the agricultural side. We produce tomatoes and breweries. The other thing we produce in my riding is greenhouse produce. It is a billion-dollar industry. Again, the fact that we are next door to the greatest economic power in the world gives us an opportunity to move those goods to the other side of the border.

I think I heard that in Europe the average individual consumes something like 100 pounds, or it might have been 200 pounds, of greenhouse goods. It was quite high. In Canada, it is about 20 pounds. In the United States, it is about three. Think about the opportunities. One day's drive: 200 million people, and think if those borders were closed. I think we can all come to the conclusion that trade has been good to us. It has been good to us in agriculture. It has been good to us in manufacturing.

Even in my riding, we have suffered. We definitely have taken a setback in our auto industry. Nevertheless, when we crossed Canada on our tour, we came in contact with many who were involved with agriculture. I remember the trip from Montreal to Quebec and I get excited. I am not one of these people who sits in the bus and chats about nothing; I am always looking. I saw so many new manufacturing operations, small and medium-sized manufacturing buildings in Quebec. When I talked to my Quebec colleagues, I asked them about this. They told me there are nouveau businesses that are excited about the possibilities, but they need markets. They told us that we need free trade agreements. We need a free trade agreement with Europe. We have a great trading relationship in the United States, but we have to expand that. We cannot, as somebody said, put all of our eggs in one basket. We need to be able to sell our produce to more locations. Europe is one of those agreements. The TPP is another. We have discussed that at length too.

What I want to lay out more than anything else is that the concept of free trade is a noble one. It has enriched and empowered people and brought them out of poverty. With regard to countries like Korea that were in such dire straits after the Korean war, we cannot imagine the poverty that was there, and yet the free market system lifted that country up to the world-class society it is today. That is what free trade does. That is what the free market does. That is why we have to defend it.

• (1750)

Are there problems? Absolutely. We are never without risk when we go on ventures, especially one as noble as the one being described. There is always risk. I believe there are risks from globalization. We must always continue to make sure that we keep

our national institutions in our communities. That should not be destroyed as we move out.

Those are some of the things we heard when we crossed Canada. People are a little afraid of this. In some cases, they are very afraid of it. What we are seeing in the United States and what we saw in Britain is a result of the fact that people are fearful that they are going to lose the power they possess as a culture and as a people and that it will be shifted to another organization or another seat of power. Those are things that we need to defend and fight for in the House on a continual basis.

The concept and the reality of free trade is an excellent one. If we think about our people in the east, in the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies, the first nations, all of our diversity, we are a trading people. We know this to be true and we see the difficulties that can arise when we lose that power or the rights that we have negotiated for something like the softwood lumber industry. Today, the United States is again looking at that agreement and attempting to break the agreements we have made.

Therefore, it is incumbent on us here in the House and on the government to make sure that we fight for them, so that the people in B.C. have access to wood, and that people in the Maritimes, where the Conservative caucus just visited, and Quebec, and Ontario still have those places; and so that the people in Alberta are able to sell their oil and gas and beef.

When I first came to the House, we talked about peak oil. Does anyone remember that? Is there someone here from the class of 2006? We were going to run out of oil and it was only a matter of time. We no longer talk about peak gas. As one of my colleagues mentioned, we talked about the importance of getting that gas to market and having agreements. When Alberta has such an enormous amount of gas from fracking and Japan is prepared to pay the price, it makes economic sense.

In my neck of the woods, when I was first elected, people were paying \$11 a gigajoule for gas in the greenhouse industry. Today, I think it is about \$4.50. Think of the ability that gives us to compete with our neighbours and in the marketplace. That is why we need to make sure that we have these agreements in place for Alberta, and for Saskatchewan with canola. That is why we need a government that has the fortitude and the strength to tell the Chinese there is a problem that needs to be straightened out, that there is too much at stake for the people of Saskatchewan to lose their canola to foreign countries that do not operate in a fair way or for Manitoba to lose out on wheat exports, as well as the pork industry and farming. In Ontario, it is auto parts manufacturing.

Government Orders

The Ford Motor Company announced that its platform in Brantford, I believe, will be used to ship cars to Europe when the trade agreement with Europe comes to fruition. As a matter of fact, it is going to do it before that, but it will be a much better agreement once that starts to happen. Bombardier is involved with the aerospace industry both in Ontario and Quebec, and I already mentioned the greenhouse industry. Quebec has hydroelectric power and could sell electricity. Then, of course, in the Maritimes, there is fishing and lumber. Free trade is good for Canada.

I want to finish by saying that free trade needs to be extended. We cannot stop. We need to extend it to the trans-Pacific partnership. There are 800 million people in Japan and is the third largest economy in the world. Those opportunities will escape us if we do not take the necessary steps. All of us need to be bold and vigilant to ensure that the right agreement is made in the best interests of our people. However, let us not be afraid. Let us not be afraid of free trade. We have a stronger, more diverse economy by taking goods to more people in the world, because trade is good for Canada.

