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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of *O Canada*, led by the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

JACK MORAN

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour the life of Jack Moran, a constituent and a long-time resident of London, a community he passionately fought to make a better place throughout his life.

Democracy depends on dedicated volunteers, and Jack was exactly that. He was known locally as a political organizing legend, a deeply committed Liberal volunteer who fought for our party's shared values. Jack gave generously of his time, knowledge and resources to provincial and federal riding associations and election campaigns. All along, he encouraged people to fight for a better country and a better world.

Above all, Jack was a proud family man and someone who had strong faith in God. He was pre-deceased by this wife Beverley Anne, a proud father to his children Susan, Linda, Cathy, Nancy and Michael, and a loving grandfather to Tara, Courtney, Zach, Hope, and Patience.

Jack, rest in peace, my friend. Many thanks for always leading by example.

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GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of questions for the Liberal government.

Why, in five years, does it not have a softwood lumber deal that will keep mills from closing? Why has it not been able to get nation-building projects like Petronas LNG, the Trans Mountain

pipeline and Teck mines approved and built? Why did it not negotiate a better deal with the U.S. so that aluminum in Quebec and the automotive sector in Ontario would not be punished? Why can it find money to build infrastructure in China, but cannot find money for veterans? Why can it not say no to Huawei? Why does it give millions to Mastercard when seniors cannot afford to live? Why does it want to spend \$40 billion a year on pharmacare, when it could put Canadians who do not have a plan on the existing provincial plans for less than a tenth of that cost?

Why is the Prime Minister leaving on a junket to Africa to schmooze for a Security Council seat when there are pressing issues here at home?

Why will the Liberal government not put Canadians first?

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[*Translation*]

EDGAR GALLANT

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not long ago, we lost one of Prince Edward Island's great Canadians. Edgar Gallant's career with Canada's public service was a long and brilliant one.

Mr. Gallant also made notable contributions to the francophonie. He chaired the committees that established francophone school systems in Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Manitoba.

He was awarded many honours over the years, including the title of Officer of the Order of Canada, Officer of the Ordre de la Pléiade, the Vanier Medal of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, the federal Excellence and Leadership in Official Languages award and the FCFA's prix Boréal.

His achievements also inspired the creation of the Edgar Gallant prize, awarded by the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones du Canada. I was the proud recipient of that prize in 2016.

I am grateful to Edgar Gallant.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

RESOURCE CENTRE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate an organization in my riding, La Ressource pour personnes handicapées, on the success of its 23rd annual telethon, held last week in Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

Once again this year, the generosity of the people of Abitibi—Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec helped the organization raise a total of \$550,386, surpassing its original goal. With that funding, La Ressource will be able to fulfill its mission and deliver support services, including physical adaptations for the home, access to medical supplies, transportation for people requiring medical care within or outside the region, scholarships, help with social integration and many other specialized services, such as sledge hockey.

I wish many years of success to this vital, active organization that provides services to people with disabilities of all kinds in my region. Once again, I congratulate the organization on its fundraising success.

I want to thank my friend Rémy Mailloux and his team, as well as the volunteers and everyone who generously contributed.

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[English]

FRIEZE & ROY GENERAL STORE

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Maitland, Nova Scotia, in my riding of Kings—Hants is a small community that is historically important to our province and our country. Situated on the Minas Basin, with the highest tides in the world, Maitland is where Canada's largest wooden ship, the *W.D. Lawrence*, was built in 1874.

It is also home to Canada's oldest general store, Frieze & Roy, which has been serving customers along the Hants shore and beyond since 1839, a full 28 years before Confederation. Frieze & Roy was a key business during the golden age of sail, an era when the completion of the Shubenacadie Canal placed Nova Scotia and Maitland as a world leader in shipbuilding.

I have had the pleasure of shopping at Frieze & Roy. It remains a key hub for our community and is truly a unique experience, as there remain many items at the store that give a unique perspective on our storied past.

I would like to congratulate the current owners, Troy and Theresa Robertson, and wish them continued success in the years ahead.

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NOBEL PEACE PRIZE NOMINATION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the attention of the House to a remarkable Coptic Orthodox woman named Maggie Gobran, affectionately called “Mama Maggie” and often referred to as “the Mother Teresa of Egypt”.

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of becoming familiar with her work in the slums of Cairo and across Egypt.

Mama Maggie is the founder of Stephen's Children, one of the largest charities in the Middle East. Stephen's Children exists not only to serve the poor and disadvantaged but also to elevate them to a sense of their dignity as children of God.

The ministry serves Christians, Muslims and anyone else in need in Egypt, and contributes to cultivating a culture of pluralism and respect for minorities. Last week I was pleased to join four other members of our caucus in nominating Mama Maggie for the Nobel Peace Prize.

In learning about her work and engaging with those in her organization, I know that Mama Maggie has no intention of being honoured for her remarkable selflessness, dedication and radical love for each person she encounters, but recognition and awareness help to strengthen the important work she is doing.

I hope that all members will join me in supporting the Nobel nomination.

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[Translation]

MONT BELLEVUE

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, very few cities can boast a mountain in their core where people can go downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross-country skiing, hiking, tubing, fat-biking, and so on.

In Sherbrooke we are fortunate to have Mont Bellevue. This beautiful mountain is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year but is nowhere near retirement. It is a not-to-be-missed attraction for both residents and tourists in the Eastern Townships. The hill has something to offer both to children skiing for the first time and the more experienced among us.

The calendar of events for this anniversary season is already quite full, which is a reflection of our dynamic region. I hit the slopes with my family for the “Nuit insomniaque” night skiing event on February 1.

I wish Mont Bellevue a happy 60th anniversary.

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[English]

AIRBNB IN SPADINA—FORT YORK

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the riding that I represent is geographically small enough that when shootings happen, the sirens are literally heard in every corner of Spadina—Fort York. Last Friday, when gunfire broke out on the 32nd floor of a CityPlace condominium, all of downtown was rattled, rattled but not surprised.

Too many guns are going off in Toronto, too many people are dying and too many people are terrified in the aftermath. Residents are demanding stronger gun control, investments to create more resilient communities and supports to help young people make better choices.

I support these goals and I will fight for them in this Parliament, but condo residents are asking for something else. Too many of these shootings are tied to short-term rentals. People in my riding are demanding that Airbnb and other sharing platforms obey city bylaws. Rules are in place to clamp down on multiple listings and units being rented out for parties.

The city has moved to protect those of us who live in condominiums. It is time for Airbnb to obey the law and drop their lawsuit.

* * *

• (1415)

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, wasteful spending and Liberal governments go hand in hand. Who can forget former Liberal minister David Dingwall's infamous statement, "I'm entitled to my entitlements"?

On one 10-day tour, the Prime Minister's flight spent, wait for it, \$143,000 on food and alcohol. Given the massive debts that this government is running up, they are putting it on our nation's credit card. Maybe it is a Mastercard.

Every day, Canadians in this country are struggling to make ends meet. They deserve better than this. When will the Liberal government stop wasting taxpayer money on fine dining and boozy flights?

* * *

VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE MUSEUM

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my support to the proposed Vietnamese boat people museum project in Ottawa. The objectives are to present the historical facts of the quest for freedom by Vietnamese refugees and to showcase the contributions of the Vietnamese community.

This noble initiative is led by Mr. Can Le, who is the president of the Vietnamese boat people museum project and who is also the president of the Vietnamese Canadian Centre. Some of the other supporters include Haquyen Nguyen, president of the Free Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa; Thu Tran, president of the Vietnamese Canadian Cultural Organization of Ottawa; and An Hoang, president of the Association of Veterans of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces of Ottawa.

This museum will also feature a community service centre and will be an excellent addition to the multicultural fabric of Ottawa.

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[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a constituent in my riding of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier,

Statements by Members

Émilie Sansfaçon, has sadly been diagnosed with cancer, not once but twice.

Thousands of Canadians receive this kind of news every year and must temporarily leave their jobs to undergo treatment and, in some cases, spend some time convalescing. The direct impact of this situation is a major loss of income. It seems to me that they should have the privilege of focusing on their well-being instead of worrying about finances at the end of each month.

Workers who lose their jobs are entitled to 45 weeks of employment insurance. Caregivers are entitled to 35 weeks of benefits. However, those fighting for their lives are only entitled to 15 weeks of benefits. How much is their life worth? That is pathetic. The Liberals are running up deficits of billions of dollars every year, but are not even able to increase the number of weeks of benefits for people who are fighting for their lives.

When will this Liberal government make the right choices and look after people struggling with illness?

* * *

[English]

TECK FRONTIER MINE PROJECT

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals simply do not get it. They talk about growing the economy and protecting the environment, yet they want to phase out the Canadian energy industry, which has the best environmental record on the planet. They say indigenous reconciliation is important, yet they refuse to show support for indigenous-backed energy projects. They claim their environmental plan will reduce emissions, when in reality it only raises costs on the middle class, a term they cannot even define. They claim to care about national unity, yet they pit premiers, provinces and regions against one another.

I am proud my riding is home to significant resource development. I am also proud that I worked in that industry for a number of years, along with many of my constituents.

The facts are clear. The work has been done. The studies are there. The opportunity is here for the current Prime Minister to finally turn words into action. It is time to stop the dither and delay and approve Teck Frontier.

*Statements by Members***POVERTY**

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our region is struggling, and nowhere is this more evident than in the rates of child poverty. According to a recent Campaign 2000 report, 63% of children in our region live in poverty. That is unacceptable in a country as wealthy as Canada. These are not just numbers; these are lives impacted by crushing poverty every single day. This poverty is directly linked to the poverty of their mothers, women's poverty. The reality is not by accident; it is the result of Liberal and Conservative political agendas that have sought to exploit, dispossess and marginalize indigenous women, their children and their nations.

The federal government must change course and take on the factors that lead to this poverty, from making healthy foods accessible to tackling the housing crisis, from ending gender-based violence to funding child care, from expanding employment and training to building all-weather roads, from creating gainful employment to ensuring the consent of first nations for development on their territories.

I stand with the many women in our north and across the country who are demanding better for themselves, their children and our collective future.

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● (1420)

*[Translation]***ANTOINE DESILETS**

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Antoine Desilets, the father of photojournalism in Quebec, passed away on December 19, 2019.

The recipient of over 80 awards during his glorious career, he first made a name for himself in the United States by winning the Photographer of the Year award from the National Press Photographers Association of North America in 1966, 1968 and 1969.

He became a Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Québec in 1990 and authored 12 books on photography, which were translated into four languages and sold over 650,000 copies.

Mr. Desilets inspired generations of Quebeckers, including many members of the House, and introduced them to the art of photography. Every year for over 10 years, the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec has awarded seven Antoine-Desilets prizes to recognize the best press photos.

A determined separatist, Mr. Desilets had the good fortune to see his son enter the House of Commons as the Bloc Québécois member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles this fall.

My friend, on behalf of all our colleagues and our party, I want to offer our sincere condolences to you and your family.

*[English]***INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEEK**

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, International Development Week gives me an opportunity to share an important story that too few Canadians know.

Leading the G8 in 2010, Prime Minister Stephen Harper brought the world's attention to something very close to his heart. Ten years into their 15-year window, two UN millennium development goals were critically behind. The first was to save the lives of children under five. The second was to save mothers in and around childbirth.

Harper's Muskoka initiative rallied world leaders to meet the challenge and delivered significant results, largely due to his relentless focus on accountability and transparency and the tireless work of the Canadian development community. The initiative would turn out to be a global game-changer, helping save the lives of more than three million children and 200,000 mothers every single year.

In the midst of a global economic crisis, Stephen Harper never lost sight of those around the world who were truly the most vulnerable. He became their quiet champion, and it is a story that should make all Canadians rightly proud.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, happy Black History Month.

Not only is my riding one of the fastest-growing in the country, but Brampton West is home to Canada's largest black community. In honour of Black History Month, although the list is extensive, I would like to recognize local leaders in my riding who make Brampton West a better place every day.

Rainford Cornish is a leader in our community who wears many hats. As a high school teacher, a mentor, a volunteer and an author, he empowers and inspires black youth through sports, volunteering and teachings of black history.

I would also like to highlight Yvonne Squires, a community activist who keeps everyone on their toes, including me, by advocating and fighting for the most vulnerable in our community. She has been a voice for the voiceless for over 45 years, and I am so proud to call her my friend.

I thank them for inspiring our community and for making Canada a better place for all.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to the original TMX plan, a private company was going to use investors' money to build it. It would have already been operational this past December, and the government would be making money on tolls and taxes, not losing money due to delay.

Yesterday the finance minister was asked whether all obstacles had been removed from the construction of TMX, and he could not answer the question. Therefore, can the Prime Minister guarantee an in-service date for Trans Mountain?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were pleased with the court decision yesterday that highlighted that our approach on balancing environment and economic growth works. We worked with indigenous communities, we worked with environmentalists and their concerns and we are moving forward on getting our oil resources to markets responsibly and sustainably after 10 years of a Conservative government that was unable to do that. Regardless of their boosterism of the Alberta economy, they were unable to get it done the way that Albertans and people in the oil sector needed. We are getting it done because we are doing it the right way.

• (1425)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberals are not doing it the right way; they are doing it the wrong way.

Instead of passing emergency legislation to deal with the court ruling, they decided to restudy the same issues, but just with a different government department. They then waited over a month to restart indigenous consultations. The court did say yesterday that project opponents “cannot tactically use the consultation process as a means to try to veto” a project. That is good news. However, the Prime Minister has promised to use a United Nations declaration to create a new threshold requiring free, prior and informed consent.

How does the Prime Minister expect any new projects to get built under that regime?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everything the member opposite just said demonstrates at which point the Conservative Party does not understand the modern economy, does not understand the expectations of Canadians to be responsible around environmental concerns, to work with indigenous communities and to get things done the right way. No wonder Conservatives failed for 10 years. No wonder they keep failing.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Prime Minister who has failed to get TMX started over a year after it was supposed to have already been under way.

There are dozens of first nations communities that supported northern gateway, there are dozens that support Trans Mountain and there are dozens that support Frontier mine. The courts have ruled that no one community has a veto over projects, but the Prime Minister is using a United Nations declaration to create a new threshold of free, prior and informed consent.

Oral Questions

Does the Prime Minister not realize that granting a veto power that does not currently exist will stop any project from being built in the future?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those are demonstrations of complete misunderstanding and miscomprehension by the Conservatives on these issues.

First and foremost, to correct the record, the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion is being built right now. The member opposite, I am sure, did not want to make false statements to this House.

Second, the court reaffirmed yesterday that free, prior and informed consent does not mean a veto for any communities. That is something that is absolutely clear, which Conservatives are choosing to misunderstand for political reasons.

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NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the current law that states that; his new law will undermine that.

[Translation]

There was strong backlash to the Prime Minister's plan requiring the media to obtain licences and be subject to penalties if they did not comply. This is about more than just freedom of the press. The author of these recommendations even suggested that all media content be regulated.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that he will reject the entire report?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always support a strong, independent press.

The report we received proposes to exempt news media from licensing requirements, but allow me to be absolutely unequivocal. We will not impose a licensing requirement on news organizations, nor will we regulate news content.

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is not just a question of the independence of the press. This report goes far beyond requiring licences for news organizations. This is from the same Liberal government that rigged election advertising rules to prevent opposition parties from advertising, while they were running around the country making government announcements. This is from the same government that put Jerry Dias in charge of a fund to bail out media companies.

Oral Questions

These new recommendations would be the biggest threat to freedom of speech in a generation. This report calls for the CRTC to “impose codes of conduct...regarding all media content undertakings”, not just news organizations.

Will the Prime Minister reject this report in its entirety?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third party report we received proposes to exempt news media from licensing requirements, but allow me to be absolutely unequivocal: We will not impose a licensing requirement on news organizations, nor will we regulate news content.

Our focus is on ensuring that Canadians have access to diverse, credible and high-quality news.

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• (1430)

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, some Quebecers may disagree with Bill 21, and they are perfectly free to challenge it in court, but they must not receive money from the federal government, money that includes taxes collected from Quebecers, to challenge a bill that has broad support in Quebec. The government has just given \$125,000 to the English Montreal School Board to challenge Bill 21.

Yesterday, the Bloc Québécois clearly demonstrated that the government's love for the Premier of Quebec is highly selective.

How can the government claim that the Premier of Quebec—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be perfectly clear. The court challenges program makes its decisions entirely independently. These decisions are not made by the government, ministers or politicians. This is an agency, a program, that is there to help Canadians defend their rights in court. It fulfills that responsibility completely at arm's length from the government.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Justice said that Bill 21 must be contested. Today, the Prime Minister is saying that the organization is completely independent.

Mr. Parizeau used to say that governments are made to govern, which means to take responsibility. The English Montreal School Board operates under the Government of Quebec's exclusive jurisdiction. We have spoken to the office of the Premier, who is very displeased. I would not recommend that the government claim François Legault's support today.

Will the government backtrack and withdraw this illegitimate funding?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the court challenges program operates entirely independently of the government. We cannot call for funding or withdraw it. The purpose of the program is to help Canadians defend their fundamental rights in court.

I know the Bloc Québécois leader would rather talk about anything other than his opposition to NAFTA, an agreement that will be good for Quebecers and for businesses and that will help Quebecers. The member's opposition to the new NAFTA is misguided.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2017, the Liberals changed the law to end discrimination against indigenous women, but the lack of resources means that it can take up to two years for their status to be recognized.

[English]

Two years of delay to recognize a woman's status means that gender discrimination continues. This is another example of pretty words by the Liberals, but a lack of concrete action.

When will the Prime Minister step up and properly fund the department to finally end discrimination against indigenous women?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians well know, we have invested historic amounts in reconciliation, in new programs, in new funding and in making sure we are creating opportunities to move forward in partnership and respect. Part of that means it does take a little longer to do, because we are working with indigenous communities to drive those solutions, not determining solutions from Ottawa.

Now, from their corner of the House, the NDP can tell us exactly what we need to do. We prefer to listen to indigenous communities themselves and get it done the right way for them, with them.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year when referring to the RCMP raids on the Wet'suwet'en people, the Prime Minister said it was “not handled the way it should have been.” Now the situation again is very serious. The Prime Minister has a role to play. The chiefs have asked to meet with the Prime Minister, but he has refused. Police action is not the solution. Dialogue is.

The Prime Minister claims that nation-to-nation relationships are the most important, so when will the Prime Minister meet with the Wet'suwet'en chiefs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government continues to be committed to reconciliation, which means partnership, respect and engagement. This is an issue that is entirely under provincial jurisdiction. The RCMP's operations there were directed by the provincial government.

On this side of the House, we respect Premier Horgan and the work he is doing to advance reconciliation, and I recommend that the members opposite do the same. He is doing good work on reconciliation and we continue to support him through a difficult situation.

Oral Questions

• (1435)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's failures with respect to our relationship with China have been numerous. Later today, the Prime Minister's point man on Canada-China relations will appear at the Canada-China parliamentary committee. Canadians are hoping that he will shed some light on the situation on the ground, what progress has been made since he arrived and how the government is addressing the many problems with this relationship.

Can the Prime Minister confirm whether any political staff have been involved in preparing Ambassador Barton for his committee appearance this evening?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ambassador Dominic Barton is an exceptional individual with great depth of understanding of the situation in China over many, many years. He has also been an extremely active member, working with me and with the Government of Canada in terms of moving forward constructively on the sometimes difficult relationship with China right now, particularly around the return of the two Michaels who have been unfairly detained.

We have full confidence in Ambassador Barton's ability to do this job and his ability to present himself to committee very well tonight.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that the government had secured an aircraft that could bring those Canadians who wished to leave China back to Canada. Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig have been wrongfully imprisoned in China for 422 days.

Will both Mr. Spavor and Mr. Kovrig be joining their fellow Canadians on this flight and returning home where they belong?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians right across the country are concerned about the coronavirus. We are doing everything we can to reduce the fear and the anxiety by saying that the risk level is low and that we are keeping Canadians safe.

The way the members opposite are choosing to make light of this and play politics with it, with clever little games, is quite frankly unworthy of the House of Commons. I hope the member opposite withdraws that question and the silliness involved. Really, we deserve better, even from the Conservatives.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have learned that the flight that was scheduled for this evening to bring Canadians home from China has been delayed, apparently because of the weather.

However, other airlines are landing in China right now, and we know that the U.S., Japan, South Korea, Jordan, Great Britain and Portugal have all managed to get their citizens out.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether the real reason for this delay is Canada's strained relationship with the Chinese government, or was it really the weather?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it really was because of the weather.

Perhaps if the Conservatives were in power, they would have ordered the pilot to fly in dangerous conditions, but we respect pilots' professionalism and the decisions they make to keep Canadians safe.

What the member is suggesting really does not bear repeating here in the House.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives were in power, these people would already be back in Canada.

