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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 23, 2023

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)
[English]

AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING ORDERS

The House resumed from May 12 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise and address the House.

Whenever we talk about the Standing Orders and procedures, I have a keen interest in the issue. I know there are some members, I would suggest probably more than most, who follow the procedures of the House and take a very keen interest when it comes time to change the rules.

Every year after an election, we have set in our rules the opportunity to review our Standing Orders. As I have in the past, I know the member for Elmwood—Transcona, who is proposing the motion we have before us, has had the opportunity to address the Standing Orders.

The Standing Orders are of great importance to all of us. They are one of the things that add to the fundamental principles of our democratic process in the debates and proceedings that take place right here inside this beautiful chamber. In representing our constituents back home from all regions of the country, we are able to do a lot of wonderful things through this chamber. Those wonders are often achieved through the rules in our proceedings, the Standing Orders.

What the member is proposing is a substantial change to our Standing Orders. Let there be no doubt about that. I can appreciate that the member is trying to get some certainty or is trying, from his perspective, to simplify the whole issue of confidence and what determines a confidence vote.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity, both in opposition and now in government, and hopefully in government for a few more years, to understand and appreciate the importance of a confidence vote. When the Prime Minister became leader of the party,

we talked a lot about how members vote. It is one of the reasons why, when we have private members' bills, we will often see members of the Liberal caucus voting in different ways. It is because the vote is not made to be compulsory, as if we have to vote as a caucus, generally speaking, on private members' bills.

There are some circumstances where the votes are whipped such that it is, in fact, compulsory for members to vote as a team, if I can put it that way. That has been long-held parliamentary tradition, whether it is here in Ottawa or in provincial jurisdictions. There are some areas where there is very little wiggle room and other areas where, as I pointed out with the private members' bills, there is a lot more grace given to members in what they feel personally about a particular issue.

Let me give members the ultimate example regarding a confidence vote. We all know the Government of Canada has to present a budget. That budget will have a series of days for debate, and after that debate comes to a conclusion, it will then come to a vote.

I am not aware of any political party here in Ottawa, whether it is that of the current Prime Minister or the previous prime minister, Stephen Harper, or aware of any premier in my years of experience at the Manitoba legislature, whether from NDP governments or Progressive Conservative governments, allowing any latitude to be given whatsoever on a budget vote. I realize the consequence and significance of mandatory voting with one's team. In fact, when I was first elected back in 1988, there was an election because of a confidence vote. There was a razor-thin majority at the time, and one government member voted against the government, which precipitated an election call. That enabled me to get elected back in 1988.

• (1110)

That was my very first experience with regard to the importance of confidence votes. A confidence vote, if it goes negative, will bring down the government. In 1986 the government had a majority, and in that situation back in 1988, because of one individual, that majority was lost.

Today, in a minority situation, parties have to come together. There is an agreement of sorts between the governing Liberals and the NDP. I believe there is a fairly decent understanding between the two entities in recognizing that Canadians do not want an election now. They want to see more co-operation take place on the floor of the House of Commons on different initiatives.

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We are seeing that. We are seeing co-operation in areas such as the dental plan. We are seeing co-operation in many of the different discussions between departments on policies, legislation and so forth. I see that as a positive thing. That is what Canadians want. At the end of the day, when we want to change a rule, especially a rule of this nature, I recommend to my colleague from Elmwood—Transcona, who is very genuine and sincere in what he is proposing, that there needs to be more discussion before it even comes to the floor because of the impact it would have on other aspects of the Standing Orders.

I can see this in legislation we passed as a government. I am thinking of our child care legislation. Even though many would argue it was not a confidence vote, there was no doubt that the government, with absolute certainty, wanted to see that legislation pass. We made it very clear that the expectation of the government was to see that legislation pass. However, even if the legislation had not passed, it would not necessarily have triggered an election, because of the traditions of the House.

When does an election get triggered? We have a budget introduced every year, we have throne speeches and we have budget implementation legislation. Those are all well-established, traditional votes that have taken place in parliaments here in Canada, federally and provincially, whereby if the vote is lost, it causes the Governor General or the Lieutenant Governor to take action. In a minority situation, some might argue that the Lieutenant Governor or the Governor General has the option to look to the official opposition or the next party with the largest number of seats to see if, in fact, parties can be put together to form a government. A lot depends on where we are in the mandate.

There are a lot of issues out there that are unknown. Today, there is a lot of stability, as we know what those confidence votes are. We know those confidence votes take place every year at different parts of the year. I think that provides a high sense of accountability.

This is a very lengthy motion. I appreciate the effort the member put into it, but I have not been convinced that it is strong enough to change the status quo, prorogation and so forth. I believe the system has worked well for us in the past. It gets parties to come together to negotiate, to talk and to work on agreements. We have had agreements with all different political parties, depending on the type of legislation we are debating. It is not just with one opposition party.

• (1115)

The current system allows for the type of stability Canadians want to see and expect of the government. It obligates us to have a higher sense of co-operation. I can tell members that it can be frustrating. I have stood up on many occasions to talk about the frustrations of being in a minority situation. However, I accept it in the hope that common sense will prevail on the floor of the House with respect to trying to get legislative and budgetary measures through so that all Canadians can be better served.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and honour to rise in the House to speak to Motion No. 79, as introduced by the member for Elmwood—Transcona in an effort to amend the Standing Orders of this place. It certainly is an intriguing motion. I will be quite honest: I enjoyed reading it and

have enjoyed following the debate that has thus far taken place in this House.

While I give credit to the member for introducing the motion and precipitating this debate, I find myself in a position to speak against it. That is not to say that it is not a worthwhile conversation, because it is. Rather, it is the fact that this is not the way the Standing Orders of this House ought to be amended. As I have said in this place and elsewhere, such as at the procedure and House affairs committee, changes to the Standing Orders should only be done after a broad consensus has been found among the recognized political parties. In this case, that consensus has not been found.

I would point to my own opposition to this during the March to May 2017 standing order standoff at the procedure and House affairs committee. At the time, my friend from Waterloo was the government House leader and tried to unilaterally force massive changes to the Standing Orders of this House, to the opposition of Conservative, Bloc and NDP members of Parliament. In fact, we had a full consensus among the opposition parties: We were in opposition to that.

Members will know that this is not the first time actions have been precipitated unilaterally to amend our Standing Orders. Members of the Liberal backbench tried to do so with Motion No. 231 in a previous parliament when they were upset and frustrated by years of Liberal leadership preventing them from speaking their minds. We also all know that the current government unilaterally, with the support of its coalition partners in the NDP, made changes to the Standing Orders this past June, not only without consensus but with the direct opposition of both the Conservative and Bloc members.

This motion deals with a number of issues. Among them is prorogation. I need not remind this House, but I will anyway, that the 2015 Liberal platform stated, “we will not use prorogation to avoid difficult political circumstances.” What happened? In 2020, the WE Charity scandal happened, and as the former finance minister was forced to resign, the Prime Minister himself was implicated in that scandal and prorogued Parliament to avoid responsibility for his actions, which was another promise broken.

In the very short time that I have, less than 10 minutes, I certainly cannot go through the entire history of the confidence convention, though I know colleagues would be interested in hearing that, but there is a certain amount of nuance and ambiguity that surrounds it, and I do not believe this motion will effectively clarify that much-needed nuance.

At its essence, the confidence convention requires that the prime minister of the day hold the confidence of the House of Commons, meaning a majority of members in this place. It has of course been contentious over time, having a number of challenges. I cannot go into the history over the last 45 parliaments, but one important precedent that must be noted is that of the King-Byng affair. We must also look at provincial examples and the 1968 vote in this House, where there was a subsequent vote noting that a previous vote was not in fact a confidence motion.

I am a strong believer in what has traditionally been seen as the three categories that make up a confidence motion. The first category is that the budget or financial bills of a budgetary nature are clear expressions of the confidence or lack of confidence of the House of Commons. The second category is what would be expressed through an opposition day motion or what we also know as a supply day motion. The third category is the Speech from the Throne at the beginning of each session of Parliament, which clearly lays out the government's agenda and proposals for that session.

As the House will know, one of the great experts in this country on parliamentary procedure and the confidence convention is the late Hon. Eugene Forsey, who was a Liberal senator and a CCF activist prior to his appointment to the other place. In his report, which he co-authored with G.C. Eglington, entitled "The Question of Confidence in Responsible Government", he wrote:

• (1120)

Once in the Standing Orders a convention would suffer from the worst of all defects. It would be inflexible and cast in one form of words. But it would not be enforceable by the Courts. We also beg to doubt whether it would be constitutionally lawful under Part V of the Constitution Act, 1982 to state many of the conventions in the Standing Orders of one House of the Parliament.