• (1755)

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Chatham-Kent—Leamington and welcome him back to the House. We have the pleasure of serving on the House trade committee together. I can be frank. He is a good contributor to that committee and brings a lot of insight and perspective that we all appreciate on that committee. We on this side of the House agree with him that free trade is good and is good for Canada. Of course, it has to be fair trade. I think he agrees with that as well.

I want to pick up on one of his closing comments on his support of the TPP. As he knows, we have heard a lot of Canadians speak about the TPP in our committee work. The auto industry is concerned about the effect the TPP might have. Coming from the part of Ontario he comes from, I wonder how he can reconcile some of the pressure the auto industry is facing with his support for the TPP.

• (1800)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member and welcome him back, as well. I look forward to working with him and his seatmate again once we get back.

He is right. The auto industry has suffered a blow. However, we can do things as a government. When I think back to the 1970s, for instance, we had an enormous advantage over the Americans. It was our health care system.

I have put forward a proposal. We could look at something like a pension plan, but not the one being proposed. I feel that it is going to cripple the economy. However, we could use our imaginations, and we could again make this a great place, because we have great automakers. We have the best in the world. We can talk about Windsor and the knowledge that is there. We have to start talking about those things, cross borders with each other, start discussing things, and come up with some interesting proposals. One of them is our pension plan. We can reform that in a better way than is being proposed.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for quite a far-flung

speech. Not too many people can go from Adam Smith to current economic theory in this House.

I want to ask him a little about the auto sector, knowing that he comes from that area. He mentioned that the Canadian auto sector did very well in the 1970s. He attributed that to Canada's health care system, which no doubt played a role. I would argue that the Auto Pact actually played a much larger role in building Canada's auto industry at the time, which is a form of managed trade as opposed to free trade.

The TPP would lower the rules of origin so that the content of a car made in one of the TPP countries that qualifies for tariff-free import into Canada would be less than 50%. That means that a car made 50% in Malaysia or Vietnam, that is maybe contributed to from China, because it only has to be 50%, or slightly less than that, could come into Canada tariff free. I wonder if he could tell us how a car that, say, has 45% Chinese content and 55% Vietnamese or Malaysian content, with their low wages and lack of standards and government programs in those countries, would affect the competitive abilities of the carmakers in his region?

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I agree on those things. We have to look at the overall picture, though, and what has happened in the auto industry. We have seen the introduction of many automakers. There was a time, when I grew up, and I was involved in the auto industry, when we talked about the Big Three. We talk about the Detroit three today, because they are no longer the Big Three. There have been other players. That has had an effect on some of the things you are talking about.

The other thing we cannot forget is that we also have an enormous parts manufacturing industry. When we did our cross-country consultations, we heard repeatedly from those who supply those automakers that we should get this deal done and that it was going to be good for Canada. Why is that? I mentioned Japan, with 120 million people. Anyone who has been to Japan knows that there are an awful lot of cars there. Japan has a protectionist system in place that we would be able to compete with. We would be able to make parts for those auto industries.

You are quite correct that there are times when we would, on the one hand, lose some, but on the other hand, we would gain.

When we expand our trade, because we are good at it, because Canadians are good automakers, good traders, and good bankers and do a lot of things really well, we have nothing to fear. When we get out into the workplace and out into the marketplace, we can compete, and we will succeed. We will succeed in that industry as well.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is just a reminder to members to address answers and questions to the chair.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just want to compliment our colleagues here today in the House, because Canadians are competitive. They have been competitive for decades, centuries. We reinvent ourselves.

Government Orders

I look at my province. We have the best agriculture farmers in the world. Everybody wants our product. Everybody wants a product from Ontario, because we have good workers. We have not talked about that in the House, but Canadians are one of the best in the world at producing, one of the best in the world at manufacturing. I think that is something that we should be proud of in this country. We have not talked enough about it in the House here.

● (1805)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Madam Speaker, I will say through you that the member should not stop there. He should not stop with manufacturing. Let us think about the farmers.

When we did that cross-country tour, I saw what was taking place in Alberta and I saw what was taking place in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I know what takes place in southwestern Ontario. When I took that trip from Montreal to Quebec and saw the innovation that is taking place there, I saw that we have so much to be proud of. Just spending time in the Maritimes and seeing how our fishing industry is rebounding again, we could go on and on. We have the finest institutions in our education system. We have schools that people from across the world are dying to get into. We have so much to offer. We have nothing to fear. I believe that as a nation, given the chance, when we compete, we will succeed.

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a quick question that I think my colleague will appreciate.

The member's riding is a riding steeped in trade history. It used to be the home of the Canada Southern Railway, the Cayuga Subdivision, and the CSX from Blenheim to Samia. These are all major lines that were very important to southern Ontario.

Could the member address how losing many of these lines has affected trade in his area?

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Madam Speaker, I think most of us would agree that the times they are a-changing. What was once the best mode of transportation is no longer the best mode of transportation.

I sometimes wonder when I travel down the 401, for instance, and I see all of those trucks, if we are doing this the right way. That is what we can do as Canadians. The trucking industry is another one that I failed to mention, and I should have. I once chaired a caucus called the trucking caucus.