The Chinese are trying to expand their influence throughout the world with their belt and road initiative. According to many experts, this initiative is another way for China to aggressively expand its global influence and to trap developing countries by not only making them financially dependent but also politically dependent on China.

Can the Prime Minister clarify the role of the Canadian government in promoting Canadian businesses in the belt and road initiative?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as part of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Canada joins many countries in promoting inclusive global economic growth. Trade tensions are on the rise in Canada and the Conservative leader is suggesting that we close our doors to international cooperation. This bank supports clean and green investments in infrastructure across Asia and in some of the poorest countries in the world.

It is misleading of them to suggest that it would be in Canada's advantage to withhold funds earmarked for landslide mitigation in Sri Lanka, flood management in the Philippines, and the modernization of Indonesia's immigration system.

• (1440)

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should know that the AIIB is part of a colonial project to expand Chinese control and influence throughout Asia, and many people are concerned about it.

Four years ago, the Prime Minister announced the beginnings of extradition discussions with China. Imagine Canada extraditing people to China. Yesterday, at the Canada-China committee, it was confirmed by officials that these conversations have actually taken place informally.

I would like the Prime Minister to clarify for the House whether he will close the door on an extradition treaty with China, or does he intend to leave that door open?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the course of many years, we have had many different discussions on many different topics. However, our values, our criteria and our expectations on extradition treaties are very clear. China would not qualify now, or any time soon, for an extradition treaty with Canada.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope that marks a real change of heart. However, I am very concerned about the government's commitment to our values.

Ambassador Dominic Barton led a corporate retreat in Kashgar, four miles from a Uighur concentration camp. While leading McKinsey, he also worked to improve the image of pro-Kremlin Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, and he prepared a report for the Saudi government that it used to crack down on critics.

Given Dominic Barton's record at McKinsey, does the Prime Minister really have confidence in his commitment to defending Canadian values on the world stage?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have tremendous confidence in Mr. Barton. He is an excellent public servant, an excellent ambassador to Canada and he, as the members opposite will see tonight, is a deep expert in how we are going to move forward on improving the situation for Canadians in China right now.

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[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am polite guy, so I cannot turn down an invitation. Let us talk about aluminum.

The Premier of Quebec is not a political tool for the Canadian government. There is one similarity between Bill 21 and aluminum, and it is quite telling. The government is clearly not working in the best interests of Quebec. The government works against the best interests of Quebec whenever it suits its own needs.

Will the Prime Minister admit that he is the one who wants to fund the challenge against Bill 21?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no, the court challenges program is administered completely independently from the government.

As for aluminum, I must point out that aluminum sector jobs were very important to us during negotiations with the United States. We defended ourselves against the United States' punitive tariffs and got them withdrawn. NAFTA is good for aluminum workers and for the aluminum industry. The Bloc Québécois should stand up for workers and support the free trade agreement with the United States.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is giving \$125,000 to the Montreal English School Board, which has an annual budget of \$350 million. The criteria for the court challenges program are clear: To be eligible, the organization must be in need of financial support to make their case.

Why is the government funding this initiative? The truth is that Ottawa is funding this initiative quite simply because it supports it.

Why is the government going against the clear will of Quebecers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I get the impression that I will be repeating this often in the House today: Administration and delivery of the court challenges program is carried out completely independently from the government.

That may be why the Stephen Harper government wanted to abolish this program. It is administered independently from any decision or political will of the Canadian government.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 14 years after an individual violently murdered his partner, he murdered another woman because his parole officer permitted him to seek the service of sex workers. The parole officer facilitated a murderer to repeat his offence and take another innocent life by enabling him to satiate his criminal appetite.

Will the government amend Bill C-5 to require Parole Board members and parole officers to receive new sexual assault training so vulnerable women like Marylène Levesque will not die tragically because of bureaucratic incompetence?

• (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this was a terrible story and we have deep sympathy for Marylène Levesque's family and friends. We have questions. People have very difficult questions to ask, and that is why we are pleased that the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board are launching a board of investigation into the circumstances that led to this tragic case.

I will highlight that it was disappointing that we were not able to move forward with Ms. Ambrose's bill on judicial training because the Conservatives chose to play politics with it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Bill C-5 on the education of judges on matters related to sexual assault was introduced in the House.

I want to be very clear. We support this bill. Let's not forget that it started out as a Conservative Party bill. However, in light of the brutal murder of Marylène Levesque, we believe it is important to add an amendment to include the education of parole officers and Parole Board members.

Would the Prime Minister agree to such an amendment?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that the Correctional Service of Canada is launching an inquiry into the circumstances that led to this tragic situation.

It is a terrible situation, and we have tremendous sympathy for Marylène Levesque's family and friends. We all want answers to the very valid questions that we are asking ourselves about how this could have happened. We will wait for the results of the inquiry in order to better understand how this happened and how we can ensure that such a thing never happens again.

* * *

[English]

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer recently released its report on infrastructure spending. Alarming, this report tells Canadians there is no way of tracking where money is being spent. The report went so far as to say the Liberals' infrastructure plan "does not exist".

The House recently passed an important motion calling on the Auditor General to investigate these lost billions of dollars. Will the Prime Minister commit today to ensuring that the Auditor General has the resources he needs to do this important work?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made historic investments in infrastructure in order to grow the economy and improve Canadians' quality of life. We remember that in the last campaign, just a few months ago, the Conservatives campaigned on 18 billion dollars' worth of cuts to much-needed infrastructure across this country. We choose to invest in infrastructure to grow the economy.

On the Auditor General, we have given more resources to the Auditor General, and I will highlight that it was the Conservative government that cut millions of dollars from the Auditor General's budget. We believe in and support our officers of Parliament and we will continue to.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister loves talking about politics. He loves talking about transparency and openness. However, he led the Liberals in voting against our motion calling for the Auditor General to investigate the Liberal infrastructure fiasco. The House spoke, and the Prime Minister lost.

If the Prime Minister is not afraid to defend his track record and is truly open and transparent, will he commit to giving the Auditor General the resources he needs, instead of encouraging Mastercard by handing it \$50 million?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was actually the Conservatives who cut the Auditor General's budget. We collaborated with the Auditor General to increase his funding in 2018-19. Thanks to that increased funding, his office was able to add the equivalent of 38 full-time employees.

It is nice that the Conservatives are finally taking an interest in the officers of Parliament, because it was their party that cut \$6.4 million from the Auditor General's budget. It was their party that fired auditors and forced the Parliamentary Budget Officer to go to court to obtain documents.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the issues surrounding Coastal GasLink and the Wet'suwet'en have been deeply divisive for communities in my riding. The world is watching, and no one wants to see last January's confrontation repeated.

The government's promises of reconciliation are on the line, and the chiefs have asked to meet with the Prime Minister. Why is he refusing to meet with them?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to a renewed relationship with indigenous peoples based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. We will continue to engage with leaders from across the country.

The Wet'suwet'en issue is with the provincial government. We would highlight that the former member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, Nathan Cullen, has been hired by the Government of British Columbia to help with this process. We have full confidence in the NDP government in British Columbia to move forward in the correct way. Why do the NDP members in the House not have the same confidence in the NDP government of British Columbia?

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the chiefs want to meet with the Prime Minister.

The Liberals' national housing strategy was announced with much fanfare, yet they failed miserably. Saying they will end chronic homelessness in 10 years is just not good enough. People are sleeping on the streets right now.

In Vancouver alone, 40% of the homeless population is indigenous, yet their overall population is only 2%. So much for the Liberals' most important relationship.

Oral Questions

We need to have a housing strategy for indigenous peoples and by indigenous peoples. Will the government increase the funding for housing to end the homelessness crisis in Canada once and for all?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we put in place a national housing strategy that is focused on ending homelessness and on working with communities to resolve the challenges facing urban indigenous populations. We are continuing to move forward in a meaningful way.

What have we achieved? We have seen almost a million Canadians lifted out of poverty and have achieved our poverty reduction targets way ahead of schedule. We recognize there is much more to do, and we will do that. We are focused on action on this side of the House, not just on rhetoric like the members opposite.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, victims of sexual assault deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. They need to know that judges hearing their cases will not be influenced by the myths and stereotypes that frequently surface during sexual assault cases.

Would the right hon. Prime Minister please tell the House what measures have been taken to support victims and strengthen public confidence in our justice system?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saint-Laurent for her question and her hard work.

Canadians expect judges to have the training they need to understand the complex nature of sexual assault and the myths that all too often surround it. Canadians also expect elected representatives to work across party lines on these issues.

Yesterday, we introduced a bill to ensure that judges receive training on factors that can affect individuals' willingness to engage with the justice system. This law will boost confidence in our justice system and make the system itself more effective.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we can only address ongoing issues of racism when we allow people to speak freely about their experiences. The government recently fired a public servant overseeing anti-racism initiatives because she spoke out against the Prime Minister. Now the government is mandating "duty of loyalty" training for some government employees.

The government claims to care about diversity and then tries to silence dissenting voices. Will the Prime Minister cancel his duty of loyalty policy and protect the right of public servants to speak out about their experiences?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past five years, we have put in place a merit-based appointments process that reflects much greater diversity within the public service, within the Government of Canada. We saw, for all too long, the appointments process be politicized or not reflect the diversity of Canada. That is why we have increased massively the appointment of women, the appointment of racialized Canadians, the appointment of indigenous peoples and the appointment of people with disabilities.

We recognize that there is more to do, and we will continue to work hard on that every day.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year, the House passed a bill by the member for St. Albert—Edmonton that would help jurors seek medical or psychiatric counselling for the horrific images and testimony that they deal with at a trial. The bill passed the House with all-party support. Since then, some provinces and territories have moved forward with their own measures to support jurors. Meanwhile, the government has failed to act.

When will the Prime Minister take action and address his responsibility to Canadians fulfilling their civic duty as jurors?

● (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there are more investments that need to be made in mental health support for Canadians, whether it is for PTSD for veterans, correctional services officers or policemen and women, or whether it is moving forward on greater supports for young people, indigenous communities or people who have experiences within our justice system.

We know there is more to do on fighting for mental health, which is why we actually made a commitment of billions of dollars more in investments in mental health for the provinces. We are looking forward to working on that.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is attacking law-abiding firearms owners with actions that will do nothing to curb gun and gang violence.

Many folks in my riding are lawful firearms owners. They have taken the required rigorous screening and safety training. They take their privileges and responsibilities as firearms owners very seriously. I, too, very well know the process, having obtained my PAL and RPAL licences.

Is the Prime Minister able to explain to the House the process of obtaining a firearms possession and acquisition licence?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to protecting communities and reducing gun violence in Canada. We strengthened controls on firearms through Bill C-71. We enhanced background checks. We required sellers to check licences of anyone who wants to buy a gun. We have invested over \$327 million to address gun and gang violence. We will continue to strengthen our gun laws by banning dangerous assault weapons and working with provinces, territories and mayors to combat gun violence and keep communities safe.

It is very simple: We will strengthen gun control; Conservatives want to weaken it.

Mr. Bob Benzen (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, section 5 of the Firearms Act says that a person who has threatened or committed a violent crime, a crime related to harassment, drug crimes or has serious mental health issues is unable to have a firearms licence. A person without a gun licence cannot legally have a gun.

It seems that the Prime Minister's red-flag proposal is a solution in search of a problem. Is the Prime Minister's proposal different from what has existed for decades or was he simply unaware of the law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to inform the member opposite of what we are planning to do.

There are many individuals who have a firearms licence and own firearms and who begin to present a threat to themselves or to their family. At that point, medical health professionals can alert them not to just take away the firearms, which exists—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Sorry, but I am having a hard time hearing the answer. Maybe it is just me, but I hear some noise. I would ask everyone to take a deep breath.

The right hon. Prime Minister can continue.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the police currently have the ability to remove firearms from someone who presents a threat to themselves or others, but they cannot suspend the licence and prevent that person from acquiring new firearms. That is what the red-flag law is all about.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec is currently experiencing the worst housing crisis in 15 years. The money to build social housing is lying dormant in the government's coffers in Ottawa because the government is fuelling the umpteenth dispute over Quebec's jurisdictions, despite the fact that the National Assembly of Quebec has unanimously asked it to step back.

On behalf of the half million Quebecers who are struggling to get housing, will the government respond positively to Quebec's request?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after many long years of federal disengagement on housing, we have invested heavily over the past five years to combat the housing crisis across the country with a national housing strategy that has a real impact on communities throughout Canada.

We have signed agreements with every province except one and with all the territories. We hope that Quebec will soon sign this agreement, which will allow us to invest heavily in housing for Quebecers. We encourage the provincial government of Quebec to sign this agreement with us.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis in Quebec is actually two-pronged. Available housing is rare and rents are expensive. Currently in Quebec, more than 82,000 households spend more than 80% of their income on housing. Back home we call that dire poverty.

Will the government listen to the community groups and families across Quebec who are calling on the government to transfer money for housing with no strings attached?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding, Papineau, Quebecers often tell me how very real the housing crisis is for them.

I have been working with community organizations for many years, since becoming an MP. We recognized that it was a real shame that the federal government was no longer playing a role in housing. However, for the past five years, we have resumed that role. We are investing heavily across the country, and I hope that Quebec will soon sign the agreement so that together we can invest in housing in Quebec.

* * *

[*English*]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his downtown Toronto Liberal MPs cold-shouldered Ontario last year when the premier submitted a plan to build the urgently needed Ontario line subway to ease capacity pressure on existing lines—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am having a hard time hearing the question because some noise is starting. I want to make sure that everybody understands that whether it is the answer or the question, everybody wants to hear it equally.

The hon. member for Thornhill, please continue.

Oral Questions

Hon. Peter Kent: Mr. Speaker, members may remember that on the eve of the election, weeks after a commitment from the Conservative leader, the Prime Minister reluctantly matched the province.

Shovels are ready. Ontario is ready. Toronto is ready. When will the PM deliver?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past years I have had many excellent conversations with the mayor of Toronto about the ambitious investments that he wants to make in public transit. Every step of the way the federal government has been there to be a partner. I am pleased that things are now moving with the province.

I look forward to moving forward on concrete plans to invest in public transit for Canadians. I certainly hope that Mr. Ford will move forward enthusiastically with us. The money is there. We want to invest it. We just need the plans to be concrete so we can do it.

* * *

HOUSING

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to young families looking for housing, the government gets an F.

First it created the dream-killing stress test, and now we learn that its first-time home buyer incentive is a flop, with mortgage value caps set too low for families in Toronto and Vancouver to buy into the market.

When will the Liberals stop building barriers and start providing solutions to Canadians just trying to buy their first home?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first-time home buyer incentive reduces the cost for first-time homebuyers in a significant way and has helped families right across the country.

Yes, we recognize that in certain areas, such as the GTA, the Lower Mainland and Victoria, the cap is too low, which is why we committed to raising it in the last election. Now that we have formed government, we will be able to do exactly that to ensure that more Canadians can afford their first home.

That is what this government is doing for Canadians.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week a review panel released its environmental assessment of CN's proposed truck-rail hub in Milton. The panel said this project will likely have a significant adverse impact on human health and air quality. It is now up to cabinet.

Halton Region opposes this project. Regional chair and former Liberal MP Gary Carr opposes this project. The people of Halton oppose this project.

Will the Liberal government, including the two Liberal cabinet ministers from Halton, tell the people of Halton its position on this project?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as always, we will move forward in a responsible way and pay very close attention to the concerns of people on the ground. Indeed, we have heard the environmental preoccupations. I can highlight that our very own new, outstanding member for Milton has been very clear on his concerns around this project, both to caucus and to cabinet. We will move forward in a responsible way, as Canadians expect.

* * *

● (1505)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new NAFTA safeguards more than \$2 billion a day in cross-border trade and tariff-free access. Prime Minister, how will the new NAFTA encourage economic diversification and contribute to strengthening our nation's international trade performance, including for my constituents in the region of Niagara?

The Speaker: Order. I want to remind hon. members to place their questions through the Chair, not directly to the person they are addressing it to.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Niagara Centre for all the work he does for his region.

The new NAFTA safeguards over \$2 billion a day in cross-border trade. That means businesses in Niagara and across the country have virtually tariff-free access to the U.S. market, supporting hundreds of thousands of Canadian jobs. This means good news for workers, employers and the economy everywhere throughout the country, including the beautiful Niagara region.

Let us all in this House do our part and ratify this agreement.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a memo to the Prime Minister, officials warned that aging government technology systems are at risk of failing. These systems, which provide EI benefits, old age security and child support, are critical to many Canadians and are at further risk due to upgrades being delayed because of procurement problems.

Will the Prime Minister correct an omission in the minister's mandate letter and instruct her to make the maintenance and replacement of these systems a priority?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have been able to invest in new ways of helping Canadians, from the Canada child benefit, which gives hundreds of dollars more every month to nine out of 10 Canadian families, to the increase in the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable single seniors. We recognize that our positive changes to EI have made a real difference in the lives of people as well.

We will continue to ensure that the infrastructure that allows us to deliver these programs to Canadians remains solid and upgraded.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2019 Canadian farmers faced another difficult harvest, made worse by the Liberal government adding an additional tax burden. From grain drying to rail transportation, heating and electricity, farmers are being gouged by the Liberal carbon tax. Saskatchewan farmers are expecting to lose 8% of their total net income to the carbon tax this year, and that number is set to rise.

Will the Prime Minister please finally acknowledge that his carbon tax is unfairly punishing agriculture producers and finally fully exempt farmers from the carbon tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were a number of times today when the members opposite brought up the work of the PBO and his report, and it is exciting to see them actually give credence to the Parliamentary Budget Officer now. Maybe they could pay attention to the fact that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has clearly stated that the price on pollution both cuts pollution and puts money back into the pockets of families in Alberta, in Saskatchewan and right across the country.

Our plan also ensures that 100% of the direct proceeds from the price on pollution go back into that province or territory. People are better off with our price on pollution as we move forward to fight climate change.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on January 24, Onion Lake Cree Nation in Saskatchewan declared a state of emergency as a result of a significant increase in drug and gang-related activities. Last week, the leadership of Onion Lake and the surrounding first nation communities signed a western chiefs declaration, with the support of the City of Lloydminster, to take on these serious problems.

When will the Prime Minister take gang and rural crime seriously? What is his plan to keep the people of the first nations, the surrounding communities and the rural municipalities safe?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the road to reconciliation means walking in partnership with indigenous communities and indigenous peoples and respecting and

Oral Questions

reflecting their priorities. We will work with communities across the country on challenges related to violence and mental health. We will work with them on ensuring that there is greater security for Canadians right across the country, including for indigenous peoples.

I am very pleased to see members on all sides of this House taking this issue seriously. We will work together to make sure that reconciliation is real in this country.

* * *

● (1510)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in order to help address the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, the Indigenous Leadership Initiative hosted the Land Needs Guardians conference in Ottawa. They shared that indigenous nations are at the forefront of a growing movement to create indigenous protection in conserved areas.

Can the Prime Minister update the House on our efforts to ensure the protection of these conserved areas and the role that indigenous peoples play in protecting and conserving lands?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Sydney—Victoria for his work on reconciliation.

We are working with indigenous partners to develop and support indigenous leadership in conservation through indigenous guardians programs and to establish new indigenous protected and conserved areas. We are moving forward with ambitious plans to conserve 25% of Canada's land and 25% of Canada's oceans by 2025.

Through a number of conservation measures, we are delivering, in partnership with indigenous peoples and Canadians, from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals brag about their oceans protection plan, but for it to work they need more than words.

They refuse to spend over \$150 million of funding. They promise to protect our coasts and the marine species and people who live on them, but they never miss a chance to push dangerous projects like TMX ahead. Our coasts are in danger. Pacific wild salmon are in the middle of a historic crisis.

When will the Liberals stop breaking their promises, invest the necessary resources and protect our coasts?

Business of Supply

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last mandate we moved forward with a historic oceans protection plan, representing one and a half billion dollars of investment in world-class marine protection.

We will continue to make the investments necessary, including the refurbishment, revitalization and renewal of our Coast Guard fleet. We know there is much more to do, particularly around protecting salmon stocks and preserving wild salmon.

We will continue to work with provincial and indigenous partners to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep our coasts protected and beautiful.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Dennis King, Premier of Prince Edward Island.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of privilege arising out of question period. When the Prime Minister was responding to a question asked by one of my colleagues, he misled the House in his statement. He said “they”, meaning the police, cannot suspend the licence of an individual and then prevent that individual from acquiring a firearm.

I am here to tell the Prime Minister, through you, Mr. Speaker, that section 5 of the Canadian Firearms Act allows that to happen specifically, and I can read it for you, as well as section 117 of the Criminal Code.

The Speaker: I understand that the hon. member is trying to inform the House, but I think we are bordering on debate on that.