I encourage all members to reflect on these words from the late Senator Forsey as we debate this motion.

The confidence convention is indeed constitutional. I would draw the attention of the House to the Constitution Act, 1867 with these short 12 words, "with a Constitution similar in Principle to that of the United Kingdom." With those 12 words, much of the structure of our Constitution, of our Parliament is developed.

The Standing Orders, however, are a matter of procedure, not necessarily constitutionality. In this place, we rely on a number of authorities to guide the procedure of the House. I would draw the House's attention to Bosc and Gagnon, page 49, where it is written:

The Speaker does not decide what constitutes a matter of confidence. Successive Speakers have stated that it is not for the Chair to interfere to prevent debate, or a vote, on a question relating to the issue of confidence, unless the motion being put forward is clearly out of order on procedural grounds.

We would be asking, through this motion, for the Speaker to enforce a standing order relating to confidence, while at the same time not deciding what would constitute a question of confidence.

Similarly, we all have our favourite authorities in this place. My personal favourite is Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, sixth edition, and I would draw the House's attention to paragraph 168, where it is written:

The determination of the issue of confidence in the government is not a question of procedure or order, and does not involve the interpretive responsibilities of the Speaker. Following the recommendations of the Special Committee on Standing Orders and Procedure as well as those of the Special Committee on the Reform of

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the House of Commons..., the House removed references in the Standing Orders which described votable motions on allotted days as questions of confidence. The committees concluded that matters of confidence should at all times be clearly subject to political determination. Motions of no-confidence should not be prescribed in the rules.

I would draw the House's attention to that very specific report of the McGrath committee. It says, "We repeat that a question of confidence should be expressed in precise terms in the motion, and not be prescribed as such by the Standing Orders."

I agree with the work of the McGrath committee, and I agree with the determination that this is inherently a political decision, a political matter and not one that ought to be left to the determination of the inflexible Standing Orders.

I would note as well, when we talk about prorogation, that the rules that already exist related to prorogation are not being followed anyway. As colleagues will know, following the last prorogation, the procedure and House affairs committee undertook a study of that prorogation. At every single turn, the Liberal government prevented us from having a meaningful report on that matter. In fact, the Liberal government filibustered that committee for 100 days to prevent us hearing from the Prime Minister, who was the one and only person who knew in his own mind why prorogation happened and who was unwilling to do so.

I respect the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona in bringing forward this motion, because it is indeed a debate that must happen. I would enjoy a conversation with the member in another venue, perhaps over a hot coffee or a cold beverage, to discuss this matter further.

However, I would repeat the words of the late Senator Forsey, "Questions of confidence, and their definition, are best kept out of the Standing Orders all together."

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning, we are debating the infamous Motion No. 79, which was moved by the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona. Let us just say that I was immediately wary when the NDP moved this motion that seeks to make procedural changes. It is important to remember that, not so long ago, the NDP supported the government in the House when the government wanted to make the hybrid Parliament permanent. The NDP agreed that members should be able to stay home all year round without ever coming to Parliament. The NDP even agreed that ministers should be able to participate in parliamentary work virtually without having to show up in the House, without having to answer questions from journalists or members of the House. That is odd.

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The NDP has had an agreement with the government for months. From what we have been told, under this agreement, the NDP has promised to support the government on confidence votes so that it can stay in office until the end of its mandate. In return, the NDP can expect the government to implement certain measures and programs of the NDP's choosing. As a result, the NDP now supports the government every time it curtails debate in the House by imposing gag order after gag order on bills that, under normal circumstances, would be studied before taking effect.

As I said, I was very hesitant when I saw NDP Motion No. 79, which deals with procedure. I was wondering what the NDP had come up with this time. I must admit I was pleasantly surprised. I am guessing that the NDP members are tired of being the Liberals' lackeys and cannot take it anymore. They are trying to grow a backbone by putting forward a motion that might switch up the dynamic somewhat.

Before this well-known agreement was forged between the government and the NDP, almost every vote had us questioning whether it would be a vote of confidence. It became the question of the day. Members would wake up in the morning having to vote on a government motion, yet we did not even know whether it was a vote of confidence. Reporters would ask that question of Liberal MPs right outside the House, and every time they would say they did not know. We did not know whether voting for or against the motion would bring down the current government. That is crazy. It goes to show how the current government abused its power. That is not as common now, because the NDP cannot be bothered and always votes with the government.

I was quite surprised to see the NDP moving something that would change procedure and lead to a little less abuse on the part of the government. One of the objectives of motion Motion No. 79 is to keep the government from unilaterally proroguing Parliament without consequence, something that has happened all too often recently. Some prorogations felt like the government was sending MPs home because it no longer wanted them in Parliament.

No examples come to mind, but there could be very good reasons for proroguing Parliament. However, it is not something to be done on a whim. No one can just wake up one morning and shut down Parliament because they do not wish to hear from the opposition. That is not how it works. Voters elect MPs precisely to send them to Parliament. Generally speaking, the party with the most seats forms government, and MPs in the other parties ensure that the government does not do too bad a job by keeping an eye on it and asking questions. That is why people vote.

To prorogue Parliament this way virtually amounts to the government saying that what people voted for does not count. That pretty much sums it up. If the government does not want to be held accountable, it can simply shut down Parliament. We have seen this happen over and over again in our history. While the government might very well prorogue Parliament for legitimate reasons, the examples that come to my mind suggest that it usually happens for the wrong reasons.

Let me start with an example from 1873. Canada was founded in 1867, so it happened not long after that, when the infamous Pacific scandal broke. Who was at the centre of this scandal? It was none

other than Sir John A. Macdonald, founder of Canada's Confederation, the same person described by the Minister of Foreign Affairs as someone whose life history was so wonderful it deserved exploring.

• (1130)

She was so proud of his legacy. I never heard her mention Mr. Macdonald after that. I urge her to learn a little more about his legacy, because the Pacific scandal is one aspect of it that was pretty nasty. He even had to resign over the matter when Parliament resumed sitting.

In 2002, the House was also prorogued, this time under a Liberal government. Why was the House prorogued? There was a parliamentary committee that wanted to look into what happened with the sponsorship scandal. That was a good reason to shut down Parliament. The Liberals wanted to make sure that no one would find out what happened with the sponsorship scandal. That was what the Liberals wanted, but it might not have been what ordinary citizens, opposition members and the justice system wanted.

In 2003, again under the Liberals, there was another prorogation, once again because of the sponsorship scandal. This time, the government wanted to prevent the Auditor General from tabling her report in the House. The Liberals did not want to know what the Auditor General had to say about the sponsorship scandal. I have mentioned three prorogations so far.

Then we get to 2008, a bit closer to where we are now. Why did the House prorogue? A coalition of opposition members formed to bring down the government because they had lost confidence in the government. The Bloc Québécois made a commitment to support that coalition without necessarily being part of it. The government decided to prorogue the House to prevent its own defeat.

In 2010, there was another prorogation under a Conservative prime minister. Why was Parliament prorogued? Officially, this was done to allow people to enjoy the winter Olympics. If that is true, then perhaps Parliament could also shut down for a hockey game. If we want people to watch the playoffs, then we cannot keep Parliament open. It makes no sense. It is as silly as that. It was decided that Parliament would shut down for the Olympics. I am not making this up. It is ridiculous.

The real reason is that, at the time, people were wondering what happened in Afghanistan. They wanted to know whether prisoners had been mistreated. We were seeing pictures of what had happened in Guantanamo in the United States, and people were concerned. They wanted to know whether things were being done the same way in Canada and whether things had been allowed to happen like that. Unfortunately, rather than answer those questions and let things run their course, the government decided to shut down Parliament.

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The last time Parliament was prorogued, the most recent time, was in 2020. This happened under the same government we have now, the Liberals. They shut Parliament down because of the pandemic. What I find odd is that they also called an election because of the pandemic. They were saying that the government could not operate in 2020 because we were in the midst of a pandemic but that an election could be called in 2021. That is a bit odd. We all know that the real reason was the WE Charity scandal.

People wanted to know why the Prime Minister's friends and family had benefited from public funds. It was a valid question. How is it that the government wanted to give \$1 billion to a foundation that was very closely associated with the Trudeau government? In the end, it turned out that the Prime Minister's family and friends were very closely associated with that foundation.

Recent history shows that, generally speaking, prorogation may not be done for the public's benefit, so it would be useful to have a better framework for prorogation, as the member opposite is proposing.