We talked about Adam Smith, the unguided hand. This is an area where, and this is the beauty of it, if we are involved in trade that is unfettered, where everyone gets an opportunity, somebody is going to come along with an improvement in trucking or rail. We can start to do those things. That is why I get excited when I think about free trade. That is why I get excited when I go across the country and see the innovation and all the great minds that are involved in this enterprise.

Again I say, we have nothing to fear. We will move forward.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to debate Bill C-13. As New Democrats, we support getting the bill to committee, but there are some serious questions that need to be addressed at committee.

Over more than a decade, I have seen an almost juvenile debate against trade or for trade. All these things turn off many Canadians, because they understand that trade created this country. Even in terms of the foundation of this country, there were different items that allowed for trade and sale. Some of the most severe, for example, were related to slavery. Canada and the British Empire were one of the first to end that trade practice, despite our neighbours to the south who continued that practice. It is part of the heritage of the area of Windsor West, which was the end of the Underground Railroad, where people came for freedom. They were a commodity.

Trade is ingrained, in a much more social fabric, and is part of our history.

Bill C-13 is very important and we should not underestimate it. Those who think it is just a maintenance bill have to go no further than reading the acts it is amending. The Food and Drugs Act is obviously very important for our health and items related to our food chain.

The Hazardous Products Act is significant. I come from a community where more than 30% of our daily trade with the United States goes along two kilometres of the border, and in that two kilometres, we fight daily to make sure that hazardous material crosses on a ferry system, in full compliance with the law, versus going over a bridge, where there is no way to get fire services to put out a fire in a truck that has chemicals or other things that should not be there. Unfortunately, in that process, some people in trucking institutions change the placard that says that it has dangerous or hazardous materials and has to cross at certain crossings. They will change that placard by taking it off or putting another one on to hide it so they can cross the border. Nobody sees them, at times, until they get to the other side. If there is such a thing as a spill, there is no containment and capture on the Ambassador Bridge. It seeps into our drinking water.

Another act needing amendment is the Radiation Emitting Devices Act. Nuclear waste is a significant issue that we as a country, and many other countries across the globe, have not taken seriously enough. I fought a campaign about four years ago to stop Great Lakes nuclear waste items, which were not emitters themselves but were contaminated from the work they did, from going on ships across the Great Lakes. Exposure would be like standing by the shore and getting an X-ray.

● (1810)

Imagine if there had been any problem with the turbines and they ended up in the Great Lakes. There was no recovery system for them. However, they were then to go all the way across the ocean to Scotland to be worked on, basically to be melted down, to be consolidated in a more solid form and come back across more highly radiated but smaller. We would end that process.

The point I am making is that even during the creation of nuclear waste, these items that we are amending through this process could even involve hospital things, the secondary nuclear waste. This relates to the current campaigning that we are working on right now, because the government has on the table a proposal to store secondary nuclear waste for up to 100 million years right next to the Great Lakes.

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This waste material is to be put down a shaft the length of the CN Tower within a kilometre of the Great Lakes for 100 million years, and only three of these in the world. Two are closed in Germany, and the third in New Mexico caught fire a couple of years ago and radiated some of the people working there.

Therefore, the single-source location for this experiment is something that we have opposed. A more progressive and thoroughly exhaustive approach to dealing with this nuclear waste is needed, as opposed to just saying, "Okay, we're going to put here, we'll give you some cash, you guys deal with this. You'll get some jobs, hooray, and we'll leave this for somebody else 100 million years from now to deal with". Even the most stringent heavy nuclear waste facility could only last 10,000 years at best with the estimates they are making. Therefore, these issues that we can change here with Bill C-13 are very important.

The Canada Consumer Product Safety Act is another issue that would change here. It worries me, with the bill before us, and I want to see some of the testimony that comes forward. The background work that I have done on some of the counterfeit and knock-off items that are coming into Canada and also being used across the world relates to the proposed legislation, which would potentially make it easier for the movement of those materials.

People might think right now that maybe it is just a knock-off of a favourite Marvel t-shirt, sports t-shirt, or whatever it might be. It is not a big deal for them. However, when we look at the data and the research, often the people making those things are children. Instead of going to school, they are being exploited to produce those items.

At one time this parliament had an all-party committee that I co-chaired with Dan McTeague, a Liberal at the time, and we had a Conservative member, James Rajotte, formerly of the Canadian Alliance and then Conservative Party. We had several meetings on the types of items, and it was not just those handbags and t-shirts. There were counterfeit items, like circuit boards, which were in hospitals. They had CBS standards stamped right on them. Therefore, installers, electricians, and others could not determine which were the knock-offs versus the others. We heard about other types of issues, including plane and automotive parts getting into the manufacturing assembly process.

Why, when we look at Bill C-13, is this very important? It is because we are amending some other acts that would increase some of the trade, which can be good for jobs and can be good for some of the processing that we do in this country, but it comes with some risks. How do we mitigate the risks?