I will take that under consideration and come back to the House if necessary.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—INSTRUCTION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The House resumed from February 4 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:10 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, February 4, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion relating to the Business of Supply.

• (1520)

Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, after your great explanation as to when a vote will and will not count, I have viewed people walking by the curtains after voting. I would like to call out the

member for Cumberland—Colchester for not remaining in her seat during that period of time.

Ms. Lenore Zann: Mr. Speaker, I was in my seat when the vote was counted. The clerks said my name, I looked at them, I nodded and I sat back down.

• (1525)

The Speaker: Order, please. Let me explain the rules. When the vote starts, the hon. members have to remain in their seats until the votes are counted and the results announced.

Ms. Lenore Zann: Mr. Speaker, I was unaware of that particular rule and I am sorry.

The Speaker: We will withdraw that vote.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I also rise on a point of order. I should have known better. I was getting up to let the member know that we have to remain in our seats for the entire time.

The Speaker: We have withdrawn that vote. The result of the vote has not been announced yet, so I expect everyone to stay in their seats.

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

(*Division No. 12*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Amos	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Benzen	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bessette	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Blois
Boudrias	Boulerice
Bragdon	Brassard
Bratina	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Carrie
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Champagne
Champoux	Charbonneau
Chen	Chiu
Chong	Collins
Cooper	Cumming
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diotte
Doherty	Dong

Business of Supply

Dowdall	Dreeshen	Perron	Petipas Taylor
Drouin	Dubourg	Plamondon	Poilievre
Duclos	Duguid	Powlowski	Qaqqaq
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Qualtrough	Ratansi
Duvall	Dzerowicz	Rayes	Redekopp
Easter	Ehsassi	Regan	Reid
El-Khoury	Ellis	Rempel Garner	Richards
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Robillard	Rodriguez
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Rogers	Romanado
Fast	Fergus	Rood	Ruff
Fillmore	Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock)	Sahota (Calgary Skyview)	Sahota (Brampton North)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Finnigan	Saini	Sajjan
Fisher	Fonseca	Samson	Sangha
Fortier	Fortin	Sarai	Saroya
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Freeland	Fry	Scheer	Schiefke
Gallant	Garneau	Schmale	Schulte
Garrison	Gaudreau	Seeback	Serré
Gazan	Généreux	Sgro	Shanahan
Genuis	Gerretsen	Sheehan	Shields
Gill	Gladu	Shin	Shipley
Godin	Gould	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Gourde	Gray	Sikand	Simard
Green	Guilbeault	Simms	Singh
Hajdu	Hallan	Sorbara	Soroka
Hardie	Harris	Spengemann	Stanton
Holland	Housefather	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Hughes	Hussen	Strahl	Stubbs
Hutchings	Iacono	Tabbara	Thériault
Jaczek	Jansen	Therrien	Tochor
Johns	Joly	Trudeau	Trudel
Jones	Jordan	Turnbull	Uppal
Jowhari	Julian	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Kelloway	Kelly	Van Popta	Vandal
Kent	Khalid	Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Khera	Kitchen	Vecchio	Vidal
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Viersen	Vignola
Kram	Kurek	Virani	Vis
Kusie	Kusmierczyk	Warkentin	Waugh
Kwan	Lake	Webber	Weiler
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Wilkinson	Williamson
Lametti	Lamoureux	Wong	Yip
Larouche	Lattanzio	Young	Yurdiga
Lauzon	Lawrence	Zahid	Zimmer
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Zuberi— 315	
Lehoux	Lemire		
Levitt	Lewis (Essex)		
Liepert	Lightbound		
Lloyd	Lobb		
Long	Longfield		
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Lukiwski		
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor		
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)		
Maguire	Maloney		
Manly	Martel		
Martinez Ferrada	Masse		
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)		
Mazier	McCaughey (Edmonton West)		
McColeman	McCrimmon		
McDonald	McGuinty	Nil	
McKay	McKenna		
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean		
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)		
McPherson	Mendès		
Mendicino	Michaud		
Miller	Monsef		
Moore	Morantz		
Morneau	Morrison		
Motz	Murray		
Nater	Normandin		
O'Connell	Olipphant		
O'Regan	Patzer		
Paul-Hus	Pauzé		

NAYS

PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

● (1530)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order, please.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 11 minutes.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER**

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to section 28 of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons, it is my duty to present to the House the report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner on an inquiry in relation to Joe Peschisolido, former member for Steveston—Richmond East.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the agreement on social security between Canada and the Republic of Albania and amendments to appendices I, II and III of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 104 and Standing Order 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first 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 move that the first report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be concurred in.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): 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**

TAXATION

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to table today from my constituents.

The first petition is regarding increasing taxes. The petitioners are calling on the Liberal government to stop raising taxes on the middle class. They are specifically asking for a rejection by the

Government of Canada on all new tax increases and to leave more money in the pockets of the people who earn it.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the second petition comes from more of my constituents.

The petitioners are asking for the repeal of Bill C-48 and Bill C-69. They draw the attention of the House of Commons to the fact that Canada has lost 7,000 kilometres of proposed pipeline. Well over 125,000 jobs and \$100 billion in investments have been lost.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to immediately repeal Bill C-48 and Bill C-69, the anti-tanker ban bill and the anti-pipeline bill.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to table e-petition e-2322 on behalf of residents of Nova Scotia.

The petitioners are calling on the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to require a portion of the existing Windsor causeway be removed to return free tidal flow to the Avon River, like the restoration of the Petitcodiac River in 2010. This would allow recovery and protection of the inner Bay of Fundy's Atlantic salmon, COSEWIC-listed American eel and their critical habitats. It would be in accordance with species at risk legislation and the precautionary approach as recommended by DFO science.

The petitioners are concerned that the Government of Nova Scotia is twinning Highway 101 and is looking to create a second aboiteau. They want to return that area back to a natural fish habitat. This is something they are urgently calling on the government to pay attention to and address.

● (1535)

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table petition e-2297, signed by residents from across metro Vancouver. They are calling on the federal government to support traffic congestion relief through a permanent annual allocation of \$3 billion across Canada, with \$375 million per year allocated to our region.

This petition was initiated by John Aldag, who continues to work for the people of Cloverdale—Langley City, whom he represented in the last Parliament.

Metro Vancouver is always prepared with shovel-ready projects that will maximize the economic, environmental and quality-of-life benefits from all our federal investments. Our west coast ports are Canada's biggest, so anything we can do to improve the transportation network in metro Vancouver improves the productivity of our ports, which has benefits right across the country.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to table today.

The first is on the issue of forced organ harvesting and trafficking. It was signed in support of bills that went forward in the last Parliament, Bill C-350 and Bill S-240. Bill S-240 received unanimous support in both Houses of Parliament. Unfortunately, it was not the same version, so it was not adopted. Petitioners no doubt hope that a similar bill will be passed and finally make it into law in this Parliament.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the second petition that I am tabling today highlights the particular challenges of Pakistani Christians in terms of the persecution they face and the challenges of Pakistani Christian asylum seekers in Thailand.

The petition calls on the Government of Canada to take up this matter urgently with the Government of Thailand. It urges the protection and humane treatment of Pakistani asylum seekers, saying that these asylum seekers must be provided the opportunity to apply for refugee status with the UNHCR, and for resettlement without being arrested, detained or deported.

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to rise today to present a petition about the Teck Resources Frontier oil sands project.

[English]

The petitioners ask the House of Commons to take note of the enormous greenhouse gas contribution that would occur if Teck Resources Limited's Frontier mine were approved. It would produce 260,000 barrels of bitumen a day. Environment and Climate Change Canada's submission to the environmental review panel pointed out that this project would be 24% more carbon intensive than the lowest carbon-intensive oil sands projects. The petitioners note that this would violate Canada's climate commitments.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons and Parliament assembled to reject Teck.

NINE MILE POINT LIGHTHOUSE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a petition today signed by 148 residents in my riding of Kingston and the Islands who are bringing attention to Nine Mile Point Lighthouse, the oldest operating lighthouse in the Great Lakes, built in 1833 on Simcoe Island, which is off of Wolfe Island in my riding. The petitioners are drawing the attention of the government to the need to preserve this lighthouse.

The petitioners are asking that the government halt the divestiture of Nine Mile Point Lighthouse on Simcoe Island. They call upon the government to engage with the local Nine Mile Point Lighthouse Preservation Society to set up historical plaques, fencing and other minimal tourism amenities so that its ongoing ecotourism, educational and cultural celebrations can continue for many years to

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come and to highlight this very important lighthouse on the Great Lakes.

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition about the climate crisis.

[English]

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to support Motion No. 1, a made-in-Canada green new deal, the first initiative before the House of Commons, which calls on Canada to take bold and rapid action to adopt socially equitable climate action to tackle the climate emergency and address worsening socio-economic and racial inequalities while at the same time ending fossil fuel subsidies, closing offshore tax havens, supporting workers impacted by the transition and creating well-paying unionized jobs in the shift to a clean and renewable energy economy.

* * *

• (1540)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

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[English]

CANADA-UNITED STATES-MEXICO AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed from February 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, An Act to implement the Agreement between Canada, the United States of America and the United Mexican States, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, when the hon. parliamentary secretary asks that all questions be allowed to stand, typically the question will be put to the House for us to provide that unanimous consent. I believe that did not occur.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is it agreed that all questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Niagara Falls has three minutes left on his speech.

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Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, as I indicated in the House on Monday, it is indeed an honour for me to be taking part in my first debate here on the floor of the House of Commons.

In the short time available to me, I would like to resume debate and provide my concluding remarks on Bill C-4, an act to implement the agreement between Canada, the United States of America and the United Mexican States.

As I had indicated previously, Canada's Conservatives support free trade with our North American trading partners. What we do not support is rushing blindly into an agreement to implement a deal whose details have not yet been shared. I am confident when I say that members on this side are prepared to work with our Liberal colleagues to ensure that this agreement is ratified; however, we need them to be open and transparent about what those impacts will be. We know they have done financial modelling and analysis of how this new free trade agreement will affect Canada's economy, both overall and broken down by sector. Will the Liberals commit to showing all the members of this House these financial models?

We already know that dairy concessions in the agreement will negatively impact the industry. By allowing an agreement to be inked that opened our supply management system, the government will now be using taxpayers' dollars to compensate our dairy farmers, because of their loss in market share. We need to know if there are other industries that we will have to compensate with taxpayers' dollars, because these industries are going to be negatively impacted by this new NAFTA.

As it is, the wine industry in my riding of Niagara Falls is facing an uncertain business environment because of Australia's WTO challenge that would change our current federal excise exemption for 100% Canadian-made wines. This is another important sector in my riding that is waiting and wondering what the government is going to do. We are about eight weeks away from the World Trade Organization's interim report on this trade challenge, and the Liberals are missing in action on this important trade file.

Meanwhile, 700 wineries and 9,000 Canadians are wondering about the future of their jobs. That does not include the thousands of other local spinoff jobs supported by the wine industry, including accommodations, dining establishments and tour companies.

These are a few of my concerns that I have about the new NAFTA.

Parliamentarians need to know the details of what has changed from the existing agreement, who will be impacted and what can be done to provide stability to those impacted business sectors. I think it is certainly imperative that the official opposition be allowed to do our job of examining the signed agreement, not just the Liberals' talking points on the agreement.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will pick up where the member left off. In the member's concluding remarks, he talked about talking points and suggested that they were just Liberal talking points on this, yet I cannot help but wonder if that is exactly what we are hearing from the other side.

The talking points have changed throughout the entire dialogue. The member talked about "rushing blindly" into this. I will give him the benefit of the doubt that maybe he was not around to hear the discussions a couple of years ago. The Leader of the Opposition was, at times, basically saying, "You need to just make any deal and take any deal that Donald Trump will give you. We need to get a deal on the table and signed now."

The reality of the situation is that we fought hard for the protection of Canadian workers. We fought hard for a good deal, and what we have seen come out of this is exactly that.

I wonder if the member can explain why it is that he is now suddenly talking about rushing blindly into this, when the Conservatives' position at every stop of the way has been "Why aren't you getting us a deal? You need to make a deal right now."

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1545)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I remind members that we do not call each other names in the House.

The hon. member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, it is a privilege and an honour for me to take part in my first debate. I am absolutely thrilled to be here. It is an incredible responsibility representing the constituents of Niagara Falls.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to meet with dairy farmers in my riding. They came to my office and indicated some of the difficulties that they were facing and the changes and the challenges that are going to be brought on because of this new NAFTA. They told me they are going to be impacted and they want to know what solutions the government is going to provide to them. They are quite concerned about this agreement and what it will do in terms of abrogating our responsibility and our sovereign right to seek out further international trade agreements for their products. We need to know more about what the government proposes to do.

We need to know the economic impacts so that we can see what other industries we need to work with and how we can work together to ensure that they are provided with some stability as a result of this agreement.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, Windsor has seen a decline in the auto industry as a result of the original free trade agreement. Canada went from being second in the world in automotive assembly to now being 10th. We have lost thousands of jobs. This new agreement only mentions some auto parts.

I am wondering what the Conservative Party's position is with regard to a national auto strategy. Without a strategy, we will continue to lose more jobs and investment. It has been over a decade since Canada had a greenfield production plant. The General Motors plant in Oshawa closed down, but the company recently announced a battery facility plant in Michigan.

With regard to the auto industry, do the Conservatives think that there should be some more work for that industry? If so, what would there be in the way of support? If they do not, that is their opinion. What we see is an erosion, quite frankly. Detroit alone received upward of \$16 billion in auto investment in the last few years, whereas Ontario only received \$6 billion over the last six years, most of that being retooling, and that was under the previous Conservative government.

I would ask that Conservative member whether or not his party believes the auto sector deserves more than just a trade deal.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with the hon. member on not only this matter but other matters as we proceed.

The auto sector is an important component and aspect of our regional economy. I was fortunate enough when I was a university student to work at our local St. Catharines factory for four summers. It put me through university. During that time, and the member probably already knows this, we had three auto manufacturing plants in the St. Catharines area, all doing three shifts and working with full employment. Today we are down to one plant and it probably employs about 1,200 workers. At one time, it probably had 5,000 workers.

This agreement is a great concern. I worry about the aluminum situation and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak in what hopefully will be one of the last debates regarding the new NAFTA deal before we can officially conclude this and get on with this new deal.

It is important to talk about NAFTA 2.0 or CUSMA or USMCA or whatever we are calling it as an opportunity to modernize the relationship we have with these two very important countries that we have come to rely on and come to work with very well over the last number of years. I say “modernize” because the global world of trade has changed so much even in the last 30 years or so since this agreement was originally put in place.

Today, I am going to focus my comments on this theme of modernization and specifically talk about the auto and aluminum industries as they relate to that, and the environment and the additional measures put into this agreement as they relate to our environmental protections.

I want to start off by talking about the concept of modernizing this agreement and I think back to my riding. I have a number of different manufacturers in my riding that rely heavily on a free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico, for reasons that can get quite complex at times because of how complex and intertwined supply chains are. The auto sector is one of those. No longer do we live in a world where an automobile and all its various parts are manufactured within a region and assembled right there in that municipality or jurisdiction.

A lot of people probably do not realize that 80% of the nylon that goes into air bags in vehicles assembled and manufactured in North

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America comes from my riding. The plant is called INVISTA, and it is a global plant.

The nylon's raw components are brought into my riding by train. They are used to create the nylon. The nylon is made into the rolls. The rolls are then taken and go somewhere else like the States and are transformed into the bags. The bags are then moved to another country in this trilateral agreement or back to Canada again. The same concept applies to aluminum and so many other industries.

The supply chain and how things work in terms of the auto industry, and many industries, have advanced so much that we rely heavily on a trade agreement that allows the different materials to move back and forth between countries. That is why I am really glad to see a lot of the components of the new agreement are focused on auto. At the end of the day, we are seeing that the deal accomplished is one that really takes into account the car sector, and in fact, is a very good deal for the Canadian car sector.

That is where I will link to aluminum, because of the effects that the aluminum industry has on the auto sector and vice versa. What we never had before, as it relates specifically to aluminum, was any particular requirement of where the aluminum comes from that is going into vehicles manufactured and assembled in one of the three countries.

For the first time, we are seeing some real measures being taken. Of the aluminum that goes into vehicles assembled and manufactured in Canada, the United States or Mexico, 70% has to come from within that region. It is very good for our aluminum sector to make sure we are not receiving aluminum from other countries that are just dumping it into our market. It will ensure there are good jobs for Canadians in the future, so we can continue to supply that aluminum right from our individual jurisdiction and the three countries involved in the agreement.

● (1550)

Related to aluminum, I talked about Invista and the nylon facilities that it has, but another company, Novelis, operates an aluminum plant in my riding. I had the opportunity to talk with them on a number of occasions, in particular when the aluminum tariffs were brought in by the U.S., about the anxieties that were being felt.

I will give another example of how it works with aluminum. A lot of aluminum for this plant in particular is mined in Quebec. It is then taken from Quebec to the United States, to northern New York, where it is hot pressed. It then moves back across the border a second time into Kingston, Ontario, my riding, where it is cold pressed.

That is just to get the aluminum into a roll. From that point, it is then going to move back and forth across the border as it changes hands and as products are produced as a result of the aluminum that is mined and refined at these various stages.

That is why I find it critically important to maintain supply chains and put confidence in investors, so that these plants that want to can build on one side of the border or another. We must make sure that the confidence is put in place for them, by making sure that an agreement like this is put in place over the long term.

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The last thing I want to talk about, as it relates to the modernization of this agreement, is the environmental protections and environmental standards that are put into this agreement.

When the original NAFTA was being created 30 years ago, there would not have been much emphasis on the environment and concerns that relate to environmental impact. Having the opportunity to go through this agreement again, and to update and modernize it, gives us the opportunity to make sure that environmental components are built into it.

We in Canada take the environment extremely seriously. We realize that there are obligations for us to live up to, in terms of mitigating our environmental impact. We also realize that we cannot do it alone. If Canada is the only one trying to do this, we are going to run into a situation where it is going to become uncompetitive.

In a free trade deal, one needs to make sure that the rules are the same on both sides. In this case, when it comes to the environment, it is extremely important to make sure that the rules in place are fair, and that we are treating the environment roughly the same on both sides of the border with those environmental protections.

That is why we see things put in place like making sure there is an entire chapter in the agreement on the environment, which replaced some side agreements that existed.

We are looking at things like upholding air quality and fighting marine pollution, making sure that we have commitments to high levels of environmental protection, which are extremely important in these trade agreements, and at the same time protecting workers and our planet from potential environmental impacts. We need to make sure that these things exist.

This is why I am highlighting that perhaps it was not something that we particularly wanted in the beginning. It is not something that we sought out, but it actually turned out to be a pretty good opportunity for Canada to modernize this agreement, to fix some of the problems with it and to update it to the current standards of where we are in terms of free trade agreements.

I know that after the hard work that was done by the government, and in particular by the minister who was responsible previously, hard work was done not to accept just any deal. We made sure we got a deal that was good for Canada, good for our values, good for our employees and good for our workers.

That is what we saw at the end of the day here, and I am extremely proud to stand with that minister and with this government in support of this agreement. We have a modern agreement that is up to date and that lives up to many of the standards that we demand now, which we may not have had 30 years ago.

I am extremely proud of this, and I really hope that this is something that can be ratified and adopted by this entire Parliament unanimously. I really hope that we can get to that place.

• (1555)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned the modernization of an agreement, but I do not see anything in here about the buy America provisions the United States government often uses in its public procurement, especially to prevent Canadian bidders.

I do not see a softwood lumber component to it. What is most egregious to me is that, in an agreement that we say is modernizing, chapter 16 does not have the inclusion of other professionals who could travel across the border more easily.

Sure, the agreement has been changed. We can call it the new NAFTA, but I wonder if the member shares my concern. To call it modernization is to go too far if we are not making sure that the labour provisions are as broad as possible, and allow more Canadians to work across the border when their jobs require them to.

• (1600)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I disagree. I do not think that it is going too far. There are a lot of components of this that have been modernized. I focused on three of those in particular. Through his question, I know the member has drawn to the attention of the House some others. I would love to get into those details and look a bit further into that.

I will say that this deal, as it relates to labour, has been endorsed by labour unions throughout Canada, so people are happy with the direction we are going in. We realized there was a lot on the table. Sometimes we get a lot of what we want, sometimes we get a little bit and sometimes we make concessions. That is the whole concept of a deal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and I agree on one thing. The agreement needed to be modernized, because China produced less aluminum than Quebec in 1993 but now produces 15 times more.

Unfortunately, the agreement was not modernized with respect to aluminum. How is it that steel was given additional protection while aluminum was not?