It is a shame I only have a minute left, because I would have liked to talk more about confidence votes. To be honest, it is ridiculous getting up in the morning and not knowing whether we will have a confidence vote that day.

It is sad that the concept is not defined. We do not know what a confidence vote is. It is simply a tradition. It is a tradition to have a confidence vote at budget time and after the Speech from the Throne. It would be good to define the concept a little better so it cannot be abused like the Liberals have abused it. Then perhaps the NDP would not have to carry water for the Liberals as much and could finally show some backbone.

If it helps the NDP show some backbone, of course we will vote in favour of the motion. If it makes future governments be less likely to abuse procedure and provides more transparency for the public, we are going to vote in favour of it for sure.

• (1135)

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the motion from my hon. colleague, the member for Elmwood—Transcona and the NDP critic for democratic reform.

The most crucial piece of this motion is directly related to Canada's democracy, which Canadians truly value and is marked across the world for how important and stable it has been. However, the power of prorogation and the power to deem motions a matter of confidence, which is wholly, willfully and solely used by a prime minister, is a direct concern for the New Democratic Party. We have heard very clearly from both the Liberals and the Conservatives that they would rather keep the status quo and continue a tradition that we believe is truly anti-democratic.

On prorogation, for example, back in 2008, Harper used the power of prorogation to avoid a confidence vote. In 2009, Harper again abused the power of prorogation to end parliamentary debate on the government's complicity in the torture of Afghan detainees and avoid complying with the parliamentary motion to hand over

all documents on the relevant charges. These are serious situations, and no single individual should be allowed to use this power to avoid the kind of democratic justice that the House can provide. Fast-forward to today's government and, in 2020, we saw the Prime Minister use prorogation to end parliamentary investigations into the WE Charity scandal after it resulted in the resignation of his own finance minister. We cannot continue to abuse the powers of this chamber for reasons of political expediency; it is not in the interest of Canadians.

These standing orders are important for Canadians, but they may not know, in many cases, that these powers are vested in such small circles, like the Prime Minister's Office. What we have seen, and continue to see, is this continued tradition by both Liberals and Conservatives to preserve these exclusive powers of a prime minister and continue to centralize authority and power away from Parliament. It is the position of the NDP that it should be this place, the democratically elected members of Canada in this chamber, who should decide some of these things rather than be decided, for political expediency, by whoever sits in the Prime Minister's Office. However, it is clear, with the Liberals' use of prorogation for political expediency, that it has been a long tradition in Canada, as evidenced by Harper's use of it as well.

We have the Conservatives supporting the Prime Minister right now with his perseverance in the protection of his personal power. Why would Conservatives say, every single day in the House, that the Prime Minister is an evil guy and make personal attacks, but then not actually address the systems that uphold these devastating authorities and powers that weigh over Parliament and Canadians?

There is a saying that New Democrats in the House are often reminded of, which is "Liberal, Tory, same old story". I am sure both of these parties have heard this many times before, and it does not take a New Democrat to remind them why we say it. We say it continuously, because it happens right in front of us.

We are seeing the protection of the government and the Prime Minister to hold power that we believe is undemocratic. We are seeing unwavering support from the Conservatives who wish to preserve that power, but why? Well, it is probably because they believe that maybe one day they will be in office again and can then lord that power over Canadians. They could prorogue Parliament again, like Harper did, and they could avoid the accountability and justice that Canadians deserve.

The crux of this issue is ensuring that our democratic institutions actually function for the good of Canada. The exclusive use of prorogation and the exclusive use of declaring motions a matter of confidence is beside that point. Members of Parliament are duly elected by our constituents and citizens. We should not be afraid of those facts.

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● (1140)

If anything, we should empower our democracy, our members of Parliament and our House to continue our parliamentary work, even if it is inconvenient to the government; even if there is a scandal. If anything, it should be said even louder that these powers should not exist because of the direct connection between the scandal and the use of prorogation declaring motions of confidence.

New Democrats stand in favour of our democratic institutions and seek to empower them for everyday people. The Liberals and Conservatives continue the status quo argument that has favoured them for generations. It is time to put an end to this. It is time to ensure that all members vote in favour of this motion.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time I rise in the chamber with you at the helm, I want to say congratulations for all the work you have done in Parliament as a parliamentary secretary and also for your tenure as Speaker in this chamber.

I am glad to speak on this motion, Motion No. 79, from the member for Elmwood—Transcona. I have affectionately referred to this bill as “ending Ottawa’s entitlement to my entitlements” motion, because that is really what this is about. This is about the traditional gatekeepers in this facility who have kept the doors closed against many Canadians, at the same time protecting their self-interests. I will get into that a little bit later.

When prorogation was used by the Prime Minister, it could have been characterized as the “running to your mommy or daddy to protect you from the people around you” bill. They go running to the monarchy to beg for forgiveness. It was the Queen before and now it is the King. It is because “I can’t handle it anymore. Please save me”. It is ridiculous. In a modern democracy we should not have to turn to our mommies and daddies as adults in this place. That is really what it is about. That is what has taken place with prorogation. It has been used to protect someone’s own interests.

I think one of the biggest things that we want to see with this motion is greater accountability to the public so they understand the rules. At the end of the day, prorogation is about, “Well, I just simply don’t have to do it anymore so the rules don’t apply to me. I’ll see you later.” I am sure a lot of Canadians can relate to that. They wish they could prorogue their laundry, their dishes or their awkward conversations with people who they do not want to be around, but they cannot. They have to deal with them.

It is sad because that is really what we are dealing with. I have seen this happen in the worst of circumstances with then prime minister Harper who did not want to deal with the House of Commons at that time and I have seen it with the current Prime Minister when he did not want to deal with the WE scandal, for example. It is a very serious issue, as it is a way of keeping privileges and entitlements. I was thinking about gatekeeping this morning and about protecting entitlements. There is the protection of the entitlements one gets as a prime minister with all the perks. For my Conservative friends, there are the perks of keeping Stornoway and all the privileges there. By the way, Stornoway does have a gate, because it protects the gardener, the butler, the person who is making the meals, and the \$70,000-a-year budget. It has a history of being part of the entitlements that we need to get rid of.

I think that it is really important that people know that prorogation is unique and special at the workplace. People do not get to call a time out in a democracy, which is really what this is: I cannot get my act together. I cannot get my caucus together. I cannot do whatever and I get to call a time out. The problem with that is there are serious issues. One prorogation was over the documents of women and men and issues over Afghanistan. We have that legacy to this day. The devastation to individuals and what took place subsequently would have been shining spotlights on those things. The consequences are still felt now, because we have many Afghanistan men and women who served under our country’s banner who are still in harm’s way. Some still cannot even come to this country because we do not have our act together on that.

The legacy of prorogation goes beyond the moment of the day because all the stuff in the House of Commons ceases. Everything grinds to a halt, which costs money. To the parties who often champion their role of being the custodians of the public purse, the last unnecessary election sent another \$630 million down the drain. A time when Harper did it resulted in a freeze of all of the House of Commons’ operations, along with all of its work, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in that year alone between the studies that would have been done, the people who were flown in for hearings, getting witnesses to come forward and producing reports. All the work that was done in the chamber and all the hours that go into moving bills were basically liquidated at that point in time.

Dozens and dozens of important bills were killed by the Conservatives and the Liberals; some bills had to go on to the next Parliament. That is where the real damage is done. The rest of the world does not get a time out or time off. People do not go running to mommy or daddy to try to figure things out. The world still goes on. The grinding of Parliament starts and the grinding of Senate follows. What that means is that we have to start over.

● (1145)

I cannot say how many of those bills dealt with social justice, women’s rights, housing, the environment and the auto industry. They dealt with a number of things that we are trying to compete with in the world. If the Prime Minister, right now, chose to prorogue this Parliament, we would lose the GST rebate, a modest housing initiative and work on the Competition Bureau. They would all be gone.

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In the committee I sit on, there are 96 witnesses and about 140 who want to work on Bill C-27, Canada's first bill on artificial intelligence. As the entire world is moving beyond us right now, that would be the real consequence. If an election is called because we have to bend a knee to the monarchy again in the system that we have because the Governor General can decide, we would be into another costly election. None of these bills could be brought back unless there was unanimous consent. On top of that, there would be months and months, if not more, perhaps almost a full year, to get back into order the work that would be gone.

That is critical if we are trying to compete with the rest of the world and world events are taking place, as they are now. My heart goes out to those who are suffering due to what is taking place. So many people are suffering. It is not just the wars, it is famine. Canadians are dealing with an opioid crisis. There is a whole series of issues on housing affordability and people cannot afford groceries. The Prime Minister of the day could basically say he is calling a time out, everyone can deal with it on their own and he will keep all of his privileges intact.