What I mean by that is the fact that we only screen about 4% of the containers coming into our ports in this country. We have around 10,000 trucks going through the Windsor-Detroit corridor per day. We have a compliance rate that is one of the best in the world, and an oversight rate that is among the most stringent.

• (1815)

Meanwhile, we only screen 4% of the containers coming in to ports like Halifax, Montreal, and Vancouver. We have heard about a number of different things, as I mentioned, related to knock-offs and counterfeits. In that, we also have drugs, some of them are not just illicit drugs but prescription drugs that are getting across the border.

This act also calls for issues related to the Pest Control Products Act, chemicals that are listed in Canada. The act would now make us compliant with the WTO. With all those goods and services coming into Canada, it would give us the provision to do some screening, and I would argue that we would actually have better response. We could send them back, store or keep them, or we could redistribute them.

I have been supportive, to a degree, of that type of thing, and I will give my Conservative colleagues credit on this. I had a bill on invasive carp in the last session of Parliament, and it was passed through regulations. We had a big campaign on it. The bill was about allowing invasive carp that come from the United States into Canada to be seized by CBSA officers. Without waiting for Fisheries and Oceans officials, because in certain areas we do not have those people, the CBSA officers could then send those fish back to the United States right away or destroy them.

Here is a quick lesson for people. Invasive carp stand high when they are stood up. They eat everything so that nothing else gets food. It is an invasive aquatic species that has destroyed the Mississippi River and the heritage there, and it is sold illegally in Canada. It is seen as a delicacy, and there are other types of uses. We have been fighting to keep this out. There is an electrical fence in the Mississippi to try to keep them out of the Great Lakes, but they come across into Canada.

My bill, with some penalty improvements and a number of things, was graciously accepted by the then government and it was implemented. Now we do not have to wait for Fisheries and Oceans officials to come before sending back the invasive carp. As an interesting side issue, the reason it is so important is that the invasive carp, like the Asian carp, can live in packed ice for 48 hours. They have "zombie-like characteristics". They can be taken out of the ice, thrown into a tank, and they will wake up. The danger is that they are not just getting into the Great Lakes but into Ontario with its thousand-plus lakes, and in other lakes across this country. They are stored in ice to be sold to market, but some people have been releasing them into those lakes. If they happen to be females that are going to give birth, we have a real risk there, and we are seeing this more.

My point is that with this new bill, it will be interesting to see some of those things taking place. However, my concern is about the workers and the obligations of sending illicit products into our country that have a high degree of risk. With this agreement, we would get that type of a benefit, but here is the drawback, and it is a serious one. If Canada is not the point of destination for something that is not approved, we have to allow it to be moved to another point. Someone could be shipping something that, for example, contains mercury that is legal in another country, or perhaps asbestos, which is another banned substance. That has been in everything from drywall to crayons for kids. These materials that are not regulated in Canada then escape our laws here and they move through. That is a best-case scenario.

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● (1820)

That is assuming that there is no potential for those products to get further into Canada through our systems, whether by rail, plane, car, truck, or any way whatsoever. We have to rely upon the shipper to do that.

We have talked a bit about trade and competition and other things like that. I saw the Prime Minister in China. I want members to think about this. I have heard the same argument over and over again, that if we could just make sure that we have access to China and other countries, they will change their practices, they will not use children, they will not use cheap awful labour with humanitarian discrepancies, and they will not use the environment basically as a subsidy for production.

One of the things I am most proud of, and I give credit to the Liberals for eventually changing this, is that it used to be legal in Canada for an environmental fine or penalty to be a business-related expense. That is what happened. I arrived in Parliament in 2002-03. I could not believe it. Individuals could get half of their money back from a fine or a penalty. This was a judge's ruling. Say for example that a company poisoned a river and was later fined for doing so. That company could claim up to 50% of the fine as a business-related expense. There were drug cases involving illicit drugs on the market that were marked wrong and were sold to men, women, and children in Canada. Those companies were later fined for marketing infringements. Unbelievably they could claim up to 50% of that fine as a business-related expense. That is unbelievable. It would be like a person receiving a \$100 speeding ticket and then getting \$50 back because they were on their way to work and it could be put down as a business-related expense. That is the way the law worked when I arrived here.

Think about this. It was a bigger argument than just the injustice of that. It was the injustice to the fair competitor who was doing the right thing, the company that was not draining oil in the auto shop out back, the company that was not processing meats and other products and disposing of them and not making sure viruses were not taking place. It was the farming community that did not use pesticides and other types of operations as a subsidy versus their competitors using illegal activity. They would have to compete against this illegal activity. We still see this behaviour taking place. I give the Liberals credit for this. At that time it was the Canadian Alliance, the precursor Conservative Party. We all finally agreed on a motion that I made at the industry committee. We did not budge from it and it was changed in the budget, so that is no longer the case. It is about fair practices. That is why Bill C-13 is going to be interesting; it relates to fair practices in China and other places.