The fact that my hon. colleague thinks that I am playing politics in this debate does not bother me because I know in my heart that I am fighting this battle for the right reasons. What is more, a regional delegation of aluminum workers, municipal officials and economic stakeholders from the aluminum valley are taking action. They came all the way from Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean to Ottawa to express their dissatisfaction with what is happening with aluminum.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague this question: Does he think that those people are not intelligent enough to understand the agreement?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I would never suggest that anything my colleague brought to the House would be petty. I would suggest that his concerns, and any concerns brought to the House, are valid.

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As it relates to aluminum specifically, I would say this. I have a riding that has a lot of Quebec aluminum coming into it, so I am very concerned about the impact this has on the aluminum sector. The majority of aluminum goes into automotive vehicles. In the agreement, the requirement is that 70% of it must come from within the trade jurisdiction. It was zero before that, so there are massive improvements in terms of ensuring that a certain amount of aluminum remains that is sourced in Canada.

On this topic, the president and CEO of the Aluminum Association of Canada said, “We think the USMCA is the right way to go.”

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and to the Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question along the same lines as the one asked by the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Quebec aluminum is extremely important. I know my colleague explained that Quebec was the source of the aluminum that is exported to the United States and later returns to his riding. I would like to hear his thoughts on the role of Quebec aluminum and its importance.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I think it is extremely important to the economy. That is one of the reasons why this government focused so heavily on making sure it had a good place in the agreement, so we could maintain and use that resource from Quebec and continue to make sure that economic activity remained robust.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my constituents again for sending me here for a second term to represent their interests and passions as well. I really believe that political parties are a way for people to organize their passions. Whatever side of the House we are on, we are motivated to do the best for our communities.

What I thought I would do, in the time that I am afforded to speak on behalf of my constituents on CUSMA, is outline some of what I think is lacking in the agreement and what it took to get to this point where we have a deal in front of the House of Commons that we can debate.

As I go through the deal, as I listen to the debate in the House, and as I have heard different members from different parts of the country explain what their concerns are and what they have heard, I have seen in this agreement some lacking elements: things that should have been there that were not successfully negotiated with the American and Mexican governments.

I really thought that we could have gotten a much better deal than the one placed before us. This is Mexico's deal. We are accepting what Mexico negotiated with the United States government and we have found ourselves in a situation where we are accepting what they have given to us. It is a “take it or leave it” deal.

There are some elements that I like in the deal, obviously. Some members have called it a modernization. I do not call it that. I call it what has given us certainty over the next six years at least, as opposed to what we had before.

It lacks a buy American provision. My father, for the longest time, was a defence contractor here in Canada. He worked at the Sorel shipyards, which used to be just outside of Montreal. I lived in Sorel for a long time when I first came to Canada.

My dad's livelihood in Communist Poland was at a shipyard there. He built 70 ships a year. He came here and was building only a few a year. He thought it was a drastic change of workload, but buy America provisions were often used in his sector to block Canadian companies from applying for very lucrative American navy contracts. On top of the Canadian navy contracts and cruise ships that they were working on, my dad would say that these buy American provisions make it very difficult for Canadian companies to bid.

I do not see anything in this deal that is going to stop the American government from continuing to do that, and I accept it has national security reasons for doing that. However, we still should have been able to negotiate on it because these large shipbuilding contracts, as we have seen in Canada, are much larger in the American context, when we are talking about building dozens upon dozens of vessels over just a few years' time.

The next provision that I think would have been really important to have in here is something on forestry for softwood lumber. Again, we have a forestry industry. I worked for Alberta forestry for a while. I worked for the minister of sustainable resource development there, and we were responsible for the forestry sector. We would track the price of an OSB piece of wood and construction in America, because it was so important to be able to export to the American market. Again, I do not see that here in this deal.

Third, as I mentioned, are the chapter 16 provisions to include new jobs and professions in the 21st-century economy. If we are calling this a modernization of NAFTA, new NAFTA, new CUSMA, whatever one wants to call it, temporary entry for business people is really important. This is an economy we are further integrating with the Americans', and with the Mexicans' as well. This is an immense opportunity.

Many of my constituents were affected by the drastic downturn and actions by the Liberal government and the previous provincial NDP government in Alberta. These cost hundreds of thousands of jobs in Alberta. Jobs that existed do not exist anymore, and jobs would have been created if the regulatory system had been kept at the point that it was at before.

I have many friends who have gone down to Houston, Denver, San Jose and Dallas. Canadians are working down there. I also have friends who are not allowed to work in America because their job titles and job positions make them ineligible for business entry into America so that they can work. They have had to retrain themselves while their spouses work, and it is difficult on them. I would much rather see them, of course, living back in my riding and being able to travel there.

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This is, I think, one of the large drawbacks in how this deal came to be in the House. I know members enjoyed this in the last Parliament. I always used Yiddish proverbs, so I am going to use one again: “The heart of a man may be compared to a sausage: No one can tell exactly what's inside.”

Up until this deal reached the House of Commons, we had no idea what was inside the actual deal. I was finding out things on behalf of my constituents just by reading the news. It would change from week to week, from time to time. There would be new provisions or new discussions, things that we would find out through the U.S. Congress or Mexican politicians giving interviews. That is when we would find out what was going on.

• (1605)

I have often heard it said on the government benches that we were consulted and we were kept informed. However, from my discussions with my colleagues on this side of the House who specialize in the USMCA and free trade deals, it was nothing like in the previous Conservative government. Getting a phone call or text message does not count as consultation. It does not count as a briefing, either.

This is the biggest deal of which Canada is part. Our three economies together are \$21.1 trillion in GDP. This is an immense deal. This will have an impact on my constituents, their kids and their kids' children well into the future. For us to call it modernization and not have chapter 16 updated is a farce.

I worked in human resources before as a registrar for the human resources profession. I know the member for Edmonton West will highly enjoy my mentioning that, as I did it at committee. The professions of the future over the next 10 to 30 years will drastically change. How could we not update an agreement that was signed back when the Internet was barely an idea, back when social media designers and infographic designers were not a thing? Database analysts were not a thing. How can we not update this to ensure that Canadians can work in America, Mexico and here at home, so they can travel overseas or overland to another country to continue their important work, earning a living for their families on behalf of the companies they sometimes own or work for? It is such a lost opportunity.

I am looking forward to seeing this deal get to committee so we can hear from more specialists and witnesses who can also dive into the details of this deal. As I mentioned, one of the big problems was that we did not know what was in the deal until it reached the House, and then we were told, almost in the same sentence, that we must pass this as quickly as possible. Parliament is not a rubber stamp. Parliament is not about that. Every piece of legislation should be treated as important. Every one that comes before the House is worthy of time. Every member who stands in the House to speak on behalf of their constituents should be afforded that time.

Why should we rush through the most important agreement, likely, in the lifetime of many parliamentarians here? We should give it a thorough debate, to bring the views of our constituents to the House, take it to committee so we can hear from both stakeholders and large associations and individual companies and people who will be affected by it. They may have a different viewpoint from their trade association, the trade bodies and professional associa-

tions by which they may be represented. That is really important, and it takes time to find these individuals. They do not exactly raise their hands immediately to say they will challenge what their professional or trade association has to say. After all, they pay dues to these bodies, so they want to be judicious, they want to know what the contents of the agreement actually are, and this is their opportunity. Once it is before the House, that is when we can give it a thorough consideration. Then we should hear from officials at committee.

I know a great amount of work happens in the standing committees of the House. In the previous Parliament, I was on the Standing Committee on Finance. Often when officials presented the actual details of legislation, that was when we really came to understand the impact certain provisions would have. It was easy for members to say on the floor of the House of Commons that they liked certain provisions and disliked others, but it was only when we heard from officials what the nitty-gritty details were, the sausage making, what is in a man's heart, to go back to that Yiddish proverb, that we knew what was in the legislation and what was being done.

It is important that we take the time to give this bill its full consideration. This deal is important. In it, \$21.2 trillion of GDP is being considered by the House of Commons and then by the Senate. I do not want to rush through this work and give the Senate a bill that we have not thoroughly considered. Every member who wishes to speak should be afforded time, because they represent their constituencies.

The people who sent us here do not expect us to rubber-stamp. We are not slot machines. I used to say that quite often in the previous Parliament when time allocation was moved. That is not the role of parliamentarians. We are here to debate. That is the very meaning of the word “Parliament”. This is supposed to be about that. I get to hear viewpoints from other members and I learn something from other members too. I did not know that the member for Kingston and the Islands had aluminum producers in his riding. I do not have them in mine.

• (1610)

I have a foundry in my riding, one of the very last foundries in Alberta.

As my time has expired, I look forward to the questions and comments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is important to recognize that this is not a new debate. It is not like we have only been talking about trade between Canada, Mexico and the U.S.A. for the last one to five months. Virtually since the last presidential election, well over two and a half years ago, we started to talk about this.

Canadians from all regions of the country came together and provided all sorts of input. We had the best negotiators in the world representing Canada. We had a government with a very proactive trade attitude working on this file. Even after the agreements were signed, the Deputy Prime Minister offered all opposition leaders the opportunity to get a full, detailed debriefing of what had taken place. To try to give the impression that here is the bill and no one knows anything about it is a stretch.

We have a wide spectrum of support from labour, business, non-profit and government. Everyone seems to be on side. They recognize the intrinsic value of that \$2 billion of trade every day between Canada and the U.S., let alone the multi-trillions in terms of the GDP, as the member has pointed out.

Would he not agree that over the last two and a half years Canadians have been engaged in voicing their opinions on this very important agreement?

• (1615)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, to address the points, sure we have been debating the concept of free trade, but not the details, the sausage itself, to go back to my Yiddish proverb once more. The details are where it is most important. That is where we reveal what has actually been debated in the past.

British Westminster parliaments have been debating free trade at various degrees since 1834. The corn law debate founded the magazine *The Economist*. It was founded for the purpose of fighting the corn laws, an issue of free trade. We can debate free trade and have a public debate outside of this chamber, but the details of the actual agreement before us have only been presented in the last few weeks.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I particularly appreciated the comments made by the member for Calgary Shepard about how important it is to take the time to assess each measure and carefully study the new free trade agreement.

He also mentioned softwood lumber. That is one of my concerns, since forestry is a major industry in the riding I represent. I think we can agree that this free trade agreement does nothing to settle this dispute, which has gone on too long.

Can the member suggest any solutions to settle the softwood lumber dispute?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question. He is right. There is nothing in the new NAFTA regarding softwood lumber. I would have liked to see a least a reference or a

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chapter on it, for the workers in this economic sector. It is a very important issue in northern Alberta.

I represent a Calgary riding, so there is no forestry industry right in my riding. However, I still would have liked to see at least a chapter in the new NAFTA so we could be sure that these workers will have the opportunity to compete for projects in the United States and will be able to export their world-class product.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I welcome you to the chair.

My question for the hon. member is about trade deals in general.

My perspective is that we can see some improvements in this deal, mostly brought by Democrats in the United States, not by the Liberal negotiators. We got rid of proportionality and investor-state provisions. There are some things that are clearly of concern, like dairy on Vancouver Island and the protection of it, and the protection of the aluminum industry in Canada.

My real concern is what happens in trade negotiations in Canada. In the House, we only get the finished deal at the last minute to comment on. Would the member agree with me that what we really need is a better process for involvement of parliamentarians at an earlier stage in trade negotiations?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I am always in danger if I agree with an NDP member. It might start a trend, but I will say, yes, but with conditions. It would be nice if we were involved earlier in the process. If he looks back to the Debates and the past free trade agreements, for many years different Parliaments have debated this and have said that members of Parliament should be more involved earlier in the process.

• (1620)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada is a trading nation and the United States is by far our largest trading partner. Of our exports, 75% go to the U.S., and 51% of our imports come from the U.S. Mexico is our fifth-largest trading partner.

In that context, I am happy to address the House today about the benefits of the Canada-United States-Mexico agreement and to encourage all members in the House to support Bill C-4.

Our government spent over a year negotiating a modernized free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico. Our goal was to negotiate a deal that was good for Canadian workers, Canadian businesses and communities across the country. We negotiated a deal that would protect Canadian jobs, create more opportunities for Canadian workers and their families and ensure the growth of our economy.

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From farmers in Alberta to auto workers in Windsor to entrepreneurs in St. John's and Surrey, the new NAFTA will benefit Canadians in every corner of the country.

The agreement we were able to achieve is particularly impressive, given the challenges we faced at the outset. We made the best of a challenging situation, because no other outcome was acceptable.

Trade between Canada and the U.S. is of vital importance. We were dealing with a U.S. president who said that NAFTA was the worst trade deal in history. He was determined to tear it up. He slapped tariffs on our steel and aluminum. What did we do? We stood up for the Canadian steel and aluminum industries, and in the end we won.

Canadians had every reason to be worried about all this. The fact we have a deal is a testament to Canada's determination and patience.

This will be the third major trade agreement signed by our Liberal government. The trans-Pacific partnership and CETA are the other two. The ratification of CUSMA will put trade uncertainty behind us. This is a big win for Canada, such a big win that even the Premier of Ontario is on board. Provincial and territorial leaders have urged all federal parties to ratify CUSMA and have warned against playing political games.

The sad truth is that the Conservatives and the NDP do not bring much to the table except political games.

The Conservatives seem to hate it when Canada does well. They say that Canada is an economic failure. They dismiss any good news. They run Canada down. They dismiss the hard work of Canadians who have created over one million jobs in the last four years.

Instead of celebrating the hard work of Canadians that has made Canada and Canada's economy one of the strongest in the world, what do they do? The Conservatives paint a picture of doom and gloom. I encourage the members opposite to stand up for Canada's future, to be proud of Canada's accomplishments, to celebrate what we have achieved together and to ratify CUSMA.

• (1625)

My colleagues from the NDP have joined forces with the Bloc Québécois to drag out the ratification of this trade deal. I am not sure why they want to drag things out, but I am sure that the deal before us is the deal we have and no stalling tactics or delays will change that. Much like the Conservatives, they dismiss the good things that were achieved in CUSMA.

I would think that the NDP and the Bloc would recognize that this deal is progressive trade in action. It has the strongest labour and environment chapters ever to be included in a trade agreement. It removes the investor-state dispute settlement provisions of NAFTA, a key demand of the NDP. CUSMA also has strong protection for women and indigenous peoples.

I am not sure why the NDP wants to delay the implementation of these progressive reforms. We should work together as colleagues,

put Canada and Canadians first and get this important bill passed without delay.

In December, Canada signed an amending protocol that makes significant improvements to CUSMA. It strengthens state-to-state dispute settlement, labour protection, environmental protection, intellectual property and the automotive rules of origin and will help keep the most advanced medications affordable for Canadians. These changes are all in Canada's best interest, and they make CUSMA an even better deal.

For residents of my constituency of Surrey—Newton and all of British Columbia, it means access to the U.S. market and the 20.3 billion dollars' worth of exports that B.C. sends to the U.S. every year. It means stability for B.C. workers in the lumber, oil and processed food sectors. It means B.C.'s agricultural goods continue to benefit from duty-free access for nearly 89% of U.S. agriculture tariff lines and 91% of Mexican tariff lines. The agreement also protects the \$2.1 billion in B.C. exports to the U.S. market.

CUSMA preserves NAFTA's chapter 19, which gives Canada access to an independent and impartial process to challenge U.S. or Mexican anti-dumping and countervailing duties. That is good news for British Columbia's softwood lumber industry and its \$4.3 billion in U.S. exports.

In the previous Parliament, I had the pleasure of sitting on the international trade committee with former MP Linda Lapointe from Quebec. During a trip to Washington, we met with U.S. negotiators and it was Linda who maintained that the cultural exemption component be kept. At that time, U.S. negotiators were not concerned about this issue. However, this is very important for the French language in Quebec and cultural industries throughout Canada.

CUSMA is the result of a long, difficult and challenging negotiation. We made it through and have a deal before us that will help Canadians build a better Canada. Let us pass it and let them get to work.

• (1630)

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have heard two members opposite mention the word “environment” and how this agreement is going to save or better the environment. Could the member tell me what specifically in this agreement is going to make the environment better moving forward? What is different now and what specific item of the environment is being saved?

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Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Speaker, this is different because there is a new enforceable environment chapter included in CUSMA. This replaces the separate side agreement, and it protects air quality and fights marine pollution. We believe that commitments to high levels of environmental protection are an important part of this trade agreement, as they protect our workers and our planet.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his most enthusiastic speech.

Our hon. colleague told us that the new NAFTA would result in new job prospects for Canadians and therefore for Quebecers. There was a protest here in Ottawa. Aluminum workers, municipal officials and economic stakeholders from the region came to tell us, with study in hand, that 60,000 jobs are in jeopardy in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and on the north shore. Sixty thousand jobs. I have seen better job prospects.

Earlier, my hon. colleague said that I was playing politics with this file. I am not playing politics, I am fighting for my constituents.

If someone told my hon. colleague that the new NAFTA would put 60,000 jobs at risk in his riding, would he be so enthusiastic about signing the agreement?

[*English*]

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Speaker, in my constituency, from one corner to the other, every business person and worker I met supported this deal. It is going to help Quebec by preserving \$57.3 billion in exports to the U.S. from Quebec. It preserves the cultural exemption. It also preserves supply management, even though the U.S. was calling for a complete dismantle of it.

This is a great deal for Quebec and a great deal for Canada.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech with a great deal of interest. I am perplexed by his argument that the NDP and the Bloc somehow joined together to block progress on the bill. What we have asked for is simply a full debate on it.

The member is concerned about how we move forward. If Parliament had been involved at an earlier stage, if the government had come to Parliament and presented its negotiation goals in this free trade agreement so we could have discussed it as a Parliament and presented reports on the economic impacts of this deal long before the present, we would have been able to move quicker at this point. Does he agree with me? Do we need a better process for involving Parliament in trade deals?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member on one aspect: We can always do things differently and do them better. That has never been denied by the Prime Minister or any member on this side.

I want to remind the hon. member that we worked well with former NDP member Tracey Ramsey when she was on the international trade committee, and that is why this deal is good for the NDP. We have never had stronger labour and environment chapters and labour value content provisions that level the playing field.

This deal removes the ISDS, which is very important to the NDP, and has protections for women and indigenous peoples.

I would therefore request that the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke ask his party to support the bill to make sure that people from British Columbia and his riding benefit from it.

● (1635)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, this debate on CUSMA is an opportunity to learn the details and ramifications of the agreement. This is not about playing politics. People are just trying to do their jobs. As members of Parliament, our job is to work for the people who are put at risk by this agreement. The Bloc Québécois has never been against free trade. Quite the opposite, actually. However, on this side of the House we will not rubber stamp anything.

This agreement, which was negotiated behind closed doors, once against sacrifices Quebec's economy. It is very sad to see history repeating itself. One example is the aluminum industry, which was sacrificed. We have spoken about that a lot in recent weeks. Another example is the agriculture and agri-food industry and our supply-managed agricultural products. The Canadian government, the same government that promised to prevent further breaches, ultimately sacrificed our supply-managed agricultural products. Once again, the government's defeatist position is that it could have been much worse.

When sacrifices need to be made, it often falls on Quebec to make them. It should therefore come as no surprise if, one day, Quebecers decide that their interests would be much better served by an independent Quebec, where the Quebec nation could choose the agreements it signs after negotiating them itself.

In the meantime, we are here to promote and protect our people's interests. I repeat: There are no political games being played here. There are only dedicated people doing their jobs.

I want to make members of the House and people across the country aware of the enormous sacrifices that have been asked, particularly of farmers. It all started with the creation of the WTO, which replaced GATT. That is when the first breaches occurred. In subsequent negotiations, foreign countries have called for either the elimination of supply management or a larger share of the market. The Canadian government assured us on many occasions that it would not touch supply management again. It is still saying the same thing when we ask questions about Brexit. Nevertheless, the government has capitulated on several occasions.

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On February 7, 2018, the House unanimously agreed to a Bloc Québécois motion to ensure there would be no breach in supply management. One month later, on March 8, 2018, the Liberal government went back on its word by signing the TPP, complete with the breaches the U.S. demanded even though it was no longer part of the agreement. How does that make sense?

Prior to that, on September 26, 2017, the Bloc had moved a motion to fully preserve supply management during NAFTA negotiations. A year later, on November 30, 2018, Canada signed CUSMA, caving in once again. According to dairy producers, the government gave up 1.4% of the market in negotiations with Europe, 3.1% in the trans-Pacific partnership, and another 3.9% this time around. The last three agreements alone have taken away 8.4% of our market share. According to the dairy producers' numbers, foreign countries will have a total of 18% of our market once these agreements are all fully implemented in 2024. If that is a closed market, I would like to know what constitutes an open one.

None of our trading partners are giving up that much market share. This is appalling. Our farmers will never be able to recover what they lost. The cost to producers alone will be \$1.3 billion per year.