What is funny is when that happens, the Prime Minister's salary, the perks of the residence and everything else are not prorogued. They continue. What does not continue is the hard work that is necessary to improve lives. That is why the member for Elmwood—Transcona is onto something here. It is critical that he get some type of recognition because this issue has not gone away.

The member's father, the former member for Elmwood—Transcona, Bill Blaikie, would be proud of him today. I stood in this chamber with Bill Blaikie many times and listened to his statesman approach, which is missing in many respects, and his maturity in trying to work toward trying to better this place and establish some rules, which is the legacy that current member for Elmwood—Transcona is carrying on. That is what Bill often did in this place: He brought sense and logic to it.

At the end of the day, this motion is about creating a balance of rules. It does not end all the rules but improves upon them in taking a credible step forward. That is critical, because we just cannot have what we have today. Imagine if Parliament shut down tomorrow. What is at stake is our lost voices.

I want it to be clear that this is a reasonable, modest, sensible and practical approach to changing the rules. Conservatives and Liberals should think about this. I know they do not often end some of the privileges in this chamber because they think they can constantly switch back and forth. There will be a new day when they are not there and they will be wishing for this legislation, because all their constituents will need it, instead of the ego of the member who occupies the Prime Minister's seat.

With that, I move:

That the motion be amended by replacing the words, "(iii) in Standing Order 45(6)(a)", by adding, after the words "An exception to this rule is", the following: "the division on a confidence motion pursuant to Standing Order 53.2(9) and", with the words, "(iii) in Standing Order 45(4)(b)", by adding after paragraph (v), the following: "(vi) a confidence motion pursuant to Standing Order 53.2(9)."

These are housekeeping amendments to improve this bill and make it even stronger.

• (1150)

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform hon. members that pursuant to Standing Order 93(3), no amendment may be proposed to a private member's motion or to the motion for second reading of a private member's bill unless the sponsor of the item indicates his or her consent.

Therefore, I ask the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona if he consents to this amendment being moved.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I do so consent, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The amendment is in order.

Resuming debate, the hon. parliament secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to what the member was proposing and what a couple of other members of Parliament have put forward. When one minimizes something that has taken place not only in Canada but also around the world, there are justifications for an amendment—

The Speaker: There is a point of order from the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I do believe I heard the member for Winnipeg North debate this motion just 20 or 30 minutes ago. I am just wondering whether the Table could check on that, and I am wondering how this is proceeding at this point.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for raising that point. However, because we are resuming debate on an amendment, the hon. member for Winnipeg North may rise in the House to take part in this debate.

[*English*]

On a point of order, the hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, thank you for your clarity on the matter.

At the same time, I do believe that when one resumes debate, it typically is with the first person who rises in their place, and I did see the member for Elmwood—Transcona rise prior to the member for Winnipeg North. Typically, it would be the first one to rise with respect to a matter, when there is not a set list on a new thing. I did see the member rise before the member for Winnipeg North, so perhaps the member for Elmwood—Transcona should have the first chance to speak to the amendment.

• (1155)

The Speaker: Regrettably, the Chair saw the parliamentary secretary before seeing the member for Elmwood—Transcona. I regret this is the case. It happens from time to time. I do make an honest attempt to make sure I recognize the first person on her or his feet. In this case, I saw the parliamentary secretary.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, do not feel too regretful, as the member for Elmwood—Transcona gets a five-minute right of reply and did get the opportunity to address the chamber for 20 minutes about the issue.

I want to highlight something I did not during my first 10 minutes of debate about the issue. Members talk about and mock, quite frankly, the use of proroguing a session. In fact, it is something that can be justified on occasion. We saw that the last time it was invoked with the current Prime Minister. We need to realize that the pandemic was not something unique to Canada; it was happening around the world. It was important that the House of Commons refocus, from what was taking place in the House to what was happening around the world and the impact it was having on Canadians. That is why there was a need to do it.

Members will recall there was a throne speech that followed, which set the agenda and provided the assurances Canadians were looking for, given the very nature of what was happening in communities from coast to coast to coast. As members will recall, the Government of Canada made it very clear it wanted to have the backs of Canadians. We wanted to focus our attention on a team Canada approach in dealing with the worldwide pandemic.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre has a point of order.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North knows exactly what he is doing, which is being rude and cutting in to the member for Elmwood—Transcona's time. I would like to—

The Speaker: I would like to reassure all members that the member for Elmwood Transcona will have his full five minutes for his right of reply. The House started its session at 11:04 today; Private Members' Business will continue until 12:04.

The parliamentary secretary, the member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as you have indicated, the member does not lose any time whatsoever. This is private members' hour and we will use the full hour, as we have often done.

The emphasis I was trying to make is the fact that the Prime Minister and members of the Liberal caucus made it very clear that we wanted to focus the attention on the pandemic that was hitting Canada from coast to coast to coast. That was the need and it was justified.

At the end of the day, I am somewhat sympathetic to what the member for Elmwood—Transcona is saying, but I do not necessarily believe there is a need to change the rules.

The Speaker: I would like to recognize the member for Elmwood—Transcona for his right of reply.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the members who participated in the debate on this motion, not just today but in the previous hour of debate as well. I do think that it has been an important occasion to reflect on one of the most important tenets of our parliamentary system, including some of the ways it does not serve Canadians well. We have heard, among the arguments on this particular motion, that it is a significant change. I would agree and say that a change of little significance is usually no change at all. I make no apologies for the fact that I am trying to fix something that I think is broken.

The member for Perth—Wellington in particular talked about what it means to unilaterally change the Standing Orders. I want to offer him some reassurance that, in fact, in a minority Parliament, there is no possibility of unilateral changes to the Standing Orders because one cannot pass a change to the Standing Orders without having at least two parties agree. Maybe he meant that changes to the Standing Orders have to be unanimous, but, of course, there is precedent for not having unanimous changes to the Standing Orders. I think that it is important that they not be unilateral. In this case, they would not be. With the Bloc supportive of this motion, all it would take would be for the Conservatives to vote for it. We would have three recognized parties in the House together forming a majority, making what I think is an important change to the Standing Orders.

If we take Conservatives at their word, what they are saying is that they do not want to put any constraints on the prime minister's power without the prime minister's first agreeing, and I think that puts the cart before the horse. As the opposition, we hold the government to account all the time and seek to limit the possibility of abuse of power by the government. We do not ask the government's permission. I find it strange that the Conservative leader is now suddenly saying that he needs the prime minister's permission and agreement before he can do anything to limit his power over this place.

This is the leader of the Conservative Party who just last week challenged the Speaker's authority to make a statement because question period might start late, and who made an appeal to the sanctity of this place. However, he is happy to have the Prime Minister and any future prime minister shut this place down without so much as a wink of parliamentary accountability. Spare me the platitudes about the importance of Parliament, because actions speak louder than words. When we have a vote on this particular measure, it will be an opportunity for Canadians to evaluate the seriousness of the Conservative leader, both when he talks about holding the Prime Minister to account and when he talks about how seriously he takes Parliament and the House of Commons.

Of note is that when the Conservative leader decides to stand up for Parliament, he usually likes to talk not about anything that has happened in recent decades but about the Magna Carta, a document that is about a thousand years old. It is also, incidentally, a document that, when it was signed, democracy was not for the working people whom the Conservative leader pretends to stand up for. It was a bunch of aristocrats getting together to protect their own right to keep the taxes they levied on the backs of working people, on land that belonged to them.

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I do not think it is a coincidence that when the Conservative leader stands up for democracy, he stands up for an aristocratic version that serves his own interests very well. He does this even as he protects the gatekeeping power of the prime minister, to keep the seat warm until he thinks he will get an opportunity to take it so he can abuse those powers in a similar fashion, just as his Conservative predecessor, Stephen Harper, did when that guy sat at the cabinet table. Give us a break on the sanctimony of Parliament as we watch this particular Conservative leader stamp on it when it does not suit his interests and then pretend to care a lot about it suddenly when it does serve his interests. That, fundamentally, is what this is about.

We heard also that it is a political decision, not a decision for the Speaker, on confidence. This does not make it a decision of the Speaker. What it does is make it a decision of the House, whether the House has confidence in the government, instead of leaving it to the prime minister to decide whether the House has confidence in him or not. That is not his decision. It is a decision for this place and it is why, if this motion passes, prime ministers would not be able to prorogue Parliament without having to face a confidence vote either before or after. That is the point. The point is that it is a political decision. It should be a political decision of the House of Commons, as it has always been in the past, not a political decision of the prime minister.