I will quote from an organized crime research brief. Some people might think that this is a New Democrat conspiracy using a document from Public Safety Canada, a review that it had in our courts on organized crime. The number one methods and techniques used by organized crime groups include smuggling methods and concealment techniques such as the use of shipping containers, concealing contraband among legitimate imported goods by using fraudulent shipping documents, and the use of transit countries and co-operation among different criminal groups. That is the problem. Therein lies some of the challenges in terms of the use of those containers that we currently have a problem on, but only at 4%. They

could contain lead toys, materials not approved by Health Canada, or other materials that should not be in our consumption stream.

This is a serious piece of legislation. It is about Canada competing with other countries. It is also about Canada competing with other rules that may or may not sync up with our values.

● (1825)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for a very far-ranging and knowledgeable speech. He comes from Windsor and I know he has done an incredible amount of work on both sides of the border to help facilitate greater understanding between Canada and the United States, and of course in nurturing that very important trade relationship.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague to elaborate on the implications he sees in this legislation for opportunities to enhance Canada's relationship with the United States. We have been talking about the TPP and CETA being other trade arrangements with other countries of the world, but Canada and the United States always will remain the number one trading relationship for our people.

Does he see opportunities or challenges in respect to this legislation with respect to the Canada-U.S. trade relationship?

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, the question is very important and is one that I did not get a chance to discuss. As we are increasing our trade, which is good, we also require the same investment for our processing and our infrastructure. That is critical, because right now we are deficient on both fronts.

We are trying to build a new border crossing in Windsor, which was supposed to be built in 2013 and now has been delayed for the RFP process because they want to do a public-private partnership indefinitely. That is giving a lot of people cold feet, because the RFP has been sitting in a box, so to speak, for seven months.

We have to invest in those allocated resources necessary for infrastructure, but also CBSA. Our men and women, who are not only checking the devices and the things coming in, but are very important in protecting against organized crime. Put the workers who were laid off back to work. They were doing investigative work with the CIA, the FBI and the RCMP.

● (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time for government orders has expired and therefore the member will have approximately eight minutes left for questions and comments when the House takes on the topic again.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

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[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, in April when we discussed the long-standing problem of abandoned vessels, Transport Canada said it was developing options, that it was on top of it, that it was taking care of the issue. It said it was developing a comprehensive approach and was addressing the issue as quickly as possible. All of those things were said in our debate on that day. That was five months ago when a solution sounded imminent.

I am interested today in hearing what the elements of the government's plan are now, five months later. In the spring, I secured a Department of Fisheries and Oceans agreement to remove the *Viki Lyne II*, an abandoned vessel that had been languishing in Ladysmith Harbour for four years since Transport Canada towed it there. It was deemed by the Coast Guard to be at imminent risk of sinking.

It is great news that the government agreed with my proposal to remove it. The government is now negotiating a bid, and we hope that the contract will be awarded shortly.

However, the worrying part is that initially DFO thought that the vessel would be removed by the end of August. Now we are at the end of September. We still do not even have a contract in place. These things are moving slowly.

This summer I heard the views and advice of 2,500 community members on abandoned vessels. We heard from marina operators, businessmen, businesswomen, and local governments. They all told me that the abandoned vessel problem has not gotten better but worse. We know that not dealing with the problem has real costs.

A BC Ferries vessel hit a submerged vessel in the spring, and that ferry service has said that abandoned vessels endanger the safety of its passengers and crew and that it has cost them in terms of travel delays.

The shellfish industry says that jobs are at risk. If an abandoned vessel is submerged, shellfish harvesting is shut down. As Kathleen Nicholls from Limberis Seafood Processing in Ladysmith says, "we... suffer economic losses (no product = no sales)".

Tourism operators on our coast throughout our region say that it costs them. It is frustrating to see problem vessels shifted from one bay to another.

What are the solutions? We need to end the run-around and finger-pointing by adopting Bill C-219 to designate the Coast Guard as the responsible department to deal with abandoned vessels; to build Coast Guard budgets and staffing back up, so that we can look after our coast responsibly; to create more recycling facilities for fibreglass and support local salvage businesses; to create a vessel turn-in program, like Oregon state has; and to update the vessel registration system and use licence fees to pay for disposal costs, like Washington state has.

There are great ideas out there. I am eager to hear the government's plan. What is your good news? How fast is your timeline? Five months ago it sounded like the work was well under way. We want to hear the elements of your plan to solve the

abandoned vessel problem once and for all, and to protect our coasts from their environmental and economic risks.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member to address the chair on questions, as opposed to using "you".

• (1835)

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wish to reaffirm this government's commitment to protecting Canada's marine and coastal areas, while also improving marine safety. These are important elements of the mandate letters of the Ministers of Transport, Fisheries and Oceans, and Environment and Climate Change. We take very seriously our evidence-based approach to decision making and understand that a clean environment and a strong economy go hand in hand. I want to assure members that we are aware of the interest in this issue from across the country.

It is clear that coastal communities in British Columbia, Quebec, and in the Atlantic region consider the issue of abandoned and derelict vessels and wrecks as one that negatively affects their enjoyment of their local marine environment. Several of these communities have gone so far as to endorse resolutions calling on federal action to address this problem, including with new legislation. We are aware of the issues these vessels of concern can present to the marine environment, safe navigation, public health and safety, and to the local economies.