Then they talk to us about compensation, but the money is always slow in coming, because it requires intense negotiations. Several sectors still have not reached an agreement with the government, and that compensation will only ever be temporary. Nothing will ever replace the market share we are giving up.

• (1640)

The compensation to the dairy sector needs to come in the form of cheques with no strings attached, because that is what the dairy industry is calling for. If some other industry has different demands, those demands should also be met, because the people in the sector know their own needs.

That compensation should therefore come in the form of cheques with no strings attached, not so-called modernization programs that will force businesses to go further into debt than they can afford.

Nothing, not even compensation, can make up for the income that these market losses will cost them. In any case, all our farmers want to do is work and feed the people. That is something we do not hear often enough in the House. Our farmers are proud. Getting a cheque does not make them happy. It is compensation. That is the right word.

That is why the people in this sector do not want to hear any more promises or vague commitments. Those commitments get made all the time, but they are rarely if ever fulfilled. Only the protection a law would offer can end this vicious cycle that is slowly but surely killing off supply management, our agricultural model, our thriving rural communities, and the dynamic use of our land.

I am not sure that every MP in the House appreciates the gravity of these new breaches.

As further proof that we are slowly but surely losing our agricultural model, for the first time in Canada's history, the Canadian government agreed to give the United States control over what Canada exports to countries that are not signatories to the agree-

ment. It is unbelievable. Canada has relinquished its sovereignty. I admit that it is odd for me to talk about a sovereignty other than the one I usually talk about.

Total exports of powdered milk, milk protein, and infant formula will be limited to 55,000 tonnes for the first year and 35,000 tonnes for the following years. Anything over these limits will be heavily taxed, making it impossible to export higher volumes because the product would become too expensive and therefore no longer profitable or attractive.

We need to understand that the United States retained the right to limit our exports. My colleagues in the House who did not realize this may need a few minutes to take in this information. I was blown away.

Think about the logic. If we cede parts of supply management, farmers could be tempted to make up for their losses by exporting their surplus products under different forms. Even then, there will be limits. They are getting it on all sides.

The current Liberal government appears to have wilfully decided to eliminate the supply management system. It is eliminating the system bit by bit, but does not have the courage to do so openly. It is being sneaky and secretive and eroding this system one piece at a time. I must admit that I do not understand why I am accused of playing politics when I make this information public.

The government is completely destroying our land use model and throwing it out the back door. Is that what we want? Some farmers under supply management are wondering whether they should sell their quota while it is still worth something. Is that what we want?

I have not yet spoken about investments. If the owner of a company that is deeply in debt has no security, will he go a few thousand or million dollars more in debt, jeopardizing the long-term prosperity of his business?

The government is asking us to sign the agreement quickly, often invoking the notion of economic security. I have some news for them: People in the dairy industry need security too.

Supply management should be protected by law.

• (1645)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, like many members of the House, the member has no doubt been provided with the opportunity to meet with dairy producers. I had that opportunity yesterday and I am very grateful. I found it to be exceptionally informative on the dairy industry in Canada, which I think provides the best product in the world.

I am very proud that a part of these negotiations that have taken place has secured that sense of commitment to supply management, protecting our dairy farmers and ultimately all Canadians because of the superiority of the product, and the industry as a whole will benefit.

Whether it is the dairy sector or all the other sectors, we have seen a wide spectrum of support, including the Premier of the Province of Quebec, labour organizations and businesses. They are saying that this agreement is a step forward for Canada and that we should be supporting it.

Given the type of support we are getting nationwide, including in the Province of Quebec, would the member not agree that we should be voting in favour of it?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague for his question.

During yesterday's and today's question period, we very clearly demonstrated that when the Liberal government cites the support of Quebec's government, it is very specific and incidental, and it is chosen very selectively.

If my colleague believes that we should always follow the Quebec government's recommendations, he would therefore agree to apply Bill 101 to businesses that do business in Quebec, because that is what Quebec's premier is asking for. He would agree to increase health transfers, because that is what Quebec's premier is asking for. I could go on, but I will stop there.

I just want to mention that I am pleased to have heard him say that he is proud of our producers, the quality product they make, the financial security that brings them and the food security it provides to all citizens of Quebec.

I am pleased that we both appreciate this. I believe that he will also be firmly in favour when we introduce a bill to stop any further breaches in supply management. We have opened up 18% of the market and that is enough.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his support for Canada's sovereignty.

[*English*]

I would ask the member if he believes that it would be helpful to hear from the other side about the economic impact that the agreement will have on the dairy industry, and in addition hear the actual details of the package that the Liberal government may be giving to those in the dairy industry in compensation for the loss of their quota.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the great question and for the joke. A sense of humour is essential for sitting in the House.

He asked a great question. The costs need to be assessed. However, since negotiations are still ongoing for some sectors, that is very hard to do.

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I would also like to see an assessment of the cost of the adverse impact on our local farmers and on the use of our agricultural land. That is an important aspect that the members across the way do not seem to care too much about. The only thing they care about is signing the agreement as fast as possible.

We on this side of the House are going to do our job and question every one of these aspects to make sure we fully understand the contract we are signing. I am glad that my Conservative colleague wants to do the same.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to know if my colleague thinks the agreement currently being put in place is satisfactory to the other commodity sectors, such as pork, beef and grain. Quebec exports a lot of pork and soybeans.

Are farmers satisfied with the agreement that is being presented?

• (1650)

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very relevant question.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, we in the Bloc Québécois generally support free trade agreements. In any case, our demographic and geopolitical situation requires them.

I have also had meetings with grain, canola and beef farmers, to name just a few, who need international agreements. We will always work with that in mind.

This will not stop us from doing our job and properly scrutinizing the contract we are signing. A contract might appear very beneficial at first glance, but it is important to look at any flaws and what can be improved. We are doing our job as the opposition and we will always do so in a constructive way.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Government Contracts; the hon. member for Vancouver East, Taxation.

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to appeal to the Bloc today.

[*Translation*]

I am sorry, I do not speak French.

[*English*]

I hope to appeal to the Bloc today with a positive, fact-based discussion about the new NAFTA. I have some credibility in this in that in one of my first speeches, I congratulated the Bloc leader on his positive, fact-based, logical approach to Parliament, which is very refreshing. Therefore, through facts and logic, I hope to constructively provide evidence for the decision that I believe will be in the best interests of Quebecers and to provide reasons for all of us to make this decision in an expedient manner.

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If some members are not here to hear my speech, I will be happy to mail it to them.

I am sure the Bloc members would agree that in any international political realm, things can change quickly. Mexico and the U.S.A. are not exempt. If there is a decision requiring an international agreement that is in our favour, I am sure we would all agree that we should not dally. I mostly want to talk about aluminum, but I will first discuss a few other points.

Quebec is a great manufacturing province. If this agreement does not go through, tens of thousands of Quebec jobs would be at risk. This agreement would give Quebec manufacturing protection from tariffs. Quebec has \$57 billion in exports to the United States, so we can imagine how many Quebec workers are at risk.

I believe the Bloc is in favour of environmental protection. This trade agreement has more environmental protection than any of our other trade agreements. Imagine what Quebeckers would lose in marine protection, air quality and other environmental protections if this agreement is not signed.

I am sure the Bloc is in favour of improving women's rights. Again, the advancements that would be made in this area would be lost if this agreement fails. Does the Bloc wish to continue to vote against improvements in women's rights?

I imagine the Bloc wishes justice for labour. Again, this agreement has more advances for labour than any other in history. Does the Bloc really want to vote against this improvement?

Under the old NAFTA, companies were suing our government and weakening local protection of our environment, etc. This agreement would eliminate that. Does the Bloc still want to be held hostage to foreign corporations? Quebec companies have access to U.S. government contracts, a provision that will be lost if the new agreement is not signed. Does the Bloc want Quebec workers to lose these types of jobs?

I am sure the Bloc, like the rest of us, is proud of Quebec culture. This agreement would preserve the cultural exemption and 75,000 Quebec jobs in cultural industries. The U.S. wanted to totally dismantle our supply management in Quebec and all of Canada, but this agreement did not let that happen.

Perhaps most importantly, I am sure the Bloc is sensitive to the poor. If this agreement is not ratified, imagine all Quebeckers paying higher prices on thousands of products, because of U.S. tariffs. Who can least afford that? It is the poor. In any agreement there is give-and-take, but where we have given up something, we can compensate, so that is a win-win situation.

In that the millions of Quebeckers I have mentioned so far would benefit from this agreement and have so much to lose without it, would it not be expedient to ratify it quickly in the volatile international political and economic environment?

There is a saying that perfect is the enemy of the good. We could give up a lot of things to try to get one last detail, but we could lose a lot more and put a lot more at risk than the one item we are trying to correct.

Now I will move to aluminum.

The Bloc Québécois has pointed out that almost all Canadian aluminum is made in Quebec, except for the 10% that is made in B.C., but NAFTA would not have an effect on B.C. aluminum, because its market is Asia. Quebec is the big winner in Canada for the gains made by the new NAFTA for aluminum. What are those gains?

First, the regional value content of automobiles would increase from 62.5% to 75%, a big win for Quebec aluminum. Second, 70% of aluminum purchased by automakers must be of North American origin. This protection goes from 0% under the old NAFTA to 70% under the new NAFTA, which is another big win for Quebec aluminum. Third, seven of the core parts of automobiles must contain at least 75% regional value content. These are the core parts of automobiles, such as engines, transmissions, etc. Given that some of these parts have major aluminum components, it is another big win for Quebec aluminum producers.

● (1655)

None of these great wins are mentioned correctly in the Groupe Performance Stratégique report that some of the Bloc members have mentioned. The report also makes an error in saying that it is not possible to change the aluminum requirement for 10 years. Although it will be reviewed in 10 years, it can be changed any time under the auspices of the CUSMA working group on rules of origin.

That report also suggests that six major aluminum projects are on hold because of the new NAFTA, jeopardizing \$6.2 billion in investment and about 30,000 jobs. If this were true, which it is not, that number does not come anywhere near the millions of Quebeckers who would benefit from the new NAFTA and the thousands of manufacturing and other jobs the Bloc are putting at risk by not supporting the agreement, as I outlined earlier in my speech.

However, the six investment decisions for the six potential aluminum projects were made prior to the final NAFTA and the aluminum benefits contained therein. Therefore, if anyone is jeopardizing the 30,000 possible jobs, it would be the Bloc because they are putting the benefits of the new NAFTA for aluminum at risk by not supporting it.

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I am asking the Bloc to live up to the image I have of them, of being professional, facts-based, logical decision-makers. There are so many benefits for millions of Quebecers, for the Quebec aluminum industry, for women, for labour, for the environment and for Quebec's great manufacturing employees who are producing \$57 billion of exports. Please support all these millions of Quebecers soon by supporting the agreement, before anything occurs to cause Quebecers to lose all these benefits.

To give the Bloc members a few minutes to change their minds, I will talk about my riding.

There is benefit in the north for the territories. In my area, it helps preserve 130 or so exports in things like mineral products. There is a general exemption related to the rights of indigenous peoples, which is very important for my riding. Trade facilitation and customs procedures are being modernized, which makes it easier to get across the border in remote locations by using electronic processes. Hopefully that will be very helpful.

There is stability and predictability for Canadian investors and service suppliers who do work in the United States. There is special temporary access to the United States, as well, for those Canadian companies that are providing services or for their investors. They can get in and out of the States more quickly and easily than people from other companies. There is also a new chapter on small and medium-sized enterprises, which is most enterprises in my riding, with enhanced opportunities for promoting small and medium-sized enterprises that are focused on women and indigenous groups.

The other two territories have all the same types of benefits. The Northwest Territories exports \$3 million in precious gems. In Nunavut, there are a number of exports including sculptures, so all of these things will help them out as well.

I hope I have convinced my Bloc Québécois colleagues of the many benefits for Quebec and that they won't let the perfect be the enemy of the good, but get these things in place as soon as possible, before we are in jeopardy of losing them.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I repeat that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of free trade. It is just that the Bloc Québécois reads contracts before signing them. I would like to be a merchant with something to sell and have my hon. colleague as a customer. For example, I could sell him a discounted car at a completely exorbitant price. He would be so afraid of missing out on the deal that he would quickly sign the contract without reading the fine print, where I indicated that the interest rate is 25%. That is a bit like what he is asking us to do.

We are talking about concessions. The government is saying that it is normal to make concessions, and the government members sometimes seem to find this funny. However, there are people in our regions of Quebec who do not find this funny at all. When it is always the same people who keep being asked to make concessions, things become very difficult for them. Sometimes those people get fed up.

The Bloc Québécois supports the manufacturing industry, the environment, women's rights and so on. With regard to aluminum, how do the members opposite not understand that the place where the aluminum is poured is not protected in the agreement?

As we have already seen over the past several years, this results in a huge increase in aluminum exports from China. This dirty aluminum, which is produced with coal, is going to flood our market. I do not understand why the government members keep saying that 70% is better than zero. It will end up being zero anyway. I would like my colleague's opinion on that.

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, I talked about gain after gain in relation to aluminum. I gave three examples where there is much more protection: 75% for the total vehicle, 75% of the core products and 70% of the aluminum purchased by manufacturers.

With respect to taking away the type of dumping the member is talking about, there is much more protection than there was under the old NAFTA. There is much more protection than aluminum companies in Quebec would have without it. The member would not want to deny them these new protections.

To give it a more esoteric response related to parts, aluminum is often bought by car producers themselves and given to parts companies because they can buy in great volume. When they do that, 70% needs to be produced in North America. This is a big benefit for aluminum producers and members would not want to deny them these benefits. They are not the total benefits but they are certainly a lot better than what they had before.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague across the way why, after initially saying that it was a non-starter and that the government would never agree to it, did the government agree to a sunset clause in this agreement and how would that eliminate any uncertainty certainly felt by the Canadian business community.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, there is a review every six years. All Canadian and American businesses that came onside originally will continue with the agreement, using the same argument that it provides huge benefits to both countries.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, this deal had to get amended. Why were the labour and environmental conditions not in the original deal?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for giving me the chance to outline the labour advancements in this deal. The labour protections in this agreement are the greatest labour protections than in any of our previous agreements.

Government Orders

There were a number of labour protections in the first agreement but some improvements and additions were made last December to labour, women and the environment to make them even stronger. Those improvements enhanced those items. There were in the original agreement a number of labour provisions and they were enhanced last December to make it even better.

• (1705)

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, as part of my time debating Bill C-4, the Canada-U.S.-Mexico agreement, or CUSMA, also known as the new NAFTA, I have some questions that my constituents and Canadians deserve answers for.

The Conservative Party has a long trade record and understands the importance of global trade. The previous Conservative government negotiated trade deals with over 40 countries.

In my community of Kelowna—Lake Country, we have many sectors that rely on international trading. We are the largest trading area between Vancouver and Calgary, with now the 10th-busiest airport in Canada.

A report from the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission laid out a sector overview. Manufacturing in my community includes agri-food and high-tech aerospace, with metal, plastic, wood, concrete and fibreglass products. It anticipates that fabricated metal, non-metallic, mineral and transportation equipment manufacturing, as well as plastics, rubber products and beverages, will lead the way in growth. The cross-section of manufacturers makes it easy for existing and new businesses to find high-quality partners locally.

When China started embargoes on Canadian farming products, local cherry producers in my community were concerned that they would be next and started looking to potentially expand their exports to the United States and other markets. It is therefore very important to farmers and all businesses that we have stable and clearly outlined trading relationships.

NAFTA was not perfect, but it has been good for Canada, with \$2 billion in trade crossing the border every day. The United States is our largest trading partner, representing 75% of Canadian exports.

I understand that the majority of major industry associations in Canada and the group, Canada's Premiers, are encouraging us to ratify the CUSMA deal. Canada's Premiers has stated, "Beyond seeking the ratification of CUSMA, Premiers are still prioritizing engagement with the U.S. to deal with other trade issues including Buy American policies and the softwood lumber dispute."

Why was the buy American policy not addressed in CUSMA? Mexico got a buy America chapter in CUSMA, but Canada did not. There was no procurement chapter.

There has been a lot of uncertainty for four years. We have lost business opportunities and investments are on hold. Many people just want to be able to move forward with clarity. Goldy Hyder from the Business Council of Canada has said that the signed new NAFTA is "good enough" for Canada and "gets us through this administration."

I will tell members about an industry that thinks the CUSMA agreement is good enough but is no further ahead, like so many other industries we hear about across the country with this deal. This is the wine industry specifically in British Columbia. Ontario also has uncertainty.

Just this past Monday I was speaking with Miles Prodan, executive director of the British Columbia Wine Institute. I have his approval to bring his comments forward in the House today. He stated, "We accept and support moving forward with CUSMA. However, there is nothing better and nothing more advantageous for our wine industry. A status quo was a win for us." He is referring to the 281 VQA wineries his organization represents in B.C., 32 of which are located in my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country. "A status quo was a win for us."

This is at a time when Canada is having a potentially devastating wine excise tax trade dispute with Australia. As I mentioned in the House yesterday, in 2018, following the Liberal government's introduction of an escalator tax for beer, wine and spirits, Australia requested a review from the World Trade Organization of Canada's exemption for 100% Canadian wines. This tax basically means automatic tax increases each and every year.

The draft report of this WTO review is anticipated in April, with a final report coming sometime this summer. A WTO ruling against Canada would be legally binding and could have a catastrophic effect on some 400 Canadian wineries, forcing them to bear the burden of millions of dollars of new taxes and putting this important industry and Canadian jobs on the line. This shows again a lack of clear understanding and thoughtful consideration by the Liberals of the ramifications of their tax policies and decisions.

On January 16, those of us from across the country who have wineries in our communities signed a letter to the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade. It was led by our colleague, the member for Prince Albert, the Conservative shadow minister for international trade. It asked the government to engage with Australia to resolve the dispute prior to the WTO ruling. We received a response from the minister on January 31, and in the letter the minister said:

Australia's position on the excise duty exemption has been unwavering and clear. Any negotiated settlement must include the removal of the excise exemption for Canadian wines in its entirety, and this was confirmed to Canadian officials as recently as December 2019.

Government Orders

• (1710)

I bring this up today as this is a trend we are seeing with trade negotiations with the current government, an attitude of, “They drew a line in the sand, so what are you going to do?”

The Australian government could be responding in this way because Australia, like many other countries, was not happy with Canada due to the Prime Minister's no-show for the trans-Pacific partnership. This was a trade deal that the Prime Minister just had to sign. Reports are that TPP's signatories, including Australia, were outraged.

Regarding CUSMA negotiations, the chairman of the U.S. House ways and means committee said that the Deputy Prime Minister and Prime Minister conceded on just about every point they raised for one reason: “enforceability, enforceability, enforceability.” What other concessions did we agree to that prompted such a statement?

If nothing else, the government is consistent. The attitude that we have heard on how Canada negotiated with the U.S. with concession after concession in CUSMA, we see here again on the Australia trade issue. This laissez-faire, “what are you going to do” attitude is not serving Canadians or families well.

Another major sector left out of CUSMA discussions was our softwood lumber industry in British Columbia. We lost thousands of jobs this past year, bringing the total to some 50,000 job losses over the last few years. I have spoken in the House about how this has directly affected my community of Kelowna—Lake Country, where 217 permanent jobs were lost.

The sustainable resource sector has been hit hard and is currently being forced to pay tariffs to the United States. Why was the softwood lumber industry left out of CUSMA? So much for supporting the middle class.

It is our duty as parliamentarians to think deeply and look at legislation closely. These calls by the government to hurry up and move it along are not responsible. These are not just numbers we are talking about. We are talking about lives, families and jobs. With the reckless Liberal “push it through” attitude, I seriously wonder whose jobs the Liberals are more concerned about.

The ratification process is slightly different in each country. In June of last year, this deal was ratified by the Mexican senate. Due to modifications made to the agreement, it was re-ratified in December. In the United States, debate proceeded in the House of Representatives in September 2019. It was passed in the House in December 2019, and the U.S. Senate passed the bill on January 16, 2020.

I can appreciate that we had an election, but we were all elected back in October. After the election, Conservatives were calling on the government to call the House back on November 25 as we needed to roll up our sleeves and get back to work on behalf of Canadians. This fell on deaf ears, and the Prime Minister did not call the House back until December 5.

The CUSMA deal had to be reintroduced after the election, but the government did not table Bill C-4 until January 29. We are now debating it much later than our trading partners, and are being

asked to hurry up. It was simply reckless and irresponsible that the government waited so long to reintroduce the legislation. It is important for us to do our proper due diligence, in particular since the government has still not presented us with an economic impact analysis. This is something we, the official opposition, have repeatedly requested for almost two months now and have yet to receive.

We heard that the government had an economic impact analysis, but two days ago here in the House the Deputy Prime Minister said that the government would present it once it is complete.