Let us change it. Let us have the Conservatives get behind actually doing something to stop gatekeeping power instead of just ranting against it and hoping it will still be there for them when they get the chance.

• (1200)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the amendment.

If a member participating in person wishes that the amendment be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 25, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1205)

[*English*]

CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.) moved that Bill C-57, An Act to implement the 2023 Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today in support of Bill C-57, an act to implement the 2023 Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine. This is not the first time I have stood in this

House to introduce a new trade agreement, but this trade agreement is special. I rise today to enter into the record the story behind this agreement, because all members in the House, all Canadians and, especially, the 1.3 million members of the Ukrainian Canadian community, should know how it came about.

The story of this agreement begins with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's first visit to Canada back in 2019. During that visit, President Zelenskyy and the Prime Minister announced a mutual intention to modernize the existing Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. Following that announcement, public servants in both countries went about doing their respective homework to prepare for renewed negotiations.

That homework often takes many months. It is just part of the routine for our respective civil servants and trade negotiators. However, there was nothing routine about the way these negotiations unfolded.

First came the pandemic, which stalled progress for over a year. Then, when we were finally ready to launch negotiations, Russian troops were massing along the Ukrainian border.

On January 27, 2022, I held a virtual event with Yulia Svyrydenko, Ukraine's deputy prime minister and minister of economy, to announce the start of negotiations on this agreement. Russia had not yet invaded Ukraine at that time, but it was already clear that the situation was reaching a precipice. The world was seeing that an invasion was imminent, and there was a lot of uncertainty.

A short time before that announcement, I asked my Ukrainian counterpart if she and her government were still willing and able to move forward with negotiations. Her answer was candid and unequivocal: She told me that her government was determined to move ahead, and she told me how much it mattered that Canada was showing confidence in Ukraine at a time when many were beginning to question its resolve.

Ukraine knew then which path it wanted to take for its future. Ukraine had chosen the values of democracy, openness and transparency, as well as a rules-based international order. A sovereign Ukraine was seeking to modernize its infrastructure, its economy and its laws. A comprehensive and progressive free trade agreement would be an important step toward modernization for Ukraine, and Canada would be its gateway.

One month after that announcement, on February 24, 2022, Russia moved in with its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and it invaded for all the reasons I just listed: Ukrainian territorial and economic sovereignty, values of openness and democracy, and a rules-based international order. Vladimir Putin despises all these things, and he could not stand to see Ukraine embrace them, uphold them and blossom into a great modern nation. That is why he invaded Ukraine.

On that day, I knew, the Prime Minister knew and the government knew what we had to do. As long as the government of Ukraine stood, we would stand with it. Since the war began, Canada has committed \$9 billion in military, humanitarian, financial and development assistance to Ukraine. We also understood that standing with Ukraine meant that we would see these trade negotiations through to the end.

Government Orders

• (1210)

At the outset, it was not easy. The war made travel dangerous and even routine calls impossible for our Ukrainian counterparts. Negotiations had barely begun; suddenly, they came to a standstill. They stayed at a standstill for four months, until I travelled for meetings at the OECD in Paris. That is where I met Ukraine's chief negotiator, Taras Kachka.

It is important to understand that we did not plan a formal meeting that day. He and I, along with Canada's chief negotiator, simply sat in the cafeteria of the OECD building and talked. Mr. Kachka recounted the first 120 days of the war and the challenges he had to overcome just to make that one trip to the OECD. I again asked if Ukraine was able and willing to begin negotiations. Mr. Kachka said yes and I said yes, and negotiations began in earnest.

A few weeks later, at the G7 summit in Germany, I finally met Deputy Prime Minister Svyrydenko face to face. We revisited our earlier conversations and talked of how our earlier hope of avoiding the conflict had been so savagely dispelled. We reiterated our mutual intention to reach an agreement, and then we hugged.

The private conversations I had with my Ukrainian counterparts moved me in ways that are hard to describe. If they had told me that they were not yet ready to begin trade talks, of course we would have waited. Canada would have given Ukraine as much time as it needed.

Ukraine's quiet resolve to move forward was unmistakable and unbreakable. These negotiations were driven by the very values of openness and self-determination that Ukrainian soldiers were and are fighting and dying for. I can tell the House today that, even in the midst of an all-consuming war effort, Ukraine's commitment to those values never wavered and neither did Canada's.

[*Translation*]

I am proud to say that this agreement was achieved in record time, a mere 12 months from start to finish. That shows the resolve that Canada and Ukraine share on this crucial matter. This process reached its conclusion just a few weeks ago, when our Prime Minister and President Zelenskyy signed this agreement as part of President Zelenskyy's second visit to Canada. It is my true honour to speak to it in this House.

It is not just that we reached a deal in 12 months; it is that we reached an exceptional deal. In trade circles, it is known as a "high-quality agreement". It includes provisions for trade in services and investments, a binding dispute settlement mechanism to ensure fair treatment, and labour protections. It recognizes the importance of small- and medium-sized businesses, women-owned businesses and indigenous-owned businesses, and it includes environmental protections that are the strongest of those in any of Canada's trade agreements currently on record.

In terms of its contents, it is on par with best practice agreements such as CUSMA, the CPTPP and CETA. With this agreement, Canada becomes the first country to sign a comprehensive trade agreement with Ukraine.

Ukraine has told us that this trade deal would serve as a model for further agreements with other prospective partners. That is one of the reasons I said this agreement is special.

Above all, this agreement is special because Canadians support Ukraine's fight against Putin's barbaric invasion. They demonstrate their support through their government with military, humanitarian and financial aid. However, support for Ukraine is not limited to government alone. Here in Canada, many individuals and organizations are helping by welcoming Ukrainian families fleeing the war. Many more Canadian organizations and businesses want to join that effort, both here at home and in the Ukrainian heartland.

This agreement opens up new avenues for Canadians to support Ukraine. It establishes the rules by which Canadian companies could invest in Ukraine's reconstruction, modernize its infrastructure and create jobs in Ukraine, as well as here in Canada. There are Canadian companies already active in Ukraine, and more are joining as we speak. The Canadian construction firm of Aecon is now forming partnerships in Ukraine under a memorandum of collaboration for the construction of a hydro power plant in Ukraine.

The presence of Canadian companies will help Ukraine persevere amid the strife of war. Thanks to this agreement, more can and will join them. Through all these activities, Canada and a victorious Ukraine will strengthen our shared values in our pursuit of peace, mutual success and prosperity. At the end of the day, trade is not just about business; it is about shared values.

Ukrainians and Canadians both want a free, modern and democratic Ukraine. This trade agreement is a manifestation of those shared values. I am truly proud to have been a part of it.

Today, I urge the House to reaffirm its commitment to those values and its support for Ukraine by ensuring the swiftest possible passage of this bill. *Slava Ukraini*.

• (1215)

[*English*]

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, article 13.10 of the trade agreement, subsection 8(d) says, "promote the rapid transition from unabated coal power to clean energy sources."

We know that the Russian war machine has been powered by energy exports. This certainly seems to contemplate the transition from coal to other less-polluting fuels. To me, this is a massive opportunity for Canada to work on exporting LNG from Canada, which many European countries have asked us to do.

This would not only starve the Russian war machine of funds but also be good for the environment. Does the minister now admit that this is something Canada should do?

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Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question from my hon. colleague, the critic on the trade file.

We see in this agreement an effort to establish a framework that would not only enable Canadian businesses to participate in the reconstruction of Ukraine, but also, indeed, include the highest environmental protections of any trade agreement on record. It would very much allow Canadians to participate and allow Ukrainian businesses and investors to rapidly pursue that transition to a greener economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her speech and for these negotiations, which are very important. I would like to ask her a two-part question.

First, supply management was included when the order to import products from Ukraine duty-free was adopted. The groups that were impacted and the opposition parties fought hard to have this removed when the order was renewed, and it was in fact removed. Can the minister assure me that supply-managed products are not covered by this agreement? That is the first part of my question.

Second, I would like to make a comment. The section on investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms puts multinationals and governments on the same footing. This means that, technically, it would be possible for a multinational company to sue a government that is hindering trade. I find that unacceptable.

Does the minister not feel that this would have been a good opportunity to make this clarification?

[*English*]

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague and all members in the House. At a time when Canada chose to unequivocally support Ukraine, there was a tariff-free ability for them to export into Canada, including the supply-managed sector. I know what a commitment that took for Canadians to permit that to take place, and that really did show the support that Canadians have and that my hon. colleague had, for Ukraine. Of course, in this agreement, it is clear, just like in our other trade agreements, that the supply-managed sectors are not, and are excluded from this agreement, just as they have been with others.