In May of this year, this government spoke in support of private member's Motion No. 40, which lays out a comprehensive approach to begin to effectively address this issue. Motion No. 40 supports our government's commitment to protect Canada's freshwater resources and oceans. It proposes that the government addresses gaps in existing authorities.

This is a complex, multi-jurisdictional issue at the nexus between safety, environmental, and commercial interests. We will have a comprehensive plan soon. There will not be a vote-by-vote approach. We need to ensure we have in place a prevention regime that is solid before focusing extensive efforts on remediation. We are carefully examining best practices from other jurisdictions, such as Washington state's derelict vessels removal regime, and are looking at how best to adapt them to the Canadian context.

In the meantime, the Canadian Coast Guard is managing the environmental risks and Transport Canada is managing the navigation and safety risks. In addition, Transport Canada created an abandoned boats and wrecks web page in May 2015 to strengthen owner awareness of their responsibilities regarding vessel end-of-life management and enhance accessibility of information for the public.

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Our government's support of Motion No. 40 clearly signals our intent to move forward with concrete action to tackle the issue. We are currently studying a number of options. We are exploring measures to prevent owners from abandoning their vessels in the first place. We need to engage stakeholders to ensure we get it right. We are working with our partners in enhancing consultations with provinces which also have an important role to play.

I wish to reiterate that this government takes the issue of abandoned vessels and wrecks very seriously and we will have more to say on this in the coming months.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Madam Speaker, with respect, a web page or a motion does nothing to address the real environmental and economic costs that coastal communities have been suffering for two decades now under successive Liberal and Conservative governments. I know this. Over 12 years elected to local government, we passed several dozen resolutions calling for federal action and provincial action on abandoned vessels. I appreciate the government's intention to support the motion from my colleague opposite, but the motion does not change anything on the ground for coastal communities.

When we spoke in April, it sounded like the Liberals' comprehensive plan was imminent. These were direct quotes from *Hansard*. Therefore, please tell me what is the government's timeline to table legislation in the House that will deal with abandoned vessels legislatively forever, once and for all?

Ms. Kate Young: Madam Speaker, we are exploring a proactive national strategy to address the problems posed by abandoned vessels and wrecks. However, as I mentioned, the issues are complex and getting the details and the collaboration right is critical. These challenges have emerged over decades, as the hon. member said, and cannot be fixed overnight.

A key lesson we have learned from other jurisdictions is to ensure we get the prevention regime right first. We must also be mindful of the cost to taxpayers of addressing problem vessels. Owners must be held responsible. Any action by governments must be focused on a risk-based approach. All levels of government have a role to play.

This government takes the issue of abandoned vessels and wrecks very seriously, which is why we supported private member's Motion No. 40 on abandoned vessels that was tabled earlier this year by the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets, and are committed to working in an open and collaborative manner to improve marine safety from coast to coast to coast.

● (1840)

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to ask again why the federal government continues to exclude Regina from extended employment insurance benefits.

The federal budget extended employment insurance for certain regions in response to the drop in oil prices. However, it left out Edmonton, southern Saskatchewan, and Regina. The NDP challenged those exclusions, and the government eventually added Edmonton and southern Saskatchewan. However, it still left out Regina.

Of eight EI regions across Alberta and Saskatchewan, seven are now receiving the benefit extension. Regina is the only one that has been kept out. This anomaly has real consequences for laid-off workers and their families.

I spent the summer knocking on doors in Regina—Lewvan and talking to constituents. I spoke to many people who were out of work or on employment insurance and about to run out of benefits. If they lived in any other part of the province, they would have several extra weeks of benefits available, but because the federal government has left out Regina, they are now at risk of running out.

These are not just anecdotes. Statistics Canada's most recent report indicates that EI use has increased more in Regina than in the rest of the province. Specifically, over the past year, the number of workers receiving EI was up by 32% in Regina, 25% in Saskatoon, 20% in smaller Saskatchewan cities, and 13% in rural Saskatchewan. Despite experiencing the sharpest jump in EI use, Regina remains the only part of the province left out of extended EI benefits.

On June 24, Evraz steel, Regina's largest private sector employer, wrote to the Minister of Employment and copied Regina's members of Parliament. The company explained that it has laid off workers due to the drop in energy prices and asked the government to help these workers by including Regina in extended benefits.

On June 27, the minister's office acknowledged receipt of the letter. However, as of today, the company reports not having received a response from the minister or from her department.

When I say that the government is ignoring Regina, that is not an overstatement or a metaphor. It is a literal description of what has happened.

I want to ask the government to reconsider whether it makes sense to exclude the part of Saskatchewan that has suffered the sharpest increase in employment insurance use.

The government eventually did the right thing by including all of Alberta in extended EI benefits. It should do the same for Saskatchewan.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the adjournment motion question brought forward by the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Let me assure members of the House that we are giving Canadians the help they need right now. We understand that employment insurance is a critical program. It is critical to supporting Canadians who are faced with a job loss or a life event, and we have responded in all regions of the country where there has been this type of extreme job loss.