Was one actually done? Was it done only on certain sectors? Is it incomplete? Is there information that there are industries where the analysis is not positive, and the Liberals do not want the information disclosed yet? These are all questions that we need answered.

Conservatives support and want free trade with the United States. We are the party of trade deals with our closest allies. NAFTA is a legacy from the Conservatives. Our Canadian businesses deserve certainty, and we should not be rushed into this important vote without having answers to the questions we are asking. It is our job as parliamentarians, and we owe that to the communities we serve. I urge everyone to take this information to committee so that we can delve into some of these questions properly.

• (1715)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Conservative side of the House for seeking greater opportunities to explore CUSMA. We feel, in the Green caucus, that we have had those opportunities and recognize that it is a done deal as far as that goes. The Trump administration is not going to reopen it.

I ask the hon. members on the other side of the House to think back to the 41st Parliament, though many members were not present at the time. The House then had zero opportunity to debate or vote on the Canada-China investment treaty, which binds this country for more than three decades to allowing the People's Republic of China to challenge any decision, by any level of government in this country, by secret tribunal. This is an egregious agreement and done in secret with zero opportunity to debate.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, when we are talking about this agreement, it is really important that we consider what is on the table here and that we are moving forward.

Government Orders

What we are looking at right now is the agreement that has been put in place. We have to look at what our duty is right now as parliamentarians, to analyze what is in front of us. That is what we are here to do. It is really important that we put a lot of these details through the committee, so that we can make sure that we are coming up with the best deal possible for Canadian businesses and Canadians.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the comments coming from the other side of House are, “Speed up. Slow down. Speed up, speed up. Slow down.”

At one time the Conservative leadership was asking why we had not gotten the deal done and that we should take whatever Donald Trump was giving. It was, “Take a deal, take a deal.” Now, all of a sudden, we are hearing, “Wait, hold on. We need more time. We need to get into the details of this.”

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has just, very eloquently, spoken about the amount of time that has been spent discussing and debating this.

I understand the position that the Conservatives are in. They want to support it, but they just do not want to show that they are supporting it because that is going to put them in the awkward position of having to acknowledge the fact that it is really a good deal.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, over the last few days I have been meeting with a number of different stakeholders and different business owners. The message that we are getting is what I had said in my presentation: “Okay, let us move forward. It is good enough. It is just good enough. Let us just move forward.”

Just being good enough is not really good enough. Most businesses are saying that if we are going to move forward with something, we want to make sure that we are getting ahead somehow, that we are at some advantage. That is really not what we are seeing or hearing from most industries. That is where the concern is.

Just being good enough is a serious question. It is something we need to really look at.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech.

I would suggest that the reason the Conservatives are in no hurry and want to study these files is that they read agreements all the way through before signing them.

I would like to ask my Conservative Party colleague to raise the issues the committee should look at so it can analyze their economic repercussions and so on. That could be supply management, aluminum or another sector.

[*English*]

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, there are a number of industries that we need to look at. The member did mention a couple already. One of the others I mentioned during my presentation was softwood lumber. We do not have a softwood lumber agreement. That is an industry that we absolutely need to look at.

We have a number of resource sectors. We still have some farmers who are very uncertain and very unclear about what is actually

in the agreement. There are a number of different industries that we need to look at, and definitely need to put a deep dive into.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I just want to get it on the record, because a number of people talked about earlier input in this debate. The fact is that we consulted with over 1,100 stakeholders and organizations, and we had 47,000 written input submissions. We have done lots of consultation.

• (1720)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. With all due respect, and I know that you are doing an extremely capable job, but I believe that the member does have an opportunity to respond to that question or comment. Does she not?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am learning as I go. Thank you for the reminder. My apologies to the member for Windsor West. We will give a few seconds to the member for Kelowna—Lake Country to answer the comment.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member opposite for allowing me to answer the comment. I will be brief.

One of the differences we can talk about here is that, when we are looking at the United States, its opposition was involved. The Democratic Party was actually involved in different points of the discussion, and we have not been involved. That is a big difference between us and the United States.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to intervene in this discussion. I represent Windsor West, which is right on the Detroit border in the United States.

Our peninsula Windsor-Essex County has been a trading component of our nation from its creation, from our first nations that were in the area and still are to this day, and we are working on reclaiming some of their rights for many reasons of colonialism, to the French settlement, followed by the British settlement. It is the oldest European settlement west of Montreal. I represent Sandwich Town.

About 40,000 vehicles, 10,000 of them trucks, per day traverse through my riding. The 40,000 vehicles not only bring as passengers visitors, but up to 10,000 doctors, nurses and other health care professionals who work in the Detroit region daily.

It was the founding of the logging industry originally, but most recently it has been the hotbed for the auto industry and manufacturing. Trade with the United States has been part of our way of life. It is our people who are interchanged, so the Canada-U.S. relationship is very important because families live on both sides of the border.

Government Orders

I have an American aunt. This is a normal thing: we have Canadians and Americans in our family units and our working units as well. Even our sports and culture are very much there.

We see American flags in my riding, but we will not find any fiercer Canadians, especially when it comes to issues like being against the war in Iraq, where Windsor and other areas fought to keep us out of that war.

I remember the days of debates here in the House of Commons, when Canada was going in that direction and we pulled ourselves back from that. A relationship is knowing when to tell a friend when they are wrong. Knowing when to intervene is something is the strength of a relationship, not a weakness by any means.

This agreement is important, no doubt. We have to look at the previous agreement and what takes place. There are some important things that need to be clarified in the debate. First of all, this agreement coming back to us is better and improved because the Liberal government did not do its job. Liberals did not want to listen to Tracey Ramsey, the former member for Essex, who forced and focused on the issues of the environment, dairy and labour that should have been in the original agreement.

In fact, there were Liberals who would say certain negative things all the time, but this bill is coming back in this chamber for this vote because Liberals did not do their job. They do not want to have to be here. They would have loved to have dealt with this the first time, but the reality is Democrats were able to take Congress. When they took Congress, the Democrats had the opportunity to fix the deal, and they did.

I have heard in the chamber, many times, members pushing the government to support Democrats to get this improved, when they did nothing. They stayed down on it because it is a Trump-Trudeau deal. That is the reality of this deal in itself. We now have—

• (1725)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As the member is one of the deans of the chamber, I am sure he is very much aware that he is not supposed to use the names of members of the House. He should be using titles.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Could the hon. member for Windsor West correct the record?

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, I did say that, so I retract it.

I will continue to advocate that people need to fix this deal to bring it to an improved place. We have to measure it against what it was in the previous deal. We currently have some serious problems with it.

The original free trade agreement had significant consequences for a riding like mine, Windsor West, and manufacturing in particular. When the free trade deal was signed by Mulroney, the problem was that the manufacturing sector was destroyed. There were 400,000 jobs lost in manufacturing. It was one of the things that was exposed as part of doing the deal.

What we lost under the free trade deal was the Auto Pact. The Auto Pact was a special trading relationship we had with the U.S. for the manufacture and sale of automobiles in the United States, the world's largest market at that time. That built our robust indus-

try. In the riding I represent, the Ford family and others who had factories and plants on both sides of the border invested heavily in Canada because of the Auto Pact.

After we signed the free trade agreement, that special relationship we had was challenged in the WTO by Japan, and it was struck down. Instead of fighting that WTO decision, the Chrétien government accepted it. Since then we have gone from number two in the world in auto assembly to number 10.

This current deal has some higher thresholds for automotive components, construction and assembly, but the sad fact is we are not doing the jobs much anymore, so it does not matter if the quota is raised. That is why, in the absence of a national auto strategy, something we have implored the government to develop, we will have further erosion, concerns and problems.

The original deal was sent by the Liberals to Washington, and the subsequent deal was fixed by people in Washington with respect to labour rights to give us some better protections. However, we have still seen plants close and move to Mexico. We have also seen new opportunities being created in Detroit, two miles across the river. In the Windsor-Detroit region, General Motors just closed a plant in Oshawa and is now building electric vehicles and a battery plant in the U.S.

What is amazing is that the Liberals often brag about \$6 billion in auto investments since they have been in government. When they had a super-majority government and support from us and others to do a national auto strategy, they never did anything about it, but they brag about that \$6 billion. Most of that was actually plant refurbishment that was being done without them anyway.

If we compare that investment to others, Detroit alone is up to \$16 billion of investment. There we have rejuvenation and a fight for jobs taking place, and it affects workers and their families. It is very significant for their future because the new age of automation in auto is here, and Canada does not even have a battery plant.

In our city of Windsor we produced the award-winning Pacifica hybrid vehicle, and the government left it off the incentive list for the new eco rebate program. The Prime Minister came down to Windsor, toured the plant that I worked in, stood on the line with the men and women who were building an award-winning vehicle and asked them to subsidize foreign vehicles for other Canadians. We could get a foreign vehicle from that list, yet the vehicle produced in their own community, which pays taxes into the coffers of the government, was left off the list.

What was unbelievable about it was that because it is multi-passenger, this vehicle is cleaner and greener, and we still had to fight to get it on the list.

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● (1730)

Our point for this process is to look at this trade agreement. We need to move it to committee and examine it. If we think we are just going to sign it and all these jobs are going to come, it does not happen like that.

If we look at when we sign all our trade agreements, we often go into trade imbalances. We have significant trade imbalances from many of our deals. We hear all the time about all the jobs that are going to come, but they are never value added and they always come with a big subsidy from the government because there is no plan. That has to change. It is time to fight for our manufacturers.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my friend and I belong to the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group and from time to time, we travel together down to Washington to talk to congressmen and senators.

Prior to 2018, Republican congressmen and senators would be very sympathetic to Canada's position. They would make clucking noises of sympathy, but say there was nothing they could do. They were afraid to challenge President Trump. Similarly with the Democrats, they would be sympathetic to Canada's position, but would say they could not do anything because they did not have a majority in either house.

Post-2018, the same visits would yield a lot of goodwill and action from the Democratic congressmen, hence the change in attitude when President Trump went to get it ratified.

It is not really the issue with respect to the Canadian representations. We actually sowed the seeds for many years to get the deal we have today, which is 95% to 98% of what we wanted in the first place.

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, I have enjoyed working with my colleague from Scarborough—Guildwood as we have gone, bipartisan, to Washington to lobby on many issues. I appreciate his work there and I appreciate the opportunity to continue that.

However, the reality is that the deal has to be fixed because the hard work and the backbone was not there to begin with. That is the problem.

We could have pushed it even further and harder had we had some conviction for it. We never saw that in this chamber. We never saw that in the debates. We never saw that in the answers from the Prime Minister. It was always standing down for Trump every single time, whether it was the awkward press interviews the Prime Minister did or in this chamber being asked by different leaders and MPs from all over this country, what always took place was him standing down.

The Democrats stood up to put the environment and labour in the deal. In fact, we met with labourers from Mexico. Tracey Ramsey brought them in. We met with the Mexican workers here and they told us to hold our ground. They did not want to be used and abused anymore for bad jobs. They told us to hold our ground. We should have listened to them.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I noted that when the member for Windsor West was talk-

ing about the auto sector, he mentioned that Canada went from number two in auto assembly in the world to number 10.

Over those 30 years, were there any other changes in the global market, perhaps demand in certain countries versus others, that may have also affected that?

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, it was primarily related to the auto trade relationship, the Auto Pact. We can go back and look at the numbers from that time. The Auto Pact is the significant contributor to the erosion, along with the fact that we do not have greenfield plants.

I hope the member for Kingston and the Islands will support another initiative that affects us along the border, my single-event sports betting bill. We have asked the government to issue an order in council to do it. The Prime Minister and cabinet voted against it last time. Now New York, Michigan and 17 other states are all taking advantage of this.

I do not understand why the government does not move on getting rid of organized crime, protecting casino jobs, bringing in new revenue for education, health and the environment and making sure we can compete in tourism. Liberals can do it with an order in council. In fact, the Liberals gave a private American billionaire a 17-page order in council for him to build a new bridge, but they will not change one paragraph in the Criminal Code to make us competitive with the U.S.

We are doing this with a trade agreement to bring reciprocity. How can we have a situation where the government will not do the same thing for our tourism industry?

● (1735)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure I join the debate this afternoon on the new NAFTA, or NAFTA .7 as I like to call it. There are a lot of things that we can agree on in this new NAFTA legislation but there are still a lot of questions to be answered. Our job here is to review legislation, to review new agreements as they come forward. People in our ridings sent us to Ottawa to make sure we do due diligence on legislation, and everyone in this room would agree with that.

I have been listening to members opposite. Some of our Liberal colleagues have spoken to this legislation. To quote a member earlier, "We can always do things...better." We would all agree with that. That is why we need to look at this agreement through a lens. We need to find out what we received in return for the concessions we made to the Americans.

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Canada came to the table too late. Mexico and the United States had been negotiating far too long without Canada being represented at that table. This came down to the eleventh hour. The Mexico-United States agreement had moved far beyond where we left off in our discussions and negotiations with our partners in this trilateral agreement. Members opposite made a mistake. Canada was not at the table soon enough and we were not fighting for our industries hard enough.

We do have a lot of questions with this deal going forward.

I grew up on a dairy and beef farm in Rush Lake, Saskatchewan. I have a lot of friends who are still in the dairy industry. The member from Winnipeg said conversations were had with the dairy industry. Representatives from Dairy Farmers of Canada have been here over the last couple of days, and that is fantastic. Our conversations may be a bit different than what members on the opposite side had.

There are concerns with what has been going on and many questions were asked. Dairy farmers feel that the CUSMA negotiations went far beyond dairy market access concessions. The agreement also concedes the equivalent of a worldwide cap on the export of certain Canadian dairy products. It requires a level of consultation with the U.S. on any changes to the administration of Canada's supply management system.

By requiring the Canadian dairy sector to consult with the U.S. on any proposed changes to our system, the government has given up some sovereignty over our domestic and international decision-making. That is a problem for any industry, whether it is dairy, softwood, forestry or the auto industry. Any time a Canadian industry feels like it has given up some of its sovereignty to another country or given up international market options is a problem for any agreement we move forward on as a government. Those are valid concerns. Some of my friends back home in this industry have big concerns.

CUSMA requires any export of skim milk powder, milk protein concentrate and infant formula beyond a specified amount be charged an export charge on each additional kilogram of product exported globally. This requirement goes well beyond what would normally be expected in a trade negotiation. It will affect dairy exports to all countries, not only the signatories of the agreement, namely, the United States and Mexico. This sets a dangerous precedent for future trade agreements for all other commodities, including agriculture.

These are some concerns that we have to take very seriously moving forward. When an industry says this will set a dangerous precedent for other industry sectors moving forward, that should make us pause and take a step back.

I am looking forward to having some of these conversations when this legislation gets to committee so that we can figure out exactly what we received in return for these concessions with one of our more important sectors. What did we receive from the American negotiators after we conceded quite a bit in our dairy sector in the U.S.-Mexico trade agreement? There are other questions going forward.

Dairy farmers are hard-working people. They have no days off. It is 24-7 work. Dairy farmers cannot have a sick day because the cows still need to be milked. We need to make sure that we have the backs of our dairy farmers when we are negotiating these agreements. They do a wonderful job.

● (1740)

Our milk and cheese products are the best in the world. When we move forward, we should do it together to ensure that we have fair trade deals and that the dairy industry knows we are there for it.

We have had a lot of conversations about aluminum. My colleagues from Quebec have done an amazing job bringing forward the issue China sending ingots to Mexico, where they are melted down and can then be considered as North American aluminum. We very much need to have conversations about this loophole to ensure our aluminum producers and manufacturers can have their world-class product be considered ahead of a product being shipped into Mexico, melted down and then sent out for auto parts. That conversation very much needs to be had. I appreciate those members bringing the issue forward.

EVRAZ steel is on the border of Regina—Lewvan, my riding. If steel had that deal, then aluminum should have that as well. This is another thing we should talk about at committee. Stakeholders come to committee meetings so we can have these in-depth conversations and figure out how we can help our aluminum sector going forward. These conversations are best suited for committee.

With the time we are given, a lot of issues can be discussed on the floor of the House, but there needs to be more time to go through in detail some of the concessions we made to our American partners.

To go back to my original point, we made those concessions because we were not at the table soon enough. We let Mexico and the United States go too far down the path of an agreement without our being at the table to have those conversations, having a strong voice there to ensure that our industries were supported and that they knew we were there to support them.

Another industry we fell short on was softwood lumber. Softwood lumber suppliers in northern Saskatchewan have concerns about this going forward. We hope that when we get to committee, some of the stakeholders have those conversations with committee members.

We talked about going fast and going slow. My Liberal colleagues have said that we have not been consistent on what we would like to see. The Conservatives would like to see a strong deal. We would like to see all sectors supported. We would have liked to see a government that did not let this go so far down a path that it had to go on bended knee, begging for a good deal at the eleventh hour.

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The Conservatives would have liked to have seen strong negotiations taking place long before it happened. We would have liked to have seen the government bring forward the deal before the middle of December so we could actually look at it. We would have liked to have seen an economic analysis on how this deal would affect all these sectors before we voted on it.

The Liberals have talked about the premiers wanting this deal to be passed to allow for certainty. I would like to know how the 16-year sunset clause will be negotiated. Every six years, there is supposed to be a review. What is the process for that to take place?

The Conservatives have a lot of questions going forward. From our standpoint, as legislators we want to do our due diligence so our constituents, the people who have sent us here, know we are doing our jobs.

I am looking forward to having these conversations in committee and moving forward. I want to be a partner with all parties in this chamber so we can get the best deal for all those sectors. We want to ensure that we have a stronger economy for all Canadians and that there are good-paying jobs in these sectors going forward.

• (1745)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of points of clarifications on supply management. Of course there will be compensation on the quota and we have guaranteed there will be no more in any future trade agreements related to milk and milk proteins in infant formula. The quota number is much bigger than we already produce and export, so it will not have any immediate effect.

On aluminum, I outlined in my speech three different new benefits for aluminum producers. It is not perfect. If a company wanted to bring in aluminum ingots from Mexico, it could not, as 70% has to come from North America. That protection was not in place before. Parts makers could bring it in, but a lot of them get their supply from the auto producers because they can buy en masse and get a much lower price. Therefore, they would be buying from North America.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I know there have been concessions made in the dairy sector, because we spoke with those groups yesterday. They brought up the infant formula and a few of those other issues and their lack of ability to gain more access to the global market. I appreciate that we will have more of these discussions at committee.

Hopefully, the member opposite will be at committee when the dairy producers of Canada and SaskMilk give their presentation, so he can hear right from the producers how they feel the negotiation on NAFTA .7 went. They do have some concerns moving forward. I look forward to seeing the member at committee for their presentation.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for showing that parties can work together even though they do not always share the same polit-

ical vision. We are all capable of fighting for our constituents. I am happy to know him, and I congratulate him on winning his seat.

He may agree with me. I get the impression that the Liberals do not realize Mexico is part of North America. Maybe we should bring them a map and explain to them that Mexico is in North America.

Mexico has no aluminum smelters, but is exporting more and more aluminum parts. That is bizarre. It also seems that China is exporting more and more aluminum to Mexico. There might be a connection there.

I would like to work on the same file as my hon. colleague. I am happy to see that the Conservatives and the Bloc can fight for the same people.

When the Liberals talk about the 70% requirement, it seems as though they do not understand what happened. The steel sector is getting more protection than the aluminum sector. For the past two months, we have been killing ourselves to get that message across to the Liberals, and workers have come to see us.

Does my colleague think that the Liberals handled this issue in bad faith or that they just do not understand what they signed?

[English]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I look forward to working together. I believe that is why Canadians sent us to the House. We have common interests. I think it is a combination of both. Perhaps the members opposite do not understand how the correlation works between the Chinese exporting more aluminum and Mexico producing more aluminum, despite there being no plant. Maybe they have not seen how that correlation and relationship works.

We will be able to point that out to them when they get to committee and perhaps have some of your riding stakeholders come forward. Hopefully, they can explain that to the members opposite so we can get a better deal and hopefully aluminum will have the same deal as steel, moving forward.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member he is to address the questions to the Chair and not to the individual members.

Questions and comments, a brief question from the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member on his thoughtful intervention on free trade. I share his frustration that parliamentarians were presented with a finished deal. We have to decide what is good, what is bad, but it is a take it or leave it.

Would the member agree with me that we might look to other countries like the U.S., which has a much more robust process, earlier when considering trade agreements, which require the negotiators to table their objectives in the House so there could be a discussion among parliamentarians on where trade agreements are heading?

With perhaps the U.K. and China negotiations coming down the road, would the member agree that we need a better process here to involve Parliament sooner in trade negotiations?

● (1750)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, as a new member, I am not going to comment on what the process should be going forward. All I know right now is that we have seen a trade deal that did not have its due diligence before bring it to the House. It should have been here sooner.