I believe that this is a very important and progressive agreement and a good agreement. It has provisions for investment protections. There is a chapter that deals with binding dispute settlements. Therefore, this is very much the modern agreement that we have negotiated with Ukraine, and it would facilitate what Canadians want to do, which is to participate in that reconstruction in due course.

• (1220)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's speech on this important free trade agreement. The NDP supported the previous agreement, and we are looking into what this new agreement looks like.

One thing we do like about the old agreement is that it did not have the investor state dispute mechanism in there. That is something that we have held as essential for any new trade agreements

going forward. CETA and CPTPP both have that in them, and we do not like that. The NDP supports free trade, but we do not like foreign corporations telling governments what to do.

One thing I am disappointed with is the speed at which this is coming before us. I have not had time to bring this before caucus to even have a basic discussion. Why was this being rushed through without following any of the standard procedures about introducing treaties and agreements before the House?

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I am really proud about in this agreement are the highest standards in environmental protections of any trade agreement that we have on record today. We would agree that is really important, particularly in the trade agreements that we negotiate today, in which we can indeed support an economy and protect the environment at the same time.

What is also remarkable about this agreement, which members heard me say in my opening remarks, is the speed at which we were able to reach an agreement with Ukraine and how much the Ukrainians participated in this, despite the fact that they have been and continue to be in a war effort.

I am encouraged by the work that we always do in ensuring good debate on something like this, which we all agree with, and is continuing to support Ukraine.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister has rightly highlighted the unique nature of trade with a democracy on the front lines of the fight against totalitarian threats. This is important. Ukraine is not the only country in that situation. I wonder if she can share the government's position on Taiwan's application to the CPTPP?

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Speaker, the CPTPP is an excellent agreement and many Canadian firms and exporters have benefited. It is not just a good agreement because of its commercial success, but it also has some of those very high-quality provisions for the environment, for inclusiveness.

As my hon. colleague will know, CPTPP colleagues around the table, who party to that agreement, make those decisions about accession together. We are very pleased that the first accession candidate is the United Kingdom, another of Canada's trading partners. We have just finished that very important work.

No doubt we will continue to work, along with our partners, with all the other applicants for accession.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to return to a question asked by my hon. colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé that the minister did not have time to answer. My colleague asked her two questions. She answered the question about supply management.

Government Orders

However, concerning the fact that the government and multinationals are on an equal footing and that multinationals are therefore able to take legal action against states, would this not have been a good opportunity to reassert government jurisdiction over multinational corporations?

I think it would have been a good opportunity. What does she think?

• (1225)

[English]

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Speaker, in the other agreements, governments have the right to regulate within their jurisdictions. That is not different for this agreement.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the minister inform us as to how she sees this trade agreement being so important, given what has happened in Ukraine over the last year and a half. Once Ukraine ultimately wins this war, which we know it will, why will this be such an important trade agreement, not just for the benefit of Canada but indeed to help our ally, Ukraine?

Hon. Mary Ng: Mr. Speaker, Canada is the first country to have a comprehensive and progressive free-trade agreement with Ukraine. It is going to set the framework for Canadian companies, exporters and investors to very much be a part of the reconstruction when Ukraine wins the war. We have heard a lot from Canadian exporters and Canadians with respect to their support for an agreement like this with Ukraine.

When I reflect on the early days of the negotiations, before the war had begun, Canada was there, and continues to be there, with unequivocal support for Ukraine, showing confidence in it, especially in a matter like this, an economic trade agreement, which is so important. As Canada showed its confidence, we were also able to demonstrate that to others, which really did make a difference.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have a very long, storied and proud tradition of supporting free trade. We only have to look back to the negotiations of the original Canada-United States free trade agreement, which was, of course, something Conservatives were in favour of and that Liberals campaigned very hard against. I was a young lad back then, but I remember a commercial from the Liberal Party on this, talking about free trade. It said that there was only one more line that we had to remove, and then it erased the border between Canada and the United States. That was a long time ago, but I just want to talk briefly about how strongly Conservatives support free trade. We believe in free trade between free nations as an integral part of improving the prosperity of all people.

We were also the people who started the negotiations on CETA. The CETA deal is a Conservative deal that was started by Prime Minister Harper as part of our aggressive trade expansion. The same thing with the CPTPP, which was a Conservative initiative. Conservatives are very supportive of free trade.

This original free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine was originated by a Conservative government under Prime Minister Harper. The member for Abbotsford, from the Conservative Party,

was the lead negotiator on that. He will speak to this, and we will have some wonderful insights on this agreement.

When we talk about the importance of the Canada-Ukraine relationship, we have to talk about the 1.3 million Canadians of Ukrainian origin who live here in Canada. Many of them were integral in the development of western Canada. They are an incredible and important part of the social fabric of Canada, and their contributions to Canada cannot go unnoticed. As a result of that, in part, we have very strong people-to-people ties between Canada and Ukraine. Of course, we are strong supporters of Ukraine during the illegal invasion being prosecuted by Russia.

With respect to this agreement in particular, this modernization would build on the 2017 agreement, which updated or added 11 new chapters to the free trade agreement. The updated chapters included rules of origin and procedures, government procurement, competition policy, monopolies and state enterprises, electronic commerce, digital trade, labour, the environment, transparency, anti-corruption and responsible business conduct.

There is also a significant number of new chapters, 11 new chapters, in this trade agreement, and I will talk a little more about that later in my remarks. However, these are on investment; cross-border trade and services; temporary entry for business people; development and administration of measures; financial services; services and investment, non-conforming measures; telecommunications; trade and gender; trade and small and medium-sized enterprises; trade and indigenous peoples; and good regulatory practices. This is a substantial change from the original agreement that was signed in 2017.

On that, I would echo some of the comments made by the NDP, which is that this agreement is actually substantial. It is a very large trade agreement. Of course, we have to take our time to make sure we study free trade agreements in detail and thoroughly. However, it does seem as though the government is trying to rush this forward, and I am not sure that is necessarily the way Parliament should look at things. We should do our jobs as parliamentarians.

• (1230)

I would like to talk about the original trade agreement. In 2022, Canada's total merchandise trade with Ukraine was \$420 million, \$150 million in exports and \$270 million in imports. The way the original agreement was designed, as it was negotiated by the Conservative government, was that this would be, in a sense, a bit of an asymmetrical agreement.

It was set up such that Ukraine would have a little more advantage in the early stages of the agreement, with the anticipation that there would be a final agreement in which more things would be added. Originally, this was primarily a merchandise agreement. We can see now that a lot of chapters have been added on the services side. I suspect that as a result of that, we will see the trade balance perhaps narrow between Canada and Ukraine, but in general increase the trade between the two countries.

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After the ratification of the original agreement, exports to Ukraine, other than coal, grew about 28% between 2016 and 2019, which reinforces the view that trade, especially free trade, is good for both countries. We saw a significant increase in the two-way trade between two countries as a result of the free trade agreements, which goes back to why Conservatives absolutely and unequivocally support free trade agreements.

Interestingly enough, the top three exports to Ukraine were motor vehicles and parts, fish and seafood, and pharmaceutical products. The top imports from Ukraine were animal and vegetable fats, oils, iron and steel, and electrical machinery and equipment. Canadian businesses certainly have an opportunity to expand their trade with Ukraine.

I have undertaken to consult with industry with respect to this. I have spoken with agricultural companies, agricultural industries, etc. The challenge of course is the very condensed time frame, and I should explain this.

What we have before Parliament is the enabling legislation to implement the free trade agreement, but that is probably not what we are debating today. We are not actually going to look at and debate whether “subsection 42.1(1.1) of the act is amended by adding the following paragraph after (a).” I suspect that is not what we will debate here today.

The implementation legislation is how we implement the changes to relevant statutes and other things to implement the actual free trade agreement. This implementation bill's enabling legislation does not seem to have much in it that any of us will spend a lot of time debating in this chamber, although I could be wrong, as some members do enjoy debating those kinds of things.

The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan might enjoy going through and deciding whether “paragraphs (b) and (c) of the definition Ukraine in subsection 2(1) of the act are replaced by the following” is a good or significant change, but that is not what I will talk about today.

What we can talk about are the general principles of supporting free trade and the free trade agreement itself. In that is some of the difficulty that was expressed by the NDP member. He said he had not had the time to discuss this legislation with his caucus and colleagues, which takes me back to discussions with stakeholders.