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Improving access and flexibility in the EI program to better support the needs of Canadians is indeed a top priority for this government. Let us look at the facts. While the level of unemployment in certain areas of the country is very troubling, it is clear that EI is supporting those who need it. Today, there is double the number of EI claimants in Alberta compared with a year ago. In recent months, the number of claimants is also up by roughly 30% in Saskatchewan. Helping Saskatchewan is not just about paying out benefits.

Rather, we are attacking this issue from all angles, and we are working with the province to understand and manage the effects of the economic situation. We have been helping match people with jobs that are available within the regions in which they live. Our government is also monitoring the levels of employment and unemployment right across the country.

The Prime Minister took a positive step by offering support to western provinces that were hit hard by the economic situation. As members can see, we have been taking action as these troubling circumstances arise. These measures are only an immediate response. However, we are committed to doing more.

As announced in the federal budget, the amount of EI regular benefits has been expanded by five weeks, up to a maximum of 50 weeks, for eligible claimants in 12 EI economic regions that have experienced sustained increases in unemployment. Furthermore, we also recently extended EI benefits to three new employment insurance economic regions to reflect the impact of the downturn in oil commodity prices.

We are clearly modernizing the employment insurance program, and these changes will improve EI to make it more fair, flexible, and responsive to the needs of Canadians.

First, we are eliminating discrimination against workers who are newly entering or re-entering the workforce. Next, we are modifying the changes that came into force in 2012 that forced unemployed workers to move away from their communities and take lower-paying jobs. That was not right and we have corrected that. Our government is also providing more flexible parental benefits and more accessible compassionate care benefits, something Canadians have been asking for as reforms under the EI program.

This government knows that when it comes to collecting EI benefits, time is of the essence, and Canadians expect to receive their benefits as quickly as possible, especially when they have lost their job unexpectedly. That is why our government is reducing the EI waiting period to one week and improving service standards to all regions of the country. Therefore, efforts are already under way to improve service delivery and streamline program rules.

I hope that these changes are supported by the—

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Erin Weir: Madam Speaker, I would thank the member opposite for that laundry list of changes that the federal government is making to employment insurance. However, I really did not hear an answer to the question of why Regina is being left out of the benefit extension. We did not hear on what criteria seven EI regions

across Alberta and Saskatchewan are getting extra weeks of benefits and Regina is not. We really have not heard an answer to the issue that I raised at all.

What we did hear was a suggestion that the government is continuing to monitor the situation and will take action. I would interpret that as meaning that the government might be willing to extend benefits to Regina at some point in the future, which is a very hopeful thought.

However, the Prime Minister, in extending benefits to three additional regions beyond those in the budget, indicated that no more regions would be added. Therefore, I would like to hear some clarification on that, and we should end discrimination against—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, I want to point out again for the member opposite that the number of EI claimants in Saskatchewan has already increased in recent months by 30%. I also want to point out that as a result of improving service delivery and streamlining the program rules under the EI program, we have invested \$92 million over the next two years to meet the increase in demand in employment insurance claims to ensure better processing and to improve access for services for Canadians who need to use the employment insurance call centres.

Our government is committed to supporting all Canadians, and not just through the employment insurance program, although it is a key component, especially for those who lose their jobs. However, we know that deteriorating economic conditions and changes in the labour market have an impact, and that is why, as the Government of Canada, we have stepped up in many regions across Canada to help reduce this problem.

• (1850)

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank all those in the House on the first day back in this parliamentary session for staying here. I would not have stayed and made the parliamentary secretary stay to respond to this, except that I think the topic is very important to all Canadians.

Over my tenure as transport critic, I have become increasingly aware of the depth of concern across the nation about rail safety.

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Last April, in this place, I raised a number of serious railway safety issues with the minister. Despite the minister's response that rail safety is his top priority, Canadians have seen minimal action on many of these outstanding critical issues. That includes in any substantive way addressing, first, runaway trains; second, demands for public access to risk management reports prepared by rail companies; third, the frustration expressed by rail workers about failed resolution of rail-worker fatigue; fourth, a growing number of communities, including the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, with concerns about risks from increasingly dangerous cargo traversing their communities; fifth, mounting concern about over-reliance on self-management of the rail sector, including by inspectors; and sixth, concern among rail workers about whistleblower provisions.

Many of these concerns echo those expressed previously by the Auditor General of Canada. Three months back, the transport committee tabled a report in this place recommending action on a litany of concerns identified by rail inspectors, rail workers, legal experts, and communities alike who called for deeper reforms. However, as yet there has not been a government response tabled in the House. Perhaps at the top of that list from the committee is the recommendation to accelerate the five-year statutory review of the Railway Safety Act as a comprehensive independent study. When will this be announced?

That is enough of the one-off responses to serious incidents. It is time for an open public review of the shift to self-management and whether that is a proper response to ensure public safety.