Hopefully, moving forward, we can work together and have some of those conversations a lot earlier than the eleventh hour.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, as this is my first time rising for a debate, I want to begin by thanking the people of my riding, Repentigny, who put their trust in me once again last October. I hope to be worthy of their trust.

I will address two aspects of this debate, namely dairy producers and, of course, aluminum.

I will talk about the lack of consideration for the dairy farmers of Quebec from a completely different perspective than people might expect. That perspective is necessary because we have to find solutions. This is imperative.

I will start by reminding hon. members that Quebec's dairy producers are resilient. They live and breathe their work 365 days a year. They look after their herd, invest in their facilities and prepare the next generation. It is not easy, because the economic outlook is something of a concern.

I invite hon. members to put the numbers aside and give a thought to the human dimension of the consequences of agreements on a top-notch nourishing industry.

The member for Mégantic—L'Érable and the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food came to a sad conclusion in the summer of 2019. They heard testimony from artisanal farmers and agricultural producers who were struggling and facing real psychological distress. If you know what rural areas are like, you know that people in the regions help each other and work together. However, when pressures, obligations and constraints increase, but protections disappear, distress is inevitable.

Would it be fair to think that, since the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food launched a campaign acknowledging that the agricultural industry is struggling, the agreement should work along the same lines instead of causing the industry any additional distress?

In Quebec, the Au cœur des familles agricoles organization has been instrumental in this area for 10 years now. Since 2016, in collaboration with the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention and the Union des producteurs agricoles, the organization has trained 1,200 industry workers to recognize psychological distress in farmers and direct them to specialized resources.

As we have said in the House, supply management is an economic model that suits Quebec well. It goes well with our culture. This economic and trade model is what allows for stability and pre-

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dictability, which was exactly what the agriculture industry asked for during negotiations for this new agreement.

In its current form, CUSMA's provisions and economic repercussions for Quebec's dairy industry are troubling. The Bloc Québécois strongly believes we must condemn all of the harms that our dairy farmers will suffer. We will never stop demanding that this government and the House respect Quebec, and we will never stop calling for consistency and integrity on this file.

We have been doing this for two months now, but I will now set the record straight yet again on the aluminum industry's position on CUSMA.

The House has repeatedly heard that Jean Simard, the president and CEO of the Aluminium Association of Canada, agreed with the current CUSMA. However, Mr. Simard made his position clear to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance yesterday. My colleague from Joliette asked him straight out whether he would rather have had an agreement like the one the steel sector got. Mr. Simard answered that this was what the association had asked for and was about to get, thanks to the efforts of Ms. Free-land and her team. However, at the end of the negotiations, Mexico said yes to steel but no to aluminum for strategic reasons.

Mr. Simard gave the committee an honest answer. We know that a committee involves multiple stakeholders, detailed questions and background work, since members take the time to study the topic being debated by the committee. Mr. Simard's candid answers clearly show that the aluminum industry was hoping to get the same protections as the steel sector.

● (1755)

Where in Canada is there a dynamic aluminum industry with tremendous potential for expansion? Where has this industry been creating jobs for decades, well-paying jobs that allow workers to develop professionally, start a family in their region, and in turn, contribute to the regional economic vitality that all levels of government so desperately want?

Well, that place is Quebec.

CUSMA proposes an economic free trade model that will allow aluminum from China to flood the North American market via Mexico. That is what we have been saying over and over for months now.

Parts manufacturing should be done within partner countries under the agreement. However, unlike steel, the metal used for manufacturing could come from anywhere. Mr. Simard was very clear on that point in committee yesterday.

What we want to hear from the government is simply a statement from the Prime Minister along the same lines as what he said the night of his election victory.

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Here is what he said: “Dear Quebeckers, I heard your message tonight. You want to continue to go forward with us, but you also want to ensure that the voice of Quebec can be heard even more in Ottawa. And I can tell you that my team and I will be there for you.”

Were those words meaningless, forgotten as soon as they were said?

The Bloc Québécois wants to work in a proactive and practical way to help Quebec's aluminum industry and obtain fair results. We want to work with the government to find solutions. We refuse to accept that this agreement is already settled and that it must absolutely be signed.

The conditions currently set out in CUSMA regarding this industry will cause serious harm to thousands of Quebec workers and Quebec's economy. Since I am our party's environment critic, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the absolutely essential manufacturing process used by the aluminum plants in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region.

Alcoa and Rio Tinto chose the Arvida aluminum plant to establish a research and development centre called Elysis, valued at over \$550 million. Together, they will develop all of the technology needed to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions in the production of aluminum and produce pure oxygen. Does the Prime Minister remember when that project was unveiled? He was at the project launch in 2018.

The aluminum industry is not only changing and developing its potential with a clean, renewable and nationally owned source of energy, but it is also producing aluminum using a zero-emission technology developed in Quebec. How many inconsistencies must we point out before the government does the right thing?

Since I am running out of time, I will not talk about the importance of concrete action to reduce GHG emissions. The aluminum industry is on the right track, and I encourage members of the House to review this issue and be honest with their caucuses about what I am saying.

Let me be clear: The Bloc Québécois is not against free trade. Nevertheless, we believe that, in any trade or other relationship, the parties must communicate, be open, negotiate and make compromises. It would be disingenuous to argue that Quebec's economy was not ignored in the CUSMA negotiations. I gave two examples of that. Members of the House of Commons who claim it was not ignored are, in my opinion, acting in bad faith or are misinformed on the agreement.

We will not ignore what industry representatives are telling us. They came to Parliament Hill last week. During the election period, Quebeckers voted for a voice that would raise their concerns here, in this chamber. That is exactly what we are doing and that is exactly what we will continue to do.

• (1800)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam

Speaker, I can tell the member quite candidly that the 35 Liberal members in our national caucus in Ottawa are a very vocal group of members of Parliament, including the Prime Minister, and the government House leader himself talked in a very passionate way about the province of Quebec being tattooed on the hearts of our MPs from Quebec.

I have listened to a lot of the debate thus far, and when I hear members from the Bloc party talk about the trade agreement, they are, in essence, raising two issues. One is that they are talking about the aluminum industry, and for the first time ever, we have guarantees for that industry. The second issue they are talking about is supply management. It was the Liberal Party that brought in supply management, and it is the Liberal Party that is going to protect and continue to protect supply management.

We understand the industries, from Newfoundland and Labrador to B.C. and all the provinces in between, including Quebec. We are very passionate and believe that this is the best agreement, and we are not alone. The Premier of Quebec and many other individuals are supporting this agreement, from labour to business and more.

My question is this: Will the Bloc reconsider and support this progressive piece of legislation?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, we have clearly established that we do not oppose free trade. Like other colleagues on this side of the House, we are asking that we do an in-depth study of the agreement.

I will use the example of dairy producers. Do we believe that they were pleased and that they wanted compensation? What they wanted above all was to stop being used as a bargaining chip and being sacrificed on the altar of free trade every time an agreement or treaty was signed.

There will be another opportunity with Brexit. What is going to happen to our dairy producers? Will they be sacrificed again? I would remind members that, in 2018, Quebec's premier acknowledged the many sacrifices made by milk producers for trade agreements.

Has anything changed in 2020? Now people in the aluminum sector will make many sacrifices. We want this to be studied in committee.

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, sometimes British Columbia and Quebec seem oceans apart, even though it is all land in between, but when it comes to free trade, there are a couple of things that we have in common.

One of those, of course, is that we produce aluminum in British Columbia as well. The second one, which is very important to me, is dairy on Vancouver Island.

I wonder if the hon. member sees the same concerns that I do. Whenever we cut into dairy production in Canada, we endanger not only the income of farmers but also the quality of our dairy products in Canada because of the lower standards in the United States, and we endanger our food security locally and our ability to supply our own markets with good, high-quality food as well. That is a very big issue on Vancouver Island.

I wonder if the hon. member shares those concerns.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for speaking about food security.

Some statistics indicate that, without the agreement, 17,700 tonnes of cheese could have been made here with Canadian or Quebec milk, which meets a much higher standard than U.S. milk does.

I completely agree with my colleague that this agreement could put our food security at risk. The Bloc supports milk produced here.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I learned something about what Mr. Simard, the president of the Aluminium Association of Canada, said from the speech given by my colleague from Repentigny.

I would like her to repeat it so I can jot it down.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I will bring him the quote.

I thank my colleague for reminding me that one of the government's arguments was Premier Legault's position. We came back to that more than once. The government also talked about Mr. Simard and his aluminum smelters. Yesterday, in committee, Mr. Simard said he was hoping for the same protections as steel.

• (1805)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House tonight to talk about Bill C-4, the Canada–United States–Mexico agreement implementation act, better known over here as NAFTA 2.0.

Since tonight is my first time addressing the chamber at length since the October election, I want to take a moment to thank those who have sent me here for my second term as the member of Parliament for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

I thank my volunteers. They made it possible for me to come into the chamber tonight for the 43rd Parliament. As well, I think everyone in the House would agree that our spouses are the most important. In this case, yes, my wife Ann has had to put up with me for 42 years now. It has been a long time, but we have had a great journey, and for the first time, during the election I also had my two children, Courtney and Geoff, door knock in Saskatoon—Grasswood, which is probably another story, but we certainly enjoyed it as a family.

It is my privilege to talk about this bill, because it is the most important bill in the 43rd Parliament. It would affect every territory and province in this great dominion. The relationship between Canada and our neighbour to the south, without question, is our most important relationship. Most of our trade is with our partners

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in the United States, including 75% of our exports and over 50% of our imports. Between goods and services, our bilateral trade with the United States is almost \$900 billion. The original NAFTA deal that was put together by Prime Minister Mulroney and the Conservative government has done this country a great deal of service. We have all enjoyed free trade.

At this time, I would also like to speak of the member for Abbotsford, who spoke earlier on this bill. Without question, he is one of the greatest trade ministers we have ever had in this country. We went from five agreements all the way up to 55. He is known around the world. I went to Taiwan, which had great things to say about the member for Abbotsford and the trade agreement that he brought during the Harper years. It should be recognized in the House that the member is still with us and is a valuable contributor. He spoke the other day on this agreement and had several very good points.

It was kind of a surprise that Mexico is our third-largest trading partner, so NAFTA 2.0 is very much front and centre in this country. The three countries are very close, both economically and politically. As well, at this time of year, many Canadians go to Mexico for weeks or months, and they know how important it is for Mexico, the United States and Canada to get along.

The importance, though, of this trading relationship is felt particularly strongly in my province of Saskatchewan. It is a trading province. It has a population of 1.2 million people, roughly, and exports more than it takes in, which it always has and hopefully always will, from agriculture to energy to manufacturing. Much of the provincial economy, more than 50%, is dependent on trade both within Canada and outside Canada. That is why it is important to recognize that Saskatchewan's premier, Scott Moe, is in Washington today with the Deputy Prime Minister. Trade is foremost in my province of Saskatchewan. We are dependent upon the NAFTA 2.0 agreement. Every community in my province of 1.2 million people depends on the NAFTA 2.0 agreement. Let me get that out into the open.

Conservatives from coast to coast understand exactly how important this trade is. Conservatives negotiated, as I mentioned, the original NAFTA. We did all the heavy lifting of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with the European Union and worked with the government of Israel to expand and modernize our agreement with that country. There are dozens of other countries that the Conservatives have negotiated new trade agreements with as well, such as South Korea, Honduras and Panama. The world is ours.

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In this country, we produce more than we can use. We have a population of only 37 million, so it is important that we have trade with each and every country in the world if we can do it.

• (1810)

As I have mentioned, perhaps more than any other province or territory in this dominion, Saskatchewan has benefited from the increased trade between Canada and our international partners. The economy in my province of Saskatchewan is growing like it has never grown before. With it, the population is growing, including 80,000 new jobs since 2007, largely due to the increase in trading opportunities created by the previous Conservative government for nine and a half years. Exports from Saskatchewan are up nearly 60% in that same time frame, and now our province ships to over 150 countries around the world.

I was in Regina on Monday for the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association address. Our premier has an ambitious growth program for our province. In 2030, we want to get another 100,000 people in our province and we want to increase our trade by another 50%. We can see that this agreement here is front and foremost in the province of Saskatchewan.

What has this meant? It has meant more for young people now who no longer have to go to Alberta to search for jobs. We have new schools in our province for the first time in a long time. We have young families who can stay home in Saskatchewan and share their families with grandma and grandpa. We have infrastructure, and the province makes investments in services for the people of my province.

It is concerning that the current government has not been able to live up to this record. In fact, it has been hurting our trade relationships. I will give a couple of examples.

Saskatchewan's minister of trade reported that Saskatchewan's exports to India alone plummeted from roughly \$2 billion in 2015 when we left government, to only \$650 million in 2018. Let us think about that. India was one of our biggest trading partners when the Conservatives left in 2015, and now my province of Saskatchewan is suffering at only \$650 million. Our agriculture sector in particular is so tied to trade with India, in chickpeas and so on. We know all about that. I might add that part of the problem has been the Prime Minister's trip to India. It has hurt the provincial economy.

Trade is important in our province. I cannot emphasize that enough. In light of the current government's weakness on this file, to compensate and to further our province's trading relationships around the world, Saskatchewan's provincial government has had to open new international offices in Japan, India and Singapore. I ask members to think about that. Our provincial government has had to go out and seek new trading partners because the federal government has let us down in the province of Saskatchewan. We now have trade offices in India, Singapore and Japan. These kinds of actions are so important because the people of Saskatchewan know how difficult it can be when we are facing uncertainty in our trading relationships.

The Saskatchewan caucus has heard over and over again from our producers, our workers and our unions about how the U.S. tar-

iffs on steel and aluminum hurt Saskatchewan workers and producers.

I want to thank a number of people from our caucus because they have raised some flags in this trade agreement. For the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo there is the softwood lumber issue where we have lost tens of thousands of jobs for B.C. Regarding automotive, our Oshawa MP has certainly stood up in this House and talked about the differences in this trade agreement. On aluminum, there is our member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord. We all know that Quebec aluminum is the greenest and best in the world, and yet we are being penalized with NAFTA 2. There appears to be a cap on milk exports that we have talked about before in the House.

In closing, it will be an interesting time. We want to see this bill go to committee. We want to bring in many stakeholders because it is the stakeholders who in the next six years will have the biggest say on this NAFTA.

• (1815)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad the member is so supportive of trade. I have two questions. First, if it is so hurtful to Saskatchewan, why is the premier supporting this agreement? Second, why did the Conservative government close a number of trade offices around the world? I know he would not support that, because he is such a supporter of trade.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, I have had many associations with my colleague during the indigenous committee. He has done great work on that. I want to thank him for what he has done for northern Canada.

Our premier and the people of Saskatchewan are proud of trade. We want to see those ships full. We want to see CN and CP Rail full. We want to get our products to markets. We are big supporters. I just talked about our province. We produce more than we can consume. We want trade. We want trade throughout the world. It is good for us.

We produce the finest agricultural products in the world and we are proud of that. We are proud of our chickpeas, wheat and canola. I should say on canola that we are concerned because the agreement with China fell apart last year, and it caused a lot of stress with our agriculture sector and it is still in flux as they head to seeding in a couple of months in our province.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, obviously one of the important things about trade is reciprocity in having comparable markets and comparable rules and opportunities. One of the things that is not taking place is an issue I have been working on which is single-event sports betting. In the United States, they are moving toward the legalization of single-event sports betting across the entire country, leaving Canadian markets at a disadvantage, not only border communities like mine, but across provinces.

We have asked the federal government to give each province the opportunity to decide for itself if it wants to have that. That is what the initiative is. If provinces want to choose to have single-event sports betting in a regulated industry, they can do that. Otherwise, we are still in the black market or in the unregulated and unaccountable market.

This could bring in some more opportunities. I would ask for the member's comments on that.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Windsor West for all the work he has done previously on this bill. Hopefully it can come forward in the 43rd Parliament. It is very important.

I had an illustrious career in sports for over four decades. We never had professional teams in Vegas because gambling was so-called "outlawed". All of a sudden, we had the Vegas Golden Knights, whose general manager, Brad McCrimmon, comes from Saskatoon, and they are doing very well. Now, Vegas is going to have an NFL team.

Yes, we need this type of legislation in this country. I will give an example of the black market. Bodog was started by a gentleman in Lloydminster. He had to go outside the country. These are the opportunities we are missing in this country because of this legislation not being passed in the last Parliament. We are hoping it comes forward in the 43rd.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, aluminum has been mentioned a number of times. Historically, Canada was the major producer during the original NAFTA. Now it is said we are protected by 70%. China has been a big producer of aluminum. Now we are exporting ingots to Mexico, but I heard from the other side that members do not understand that Mexico is part of North America.

Would the member like to respond because he mentioned aluminum and this problem for our country?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord brought this up many times. He had a great speech the other day talking about the green economy. Quebec aluminum is the best in the world, and it should not have to go up against China through Mexico and through the United States. We should be promoting a green economy. I think the government has tried to promote a green economy, but right now, Quebec is not on the same level as China-Mexico. That is unfortunate for all the workers and all the manufacturers in the province of Quebec.

● (1820)

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to speak in the House on the NAFTA, both in my role as a member

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of Parliament for the great riding of Essex and also in my capacity as a member of the international trade committee.

As the House knows, the North American Free Trade Agreement is a legacy of a previous Conservative government. At the time it was introduced, there were a lot of naysayers. Indeed, the Liberals campaigned on their opposition to that agreement and then affirmed it once elected. Twenty-five years later, no one disputes the value of free trade agreements.

Under former prime minister Stephen Harper, Canada signed a record number of trade agreements with over 40 different countries, giving Canadian entrepreneurs unprecedented access to markets across the globe. The Conservative Party's record is clear. We support and want free trade with the United States.

Canada's prosperity is tied to a vibrant export market. In Windsor—Essex, we recognize the importance of trade, particularly for our local agriculture industry and automotive sector. The U.S. is our largest trading partner. Every day, \$2 billion in trade crosses our border, representing 75% of all Canadian exports. The region of Windsor—Essex, which encompasses my riding of Essex, boasts the busiest border crossing in North America.

Canada's trade levels with the United States are on the order of nine times more than with our next-largest trading partner, China. As my colleague representing Abbotsford, who was trade minister under the Harper government for four and a half years, said, "The United States will always be our largest trading partner and we had better get that relationship right". He called this deal a "squandered opportunity".

Here is a quick list of what Canada gave up or failed to do. The new NAFTA does nothing to address long-standing softwood lumber disputes. This trade negotiation was a perfect opportunity to resolve the buy America provision. Mexico got a chapter on this, but Canada got nothing. The Liberals agreed to major concessions on dairy, eggs and poultry without any American concessions in return. The Liberals agreed to a U.S. veto on any trade negotiations with a non-market economy, such as China. Aluminum was not given the same protocols as steel. Why not?

Despite these flaws, the bottom line is that businesses thrive in a climate of stability. As the Canadian Chamber of Commerce said:

Over the last three years, Canadian businesses have sought certainty on the future of the North American trade relationship....

The CUSMA...was an imperfect but necessary agreement to provide greater predictability in our relations with Canada's largest trading partner.

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As a spokesman for the Business Council of Canada put it, the new NAFTA is “good enough” for Canada, something that “gets us through this administration.”

I echo my colleague from Calgary Midnapore: Canadians deserve more than good enough.

Nevertheless, after years of uncertainty, the majority of Canadian businesses and labour wants this deal ratified. Despite this cautious support, many have also expressed concerns about the details and want to know how this deal is actually going to affect them.

That is our job, as parliamentarians, to find out. It is even more so, given the record of the Prime Minister in dealing with other trade agreements, including the TPP, which was badly mishandled by the government.

We saw a repeat of these unnecessary delays during the new NAFTA negotiations. The Liberals did not work with opposition parties during the negotiation and ratification process and now are rushing to get this deal done. They have not provided documents outlining the economic impacts of the new trade deal despite numerous requests from opposition MPs.

On December 12, members of the Conservative caucus requested the release of the economic impact study. It is now 56 days since the request, and we have yet to see the report. We do not intend to simply rubber-stamp this deal.

One example to illustrate the kind of data needed is an issue close to my heart. Labour has supported the clause that requires 40% of cars produced in Mexico be completed by workers making at least \$16 U.S. per hour. There is an assumption that automotive manufacturing jobs will migrate north, and that would be good news for workers in Windsor—Essex if that assumption proves correct. However, because of the lack of analysis, we do not know how many jobs are expected to be created in Canada. An economic impact study would provide a frame of reference for us to track those numbers.

- (1825)

Let us look at another crucial sector: dairy. As the Canadian Federation of Agriculture pointed out, “...concessions made by Canada for supply-managed products will once again negatively impact farmers in these sectors.”