As part of looking at whether this will be a trade agreement that benefits Canada, we want to talk to stakeholders to see whether they view some of the changes to this free trade agreement as being good or bad. In particular, in the agricultural sector, we are going to be talk about things like sanitary and phytosanitary measures. We are going to look at whether the quotas that will be allowed, the products that are coming in without tariff, are appropriate. This could be in the beef sector, the pork sector or in a whole bunch of agricultural sectors.

• (1235)

Those consultations are ongoing right now. I have reached out to the industries that would be affected by that to find out where they stand on it.

When I attended law school, we had professors very clearly say that the devil was often in the details. I am not 100% sure that Parliament should just pass things without any scrutiny whatsoever. We have learned that when other trade agreements were put forward by the Liberal government and passed rapidly, we ended up with some challenges.

If we look at, for example, free trade with the European Union, we have all kinds of challenges now with the sanitary and phytosanitary measures surrounding beef and pork. It is a particular issue right now in our negotiations with the U.K. It is almost impossible for Canadian beef or pork producers to export into the United Kingdom. They also have great difficulty exporting into the European Union. Why? It is because there are sanitary and phytosanitary measures preventing those exports from taking place. We would think that after this amount of time that these things would be resolved. However, for both things, there are very complicated dispute resolution procedures in place to try to resolve issues of sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

Sanitary and phytosanitary measures are important. They are put in place to ensure the health of people consuming the products. They are also protections put in place to protect biodiversity, to ensure things are not contained within certain products that could harm biodiversity. These measures are important, but sometimes these sanitary and phytosanitary measures are used as non-tariff barriers, or NTBs. NTBs have become sort of the new way to frustrate free trade. As we look around the world, we see that NTBs are growing in number and there are challenges in resolving those free trade agreements.

I took the time to look at the section in this free trade agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary measures. I am pleased to see that this section sets out that they will be resolved within the rules set out by the World Trade Organization. That is quite a difference from the measures that have been put in place for the resolution of sanitary and phytosanitary measures within CETA, which the U.K. benefits from in the transitional agreement. Trying to resolve those issues through that process has proven to be, if not incredibly complicated, almost impossible. It is good to see that is in this agreement.

If we look at the opportunities for Canada, one of the things I raised in my question to the minister was that the agreement talked about the phase-out of coal. However, in Europe, we have seen the rise in the use of coal by a number of countries as a result of them trying to stop buying Russian gas. As we all know, the purchase of Russian gas is providing revenues and profits to Russia so it can use those monies to fund its illegal war in Ukraine.

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Many European countries have asked Canada to export more LNG, and the United States has actually taken that up. It has built a number of LNG export facilities over the last number of years to take advantage of the demand for LNG, including that demand in Europe. Unfortunately, Canada has not taken advantage of that and, in fact, has lost all kinds of opportunities.

However, when talk about transition, we do not transition from coal to a solar panel. Those kinds of transitions generally do not work. We do not transition from coal to a wind turbine and solar. Those things do not work. Both of these things provide intermittent power. Intermittent power makes maintenance of the electric grid more expensive and it is unreliable when there are surges in demand. We need a strong baseload of electricity generation.

• (1240)

I hope that when I have the time to go through this agreement in full, I will see this addresses a great area of potential opportunity for Canada and Ukraine with respect to electricity generation. We have amazing expertise in the production of nuclear reactors, as does Ukraine. Canada has all kinds of uranium that it can export. I really hope there will be some things in the agreement that talk about furthering this kind of development and partnership. It would be both good for Ukraine and good for Canada.

However, transitioning from coal would be beneficial to the world. When we look at energy transitions, we know they do not happen rapidly. In fact, they take a long time. All we have to do is think about how coal was discovered 200 to 250 years ago. We have had gas, natural gas and nuclear for a much shorter period of time, but they have not completely displaced coal even though the power density for both gas and nuclear is far more dense than for coal. Therefore, it makes sense to transition to these things.

This is the challenge in suggesting we transition from coal to solar or wind, because the actual energy density is so much smaller. An electricity plant that would use LNG or nuclear would take up 20 acres, but to get a similar amount of energy from wind or solar, we would be looking at 10 to 100 times that amount of land. The suggestion that we can make those transitions quickly from coal to wind and solar is not feasible and it does not make sense. We should be exploring the opportunities that Canada has with LNG and nuclear.

The Conservative Party is 100% behind supporting Ukraine, supporting trade and free trade. Free trade between free nations is something we support 100%. I look forward to going through this agreement and to the debate on this agreement in the House.

• (1245)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I like how my colleague touched on the fact that when this type of legislation and these types of agreements come before the House, it is necessary for us, as parliamentarians, to do wide consultation with stakeholders.

I have been a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for five and a half years now. One of the concerns brought up to our committee by Chicken Farmers of Canada was the Ukraine remission order that allowed Ukrainian poultry to come into Canada.

It is not that Chicken Farmers of Canada does not want to support our Ukrainian allies, but it felt that more time was needed to ensure that the high standards we have in Canada, especially with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, were in place. Before we had such a system, it felt it was rushed too quickly.

Could my colleague expand on that one notable example? Perhaps there is more that he knows on why with these kinds of agreements, while we know they are being done in good faith and for good reason, we still, as parliamentarians, owe it to the Canadian public and to stakeholders to ensure we iron out all those very fine details because of the unintended consequences.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. In the particular circumstances of that remission order, I agree. I was certainly consulted on that. Chicken farmers were not against supporting Ukraine, but it looked like that was rushed and not all details were looked at. I did talk about that in my speech.

I still remember my contracts professor in my first year of law school saying that the devil was always in the details. We do not look at things in broad strokes if we want to be a good lawyer. We have to get down into the nitty-gritty.

When we look at this agreement, which is somewhere in the range of 600 pages, and we are asked to rush this through, that is how mistakes happen. That is how we end up with agreements with unintended consequences by not scrutinizing them.

It is the job of parliamentarians to scrutinize this and reach out to stakeholder groups that will also be looking at this. They will ensure they look at those details. We should ensure that work gets done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see such enthusiasm for this bill today. We know that there is no shortage of emergencies, including the housing crisis and the climate crisis, but these topics are not on the government's agenda.

My colleague mentioned several interesting things in his speech. We know that we are not reinventing the wheel today; we are modernizing the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, which has been in effect since 2017. The fact is that trade with our trade partner Ukraine has grown significantly.

I have a question for my colleague. There was a whole saga in the House about the standing ovation for a former SS soldier, in yet another blunder committed on the world stage by the federal government, or rather the Liberal government. That all happened in conjunction with the presidential visit, when he was here to sign the agreement on September 22.

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It seems to me, or rather I am quite convinced, that the government deliberately waited for President Zelenskyy to come to the House before implementing the new agreement. We are hearing that it is really urgent for us to study this bill today as a priority, and that it must take precedence over the housing crisis, the cost of living crisis and the climate crisis.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on something. Does he think the government could have done this sooner? Does he think the government deliberately waited for President Zelenskyy's visit to try to restore its image after all the blunders we have seen, such as Chinese interference and the conflict between Canada and India?

[*English*]

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the motives are. I do know that this agreement was signed much earlier. If it had been tabled in Parliament earlier, we would certainly have had more debate and more time to scrutinize this particular piece of legislation.

The members of the Liberal Party were chirping when I was speaking about taking the time to study something. There is an old adage saying that a lawyer who represents himself has a fool for a client. A government that thinks it can do no wrong and has birthed the perfect agreement is also a fool because mistakes are made. We know that. We know that with respect to beef and pork access to the EU. The Liberals thought they had a deal with a side letter that was going to resolve all kinds of things, but in fact it did not. There is no access, effectively, for beef and pork.

Parliament should do its work. I wish this bill had been brought to Parliament sooner so that there would not be the rush the government is making to get it through Parliament.

• (1250)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let there be no doubt about the aggressive approach this government has had, virtually since 2015, in recognizing the importance of international trade and how it supports Canada's middle class. In fact, no government in the history of Canada has signed off on more trade agreements than this government. That is a fact.

The member opposite, at the beginning of his speech, said they did this, they did that and they had this in the making. It was this government that ultimately signed and brought to a conclusion a number of deals that have been critically important for fostering more trade between Canada and countries around the world, whether it is the United States, Mexico or those in Europe and Asia.

Would the member not recognize that this is yet another agreement modifying an agreement signed off by the current Deputy Prime Minister a number of years ago and is a positive step forward that both Canada and Ukraine will benefit from?

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, eight out of 10 people know one can make up statistics about anything. That is effectively what this member is doing in saying they have done the most. Anyone can make up statements about anything.