Since last April there have been at least seven major rail incidents, including collisions, derailments, and runaway trains. Most recently, a collision in midtown Toronto, between two trains carrying dangerous cargo, spilled over 1,000 litres of diesel fuel near a residential neighbourhood. The accident shed light on the absence of a fail-safe physical automatic defence to prevent train collisions, a matter that has been called for many times in this House. In a previous investigation, the Transportation Safety Board recommended that Transport Canada require major Canadian railways to implement physical fail-safe train controls, but to date, there has been no action from Transport Canada.

In April it was revealed that Transport Canada had withheld information on the 500 most dangerous rail level crossings. Two of those listed on the most-dangerous top-20 list are in my riding of Edmonton Strathcona. My mayor would welcome federal dollars to address these risks but has yet to receive information on how. I am hearing the same concerns from smaller communities across the country.

Every year, approximately 200 accidents and 30 fatalities occur in Canada as a result of train-vehicle collisions at rail crossings. Transport Canada officials say they have committed \$11 million to improve these crossings, but the municipalities have yet to get information on how to access that funding. That is a drop in the bucket, with 21,000 rail crossings, let alone to address 500 of the most dangerous.

Inaction will not improve rail safety. When can we expect the government to take the initiative to make rail safe?

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, rail safety is a top priority for our government, and that is why in the last budget \$143 million over three years was allocated for rail safety. Specifically, funding will sustain existing measures and support new and expanded activities to strengthen oversight and enforcement, and to enhance prevention and response capabilities related to rail safety and the transportation of dangerous goods.

With respect to grade crossings, our government supports the safe coexistence of railways and communities. Under the Railway Safety Act and related rules and regulations, federally regulated railway companies and road authorities, usually municipalities or provinces, are ultimately responsible for the maintenance and safety of grade crossings, and for ensuring that grade crossings are compliant with the regulatory requirements.

First, I would like to highlight that several factors could contribute to one crossing having a higher risk ranking than another. Just like road intersections in a city, all railway crossings have an inherent risk due to everyday factors, such as volume of traffic, train and road speeds, number of tracks and lanes, proximity to areas of pedestrian traffic, and busy urban versus quiet rural environments.

Second, it is important to understand the distinction between risk and danger. Risk factors do not necessarily mean that a crossing is unsafe. It means that when you compare two different crossings against these risk factors, one may deem one crossing to be higher risk than the other.

Lastly, Transport Canada officials use GradeX, a web-based analysis tool that assesses various factors using a snapshot of a pool of crossings' characteristics. It is just one of the tools used by the department to design and implement its oversight of grade crossings.

On April 28, 2016, Transport Canada's list of grade crossings produced by the GradeX system was made public as part of our government's efforts to increase transparency and openness. This information will help municipalities and road authorities in their planning.

We continue to make progress on improving rail crossing safety. We are constantly updating information that we collect to ensure that improvements are made. We also have programs in place, such as the grade crossing improvement program, which provides funding assistance for safety improvements at public grade crossings that are under federal jurisdiction.

Through this program, the department funds up to 50% of safety enhancement costs at many sites across Canada every year. In reviewing applications under this program, the department allocates funds based on those sites where safety enhancements would most benefit the public. This year, we will provide more than \$10.9 million to upgrade over 400 rail crossings across the country.

• (1855)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, as the hon. member mentioned, \$140 million has been committed over three years. That is about \$46 million per year over the next three years, and \$11 million of that is for rail crossings. Given the extent of the changes needed for even the two most serious rail crossings in my riding, let alone additional ones in the surrounding area, I cannot conceive that is going to address the problem. Therefore, there needs to be more discussion. I am concerned that my mayor still has no idea of where he can access the dollars. He is concerned that he has to use the infrastructure dollars he gets from the federal government simply to address the problems with rail.

What the hon. member has not addressed is the overriding issue of the move by the previous Liberal government to rely on self-management rather than regulation. If ever there were an issue that is overriding, that increasingly legal experts are raising, particularly in their analysis of what happened in Lac-Mégantic, it is a call for a rethink about the way we are dealing with this industrial sector. If we think about it, rail, which is moving increasingly dangerous cargo, is not subject to environmental impact assessments, while other sectors are.

I would appreciate hearing broader—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

Adjournment Proceedings

Ms. Kate Young: Madam Speaker, let me reiterate that rail safety is a top priority for our government. That is why in the last budget we announced \$143 million over three years to sustain existing measures and support new and expanded activities to strengthen oversight and enforcement and to enhance prevention and response capabilities related to rail safety and the transportation of dangerous goods.

The department identifies safety concerns through regular inspections and communicates them to the responsible municipalities, railways, and road authorities so that they can be addressed. We are working toward implementing new mechanisms through which even more information can be shared with municipalities.

Our government recognizes the value of meeting with community groups to hear their concerns, and the department regularly meets with municipalities, railways, and road authorities to discuss railway safety.

On April 28, 2016, Transport Canada's list of grade crossings, produced by the GradeX system, was made public as part of the Government of Canada's efforts to increase transparency and openness.

• (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 7 p.m.)

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