I have met with dairy farmers in my riding of Essex as well as in my office here in Ottawa. Milk classes 6 and 7 have been eliminated and 3.6% of the Canadian market is now opened up to imports. The deal also dictates thresholds for Canadian exports on milk protein concentrates, skim milk, powdered milk and infant formula, something Canada has never agreed to before. Further, if the industry exceeds the thresholds, Canada will add duties to the exports, making Canadian products more expensive and less competitive.

As the Dairy Farmers of Canada suggest, “this sets a dangerous precedent that could affect other sectors in future trade deals as it applies to exports to all countries, not just the signatories of an individual trade agreement.”

The Dairy Farmers of Canada have done an impact study. Its numbers show an 8.4% drop in Canada's milk product, an estimated

average of \$450 million for dairy farmers and their families. It further projects that by 2024, Canada will have conceded 18% of our domestic market to foreign production.

Another concern is whether foreign dairy products will adhere to the same production standards as produced in Canada. I am told that all milk produced in Canada is free of the artificial growth hormone rBST, which is not the case in the U.S. Quality standards need to be part of the discussions going forward.

Dairy farmers have outlined three action items: one, full and fair compensation for recent trade agreements and ensuring that no more concessions are made in future agreements; two, seeking improvements to the new NAFTA through its implementation to ensure that dairy export penalties apply only to the U.S. and Mexico, not globally; and three, ensuring that agencies like CBSA and CFIA have the resources they need to enforce dairy quality standards and regulations.

Past promises to mitigate such concessions have not materialized. We need to ensure that our producers are properly compensated.

Another troubling aspect of this deal is that aluminum was not afforded the same provision as steel, requiring it to be North American and requiring it to be smelted and poured in one of these three countries. Mexico has no smelting capacity for aluminum. The concern for Canadian manufacturers is that without this provision, imported aluminum that is unfairly subsidized and/or sold at bargain prices from countries like China will be dumped into the Canadian market.

Our Bloc Québécois colleagues have made a compelling case for a thorough study of the impacts of this omission. I look forward to hearing more about the economic impacts to aluminum producers and what my Quebec colleagues propose as mitigation.

I also had a briefing with CAFTA, the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, which represents thousands of farmers. Its statistics underscore the importance of international trade to our producers, as 90% of farmers in Canada depend on trade, 50% of which is with the U.S. and Mexico. As well, value-added products represent a \$36-billion export market to 190 nations. Market certainty is key to its members' success. It urges us to ratify the new NAFTA and is committed to working with us on implementation to ensure this and other trade agreements function properly. It is so important to Canada's economic prosperity that we get this right.

In closing, I will reiterate that we intend to do our due diligence. We need to see the ramifications, identify the new NAFTA's weaknesses and its implications for future trade deals, and ensure that there is a plan for those sectors and industries that have been left out. We need to do what we can to mitigate negative impacts.

At the end of the day, Conservatives want the best deal for Canadians, but we also know that Canadians depend on us to find out where this deal falls short. That is what we will do at committee. Along with my colleagues, I look forward to giving the new NAFTA a thorough examination.

• (1830)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will reiterate the benefits for our aluminum in case the member was not here when I mentioned them before.

Canada, Mexico and the U.S. are in the agreement. They are in North America.

The member talked about dumping, but that could happen now, as there is no protection. However, there would be some protection after this agreement is ratified, and a lot more than there is now.

The regional value content would go from 62.5% to 75% for cars and light trucks. If a company in Mexico, the United States or Canada buys aluminum, 70% of it has to be North American content. A car company cannot bring that from China. Also, 75% of the seven core products have to be made from our aluminum. As well, aluminum can be dumped into products, but often the car producers themselves buy the aluminum for all the parts producers because they have the economy of scale and can buy it more cheaply.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, I guess I would say I was not in the House. You are correct. I was at committee, so I may not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. member to direct his comments to the Chair and not the individual member.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, I will put it this way. In April 2019, before the decision to ratify was made, the U.S. International Trade Commission produced a 400-page document on the likely impacts on the U.S. economy and specific sectors. By contrast, the Liberals have yet to produce an economic impact study for us to review. We are not trying to hold up the deal. We support trade in principle, but it is our democratic duty to study this deal in depth in the best interests of all Canadians.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his very fine speech.

I am pleased to hear him say that the Bloc Québécois is working hard on the aluminum file. The best part is that initially the Liberals were saying that we were the only ones working on the aluminum file. Today, the Conservatives and the NDP are working with us and the Deputy Prime Minister is now open to our proposals. I think that is fantastic.

Does my hon. colleague agree that the Liberals are currently on their own in this aluminum file?

[English]

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois members have made a compelling case for a thorough study of this omission. That is one reason why we intend to give the new NAFTA a thorough study.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have a quick question for the member for Essex.

We see when imbalances take place. Locally, we see the problem of the United States moving ahead with single-event sports gaming in Michigan. The State of New York has already moved ahead. We have seen the casino industry look at what is taking place in the Niagara Falls area. I would ask the member about that.

We have a simple amendment to the Criminal Code that would allow each province to make its own decision with respect to having single-event sports betting as opposed to it being done on the black market.

We are worried about losing jobs and also investments. I would like to hear the member's thoughts on that issue.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, I am very much looking forward to that bill coming forward and to giving it some thought.

I will finish up by saying that although the government is anxious for us to push this new NAFTA through, rubber-stamping it, so to speak, it is vital that we do our due diligence and dig into the details, in the House and all necessary locations.

The Liberals have already sold out the dairy industry. When the new NAFTA is renegotiated in five years, who will they sell out next?

Government Orders

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I give the floor to the next speaker, I simply want to mention that I will have to interrupt him before the end of his speech since we are running out of time.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

• (1835)

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, it goes without saying that you should feel free to do your job as required.

The new NAFTA is not all bad for Canada or, more specifically, for the rest of Canada. It preserves the cultural exemption for Quebec, it protects the automotive industry and steel producers in Ontario, it protects Canada against legal action by American investors. However, the members of the Bloc Québécois are here to represent Quebec, its economy, its workers and its regions. Unfortunately, once again, in the negotiations with the United States, all the concessions made by the Government of Canada were made on the backs of Quebecers. For the sake of Quebec's regional economic development, the Bloc Québécois cannot accept that. Let me explain why.

First there is aluminum. I asked around and I spoke with my colleague from Repentigny to find out what the president of the Aluminium Association of Canada, Mr. Simard, said. I think it bears repeating.

My colleague, the member for Joliette, asked him whether he would rather have had an agreement like the one the steel sector got. Mr. Simard's answer was clear. He gave that answer in this institution, not in this room, but at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance. He said that this was what the association had asked for and was about to get, thanks to the efforts of Ms. Freeland and her team. However, at the end of the negotiations, Mexico said yes to steel but no to aluminum for strategic reasons.

That strategy is obvious.

Canada sacrificed Quebec's aluminum industry in its negotiations. Because of Canada's decision to let Chinese aluminum flood the North American market by way of Mexico, six aluminum smelter expansion projects in Sept-Îles, Jonquière and Alma may not go ahead.

What is the government promising? It is hinting that compensation is likely. If I represented an industry, that would hardly come as a surprise. That money can be taken and maybe used to build those industries elsewhere. This could be a disaster with severe economic consequences for 60,000 workers.

Businesses across Quebec, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and the North Shore are suffering the consequences of the Trudeau government's refusal to protect Quebec's aluminum. As a result, \$6 billion in investments will be put off. The consequences will be devastating.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. parliamentary secretary on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member across the way has, not once but twice, referred to names of members of Parliament. He should be sticking to titles, or ridings, or ministries and so forth.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I apologize for not having caught that right away.

[Translation]

I would remind the member not to use the names of sitting members of Parliament.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I would really like to know when I did that. I spoke about Mr. Simard, who is not a member of the House but who represents the association. I also spoke about my colleagues from Joliette and Repentigny.

An hon. member: Yes, but he quoted Mr. Simard who spoke about Ms. Freeland.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. That does not make any difference. The member must not use the minister's name even when quoting someone else. He must use her title instead.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue can continue his speech before I interrupt him again.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I was saying that over \$6 billion worth of investments could be delayed, which would have a significant impact on the construction industry, suppliers and workers across Quebec.

That is not all. Another industry has been left out in the cold and is not getting nearly enough attention in the House: the forestry industry. Unfortunately, the Canada—United States—Mexico agreement has not led to resolution of the softwood lumber conflict, far from it. This conflict has been going on for too long. Washington's unfair tariffs on a range of forestry products are at the root of the softwood lumber crisis. Quebec's new forestry regime was developed specifically to address the United States' demands and to ensure that Quebec would not be accused of having illegal subsidies.

We know the softwood lumber crisis is cyclical and has been for at least 20 years. Quebec has suffered the consequences of sanctions that did not necessarily target its industry. Of course we stand united with Canada's industry, but that hurt us, especially in the early 2000s.

Canada prefers the status quo even though U.S. tariffs have led to the closure of several mills. I would note that problems in the forestry industry affect the vitality of many Quebec towns and cities. These problems have had a devastating impact on the economy of Nédélec, a town in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, where I am from.

The forestry industry accounts for nearly 30,000 direct and indirect jobs in Quebec, mostly in the regions, but also in the cities. These businesses invest an enormous amount of money to increase their productivity while lowering their production costs. To manage that, they have to be financially and generously supported by innovative Government of Canada projects. To remain competitive, we must absolutely modernize our plants, and to do that, we will have to think about improving programs, including those delivered by Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.

I have enough time to talk about supply management. The new NAFTA weakens our agricultural model in Quebec, and the federal government made a massive concession. This saddens me to no end. By 2024, our dairy producers will lose 18% of their domestic market to foreign production. That represents an annual loss of \$450 million.

I found out that in my region, producers living through this economic uncertainty have started selling some of their quotas. As far as I am concerned, that is the beginning of the end. This shows how much uncertainty this free trade agreement is creating for our farmers.

As if that were not enough, this agreement will also let Americans have a say on our commercial practices. I find that simply unacceptable. How can Canada allow the Americans to use export penalties to block our trade with other global markets? This will limit the ability of Canadian products to compete with those of other countries.

What can we do? First, the compensation package for the new NAFTA will have to provide for millions of dollars in compensation for the losses suffered by dairy producers as a result of previous bad agreements. I remind members that if these producers were asked to choose between receiving compensation or being fairly rewarded for their work, they would tell you that compensation is not their choice.

Next, we will have to require that the Americans—

• (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I must interrupt the hon. member, but he will have three minutes the next time the House debates this matter.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal government's track record on ethical breaches is astounding. In the previous Parliament, Canadians were treated to the SNC-Lavalin scandal, when the Prime Minister politically interfered in the criminal prosecution of his friends at SNC-Lavalin. Canadians were shown the finance minister and his forgotten French villa. "Clamscam" reinforced the fact that the Liberals looked out for their own when the

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fisheries minister awarded a lucrative fishing licence to family. Of course Canadians learned of the Prime Minister's illegal vacation to billionaire island. Just this weekend, we learned that the bills were still being paid, many years later.

The hallmarks of ethical breaches and cover-ups are the record of the government. Now the Prime Minister has mandated his ministers to operate to the highest ethical standards, but they continue their disregard for ethics by continuing to block investigations and award sole-source contracts to former Liberal MPs.

The lack of clarity and prudence in the decision-making exhibited by the Liberal government has deeply impacted the great residents in my riding of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Flooding along the St. Lawrence River has caused massive amounts of damage to homes and businesses, leaving residents with a great deal of anxiety and fear for what is sure to be a repeat this spring. People are seeking answers from the government and the International Joint Commission, but are met with a continued theme of opaque transparency and decision-making. To date, the IJC and its representatives have refused to hold public meetings in my constituency or appoint someone who has feet in the street or real boots on the ground experience with the St. Lawrence flooding. I am continuing my calls on the minister and the IJC to hold open meetings and work to find solutions for those affected by the flooding.

Transparency and prudence are of the utmost importance in good governance and a governing party ought to be constantly reaching for those goals, but sadly my constituents just do not see that happening. The County Road 43 expansion project is extremely important to the residents of my riding, but the government has shut them out when they seek answers and transparency.

More than 18,000 vehicles travel on County Road 43 daily. Expanding the road to four lanes would increase the safety of motorists and pedestrians and improve access to local businesses. This project is important not only for the Municipality of North Grenville, but for the entire region.

The project was ranked by the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville as its top priority and was approved for funding at the municipal level. Thanks to the work of Minister Steve Clark, the local MPP, and the Ontario PC government, provincial funding was approved last summer. Any inquiry into timelines for federal funding has gone unanswered.

How can Canadians be expected to have confidence in their government and public institutions when the government, marred by scandal after scandal, seems increasingly separated from the lives of everyday Canadians? The public trust can start being repaired if the Liberal government opens up and stops blocking the full investigation into its corruption and begins to put Canadians first, before its friends.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1845)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes asked a question about flooding, but did not mention climate change at all. He talked about the costs of climate change but did not address the core subject, which is the fact that climate change is a crisis that will cost us.

I am here to talk about something a little different. I welcome this opportunity to reiterate our government's commitment to transparent government and making Canada's voice heard at the UN, notably through our candidacy to serve on the United Nations Security Council.

This government is making an important contribution to a safer, more just, prosperous and sustainable world. We have renewed our long-standing commitment to UN peacekeeping and are leading innovative approaches to advance conflict resolution and peace building.

We know that working together is the only way to make progress in this uncertain world. The Security Council is among the most important fora for addressing international peace and security challenges and, if elected, Canada will be a committed voice for building a better future by working together.

Our officials have been working arduously to prepare to assume the responsibilities associated with a potential term on the council, should we be elected. As a positive, constructive and responsible contributor to this important body, we have a heavy responsibility and we must be ready to engage on a wide range of issues of international peace and security. Canada would serve on the Security Council alongside key world powers, providing direct access to advance our priorities and interests bilaterally and around the world.

Global Affairs Canada is arranging for specialized training on Security Council working methods, procedures and related issues, which will equip our teams in Ottawa and New York to engage on key global security issues relating to the council's work. Building up our teams on Security Council matters is a valuable activity irrespective of the result of the vote on our candidacy, since Canada engages with the council in many other ways as an active UN member state.

The planned training is commonplace among Security Council candidates, a majority of whom undertake similar training from the same organization each year, including seven of the 10 elected members of the council. The supplier identified so far, New York-based Security Council Report, is a highly specialized, reputable non-profit organization with the mission of advancing transparency, effectiveness and accountability of the council. It is the leading provider of training in council procedures and working methods, and nations competing with Canada for the same UNSC seat have already received this training.

The standard procedures have been followed in line with Treasury Board contracting policies in the development of the planned training. No contract has been awarded yet. Instead, Global Affairs Canada pre-identified Security Council Report as a qualified supplier, given the highly specialized nature of the training and the or-

ganization's unique capabilities. To be clear, Mr. Rock's work at Security Council Report is in a volunteer capacity, and he derives no financial or other benefits from any contract awarded by Canada or anyone else.

I am proud of everything our officials are doing to prepare to make the most of a potential term at the Security Council.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, Canadians are concerned. Just today, the Peschisolido report was released by the Ethics Commissioner as part of a litany of ethical concerns and breaches coming from the Liberal benches. When it comes to Mr. Rock, who seemed confused about why there would be an ethical question raised, we know that Mr. Rock took a free trip to a fishing lodge owned by the Irving family when he was serving in this place.

The concerns Canadians have about ethics, the confusion as to why this would be raised by the official opposition, speaks to the reason why we will continue to apply a vigorous eye to all of the government's actions. Any issues that give rise to concern will be referred to the Ethics Commissioner when appropriate.

• (1850)

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, the government has presented Canada's candidacy to serve on the UN Security Council because we believe Canada's voice matters, and that we can help the council build a safer and more peaceful world.

To prepare for these responsibilities, Global Affairs Canada has followed routine, transparent contracting procedures, posting a notice proposing training from a highly reputable organization that has helped prepare most existing elected Security Council members. We will continue to engage with multilateral organizations and Canada's place within them.

TAXATION

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canadians sent a clear message to the government in November of 2019. They wanted the government to work across parties in the best interests of Canadians.

On December 9, 2019, the Minister of Finance announced his proposal to change the tax system for people making \$140,000 or less. If the government proceeds with the changes as announced, it would cost Canadians a staggering \$6 billion annually, yet 47% of Canadians will receive no benefit whatsoever from this tax change. Many of the people who will be left out are those who live in poverty and are in the greatest need.

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New Democrats believe that there are better ways to invest these funds to get help to families who urgently need it, and we are proposing an alternative. If this tax cut were capped so that all benefits would go to those earning less than \$90,000 a year, it would free up \$1.6 billion from the government's projected cost to invest in other priorities, such as dental care.

According to estimates prepared by the Parliamentary Budget Officer, providing dental coverage for uninsured families making less than \$90,000 would cost \$1.8 billion in the first year and approximately \$830 million per year for every year after that. This program would give immediate help to 4.3 million people and save our health care system tens of millions of dollars every year.

Almost 20% of Canadians avoid the dentist every year because of the cost, and emergency room visits due to dental emergencies cost taxpayers at least \$155 million annually. Often, these visits do not address underlying dental issues and are followed by return visits and ongoing pressures on our health care system. Also, I have met seniors who told me that they have had to blend their solid foods into liquid because they are unable to chew the food properly.

The program the NDP is proposing would save households at least \$1,200 annually and still allow the government to push forward the proposed tax cut to families earning less than \$90,000 a year. We believe that this is a constructive proposal that would make a meaningful difference in the lives of millions of Canadians, particularly the people who are in greatest need.

The government's intention was to have Parliament vote on its proposed tax changes on December 11, 2019, before Parliament adjourned for the holiday season. That vote was deferred after the NDP proposed the changes to it. New Democrats are still waiting for a response from the government on our proposal. We are encouraged by the mention of dental care in the throne speech as an idea to explore, and this proposal is a great opportunity to give meaning and action to those words and demonstrate a real commitment to helping Canadians who need relief now.

It is a chance for the Liberals to show Canadians that they are willing to work with the opposition in a minority government to deliver much-needed services to Canadians.

My question for the government is this: Will it be willing to work with the NDP to deliver dental services to seniors, children and families making \$90,000 or less?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, all Canadians deserve to share in the benefits that come from an economy that is strong and growing, and right from day one, our government has taken action to ensure that all Canadians have the opportunity to do so.

We created the Canada child benefit, which is providing more money to the families that need it most. By doing so, we have helped lift nearly 300,000 kids out of poverty and given them a better start in life. Also, because we boosted the guaranteed income supplement, close to 900,000 seniors are now benefiting from greater income security, 70% of whom are women. This helped lift 57,000 vulnerable seniors out of poverty.

With the introduction of Canada's first-ever national housing strategy, a 10-year, \$40-billion investment that will give more Canadians a place to call home, we are lifting 530,000 families out of housing need and reducing chronic homelessness by 50%.

We also introduced a tax break for the middle class that took effect in 2016. That tax cut is benefiting more than nine million hard-working Canadians. Today, a typical middle-class family of four will receive, on average, about \$2,000 more each year as a result of this middle-class tax cut and the Canada child benefit.

In December, as one of the first actions of our new mandate, our government proposed to lower taxes further for the middle class and those working hard to join it. Specifically, the proposal is to increase the basic personal amount that people can earn before having to pay federal income tax. By raising the basic personal amount to \$15,000 by 2023, we would be cutting taxes for close to 20 million Canadians. It would also mean that nearly 1.1 million more Canadians, low-income Canadians, to be precise, would no longer be paying any federal income tax at all.

By 2023, single individuals would save close to \$300 in taxes each year, while families, including those led by single parents, would save nearly \$600 in taxes per year. To ensure the tax relief goes to the people who need it the most, we would phase out the benefits of the increased basic personal amount for wealthy individuals.

With more money to cover their necessities, Canadians can focus on new opportunities for themselves and their families and less on simply making ends meet. It is what our plan to help Canada's middle class grow and prosper is all about, and our plan is working.

● (1855)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, I am pretty sure the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport did not hear my question. My question was whether the government would be willing to work with the NDP to deliver dental care to seniors, children and families making \$90,000 or less.

I am so disappointed that the government did not even bother to ensure that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance would respond to this question. Instead, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport read off a message box, without answering the actual question I posed to him.

It is not a good way forward for the government, a minority government, to operate in this way. I am very disappointed.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, the hon. member even referenced the Minister of Health's response with regard to this.

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As she is fighting for those most vulnerable, I am outlining the government's strategy to helping those most vulnerable in our society and how we have fought from day one to reduce poverty. We are ahead of our poverty reduction targets. We are fighting for those most vulnerable, not only in St. Catharines but across the country, and I am proud of that fact.

Our plan is working. We can do better. We can always fight to do better. I know the hon. member referenced the Minister of Health's comments with regard to dental care, and it is an exciting opportunity to work on for the future.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:59 p.m.)

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