It is great that they came to the trade party, but they came to the trade party late. I still recall their vehement opposition to free trade with the United States. I led in my speech with what they said about the one final line they would like to change, and they erased the border between Canada and the United States. The member is saying not to go back in time, yet every time we talk about things, they talk about former prime minister Harper, from 2006. It is typically Liberal: They want it their way one way but everybody else has to have it a different way.

I am glad this free trade agreement has been modernized. I look forward to looking at it, examining it and doing the due diligence that it seems like parliamentarians want to do, whether they are in the NDP or the Bloc. The only members who do not seem to want to study this agreement are the Liberals, because as usual, in their arrogance, they believe they have birthed the perfect child and nothing could be wrong with it. We want to verify if that is true.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague did an excellent job of highlighting the Liberal failure to support Ukraine in the area of energy security. European countries vitally need the natural resources that Canada is ready to produce and sell.

Last summer, we had emergency hearings at the foreign affairs committee because, instead of supporting the sale of Canadian energy to Europe, the Liberal government gave a sanctions exemption to allow a turbine to be sent to facilitate the export of Russian gas to Germany. We were more interested in facilitating the sale of Russian gas to Germany than in helping to relieve European dependence on Russian natural resources by providing Canadian resources as an alternative.

Could the member share more about the Conservative vision for Canada to be a leader in supporting global energy security by enabling our European allies to no longer be dependent on imports from Russia?

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, that was a great question, the best one so far. The issue the member raised with respect to the export of those turbines was a shameful affront to Ukraine. The Liberal government and Liberal members should be ashamed of that.

If we look at LNG exports to the European market, the United States is at 26%, Qatar is at 24% and Russia is at 20%. Canada could absolutely fill that need if we had a government that recognized that LNG exports are good for lowering emissions, are good for the Canadian economy and would be very good at disrupting the Russian war machine.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to speak to Bill C-57, which seeks to modernize the 2017 Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, or CUFTA. I rise as the Bloc Québécois international trade critic, and I am pleased to speak on behalf of my political party today.

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I just want to remind the House that our party is continuing a tradition, because Quebec's independence movement has been advocating for free trade since the 1980s with a view to exiting the Canadian economic framework, which is too narrow. It has been a quite a deal for our SMEs, whose expertise is as valuable as it is diverse. I should note, however, that our position is not categorical: A trade agreement may be bad, and it is what it contains that determines whether or not we support it. If an agreement is going to be harmful to our key sectors, commodify our public services to an unreasonable degree, give multinationals the upper hand or hurt the environment or workers' rights, we would not support it merely because we believe in the virtues of international trade.

In the present case, I will say right now that we will be voting in favour of the principle of the modernized 2023 agreement, since we are still at the principle stage. However, we have a major concern about something that I will talk about a bit later, something that we will be urging the government to commit to changing.

Let us first look at the context. We are talking about modernizing an agreement that dates back to 2017, but we could basically call it a new agreement. The 2017 CUFTA, which was essentially negotiated by Stephen Harper's Conservative government, was mostly about extending a hand of friendship to Ukraine, a symbolic stance, since trade with Ukraine was rather marginal at the time. The negotiations ended in the summer of 2015, just before the election, but the agreement was signed by the current government during the Ukrainian Prime Minister's visit to Ottawa in 2016 and it took effect in 2017. The Bloc Québécois supported that agreement. Given that we wanted to move forward quickly since Ukraine was looking for international support, the 2017 CUFTA was pretty bare-bones. More work could have been done, particularly with regard to the implementation mechanisms that were meant to ensure compliance with the agreement. They were rather weak.

What we have before us today is a real trade agreement. Bill C-57 is 15 pages long and merely amends Canadian legislation to align it with the agreement's requirements so that the government can go ahead and ratify it. Bill C-57's clauses are largely technical, as most of them change references to the 2017 CUFTA or other agreements, replacing them with references to the modernized 2023 agreement for consistency. It also authorizes the establishment, recognizes the authority and allows for the funding of the various institutional mechanisms provided for in the agreement, including the secretariat responsible for overseeing the agreement and the various dispute settlement bodies.

The modernized 2023 agreement is a comprehensive agreement. We are talking about 1,000 pages. It contains 30 chapters covering trade in goods and services—including special provisions in a number of areas—as well as investment, government procurement, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, labour law and environmental law. It also includes provisions to favour SMEs or businesses owned and operated by women and indigenous people. It casts the net wide.

For starters, we were pleased to see that the content of the June 2022 order was not included in this agreement. Countries in difficulty or at war are often exempted from Canadian tariffs, but this was the first time supply management was included. Ukraine became totally, or almost totally, exempt from supply management

in relation to Canada and its borders. Chicken farmers were very concerned, and for a year, they suffered the ill effects of that access. It was unacceptable. There was no reason for this to happen, especially given the rather ridiculous reasoning behind it. For example, it was alleged, on the basis of studies from several years ago, that there is no bird flu in Ukraine. However, we know that viruses can mutate and that one of the main sources of bird flu in Europe is Poland, which is right next door. Until proven otherwise, birds, such as chickens, do not respect borders. They are not screened at the border. If there were a major outbreak in Poland, it would be surprising if there were no cases, contrary to what was being said in Ukraine.

● (1300)

In short, this agreement covers the components of trade and various related sectors likely to impact trade. Among its 30 chapters, 11 are new since the 2017 CUFTA. The “Cross-Border Trade in Services” chapter sets out the rules applicable to services. The chapter entitled “Development and Administration of Measures” ensures that administrative practices are predictable and consistent. The “Investment” chapter protects investments and replaces the 1994 bilateral agreement for the protection of investments.

The annexes on services and investment non-conforming measures complement the chapter on cross-border trade in services. They clarify its application in specific areas and list the exceptions that both countries wish to retain.

The “Temporary Entry for Business Persons” chapter is a necessary provision for business to occur between the two countries. It did not appear in the 2017 CUFTA.

Although the “Telecommunications” chapter does not completely open up access to the telecommunications market, it guarantees access to the telecommunications infrastructure. It does not cover broadcasting and therefore has no impact on cultural policy. Fortunately, the cultural exemption, as we call it, remains intact, and a good thing too, because we certainly would have fought this provision if it violated the cultural exemption.

The “Financial Services” chapter, which complements the chapter on cross-border trade in services, sets out the rules applicable to financial services without completely opening up the market. The Canadian banking market remains essentially protected. This chapter sets out the rules that facilitate the use of financial services in the other country and the simple flow of capital.

Three chapters are being added to the 2017 CUFTA concerning the participation of certain groups in trade, specifically SMEs, women and indigenous people. This allows preferential measures to be put in place.

There is also the chapter entitled “Good Regulatory Practices”, which codifies the manner in which regulations are adopted to ensure transparency and predictability.

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Eight of the chapters in the 2017 CUFTA are being amended. The chapter entitled “Rules of Origin and Origin Procedures” relaxes the rules of origin for products containing materials that come from a country with which a free trade agreement has been concluded. The chapter entitled “Digital Trade” clarifies the rules that apply to electronically transmitted data to ensure more efficient flow. The chapter entitled “Competition Policy” clarifies the competition rules that could hinder trade, particularly in the case of Ukraine, where mass privatization occurred after the fall of the U.S.S.R. State monopolies were replaced by private quasi-monopolies that were difficult to break into. The agreement will help address that. The chapter entitled “Designated Monopolies and State-Owned Enterprises” includes the provisions of the 2017 CUFTA, but in a separate chapter to facilitate its implementation.

The chapter entitled “Government Procurement” was in the 2017 CUFTA, but in the form of a statement of intent only. The new agreement includes provisions from the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement, which takes it away from the WTO's dispute settlement bodies, which have been paralyzed for years, and gives it instead to the panels under the Canada-Ukraine agreement. This chapter is very important, considering the huge contracts that will be awarded for rebuilding Ukraine, presumably in the near future, as soon as the war is over, which we hope is not too long from now.

The chapters on the environment and labour, which were also statements of intent in the 2017 CUFTA, will now be binding.

Now let us talk about the chapter entitled “Transparency, Anti-Corruption, and Responsible Business Conduct”. The 2017 CUFTA contained anti-corruption measures. The 2023 agreement adds provisions on responsible business conduct. We know that the government is boasting about this chapter. This section encourages businesses to adopt internationally recognized guidelines and principles of responsible business conduct and corporate social responsibility, but these codes are purely voluntary. It is merely a fine principle. It is completely empty. There is nothing in it but encouragement to follow lofty principles. There is no body to oversee or verify compliance with this chapter.

• (1305)

In other words, we should disregard the siren songs of the Liberals, who are bragging that this chapter will do even more to help in the fight against corruption in Ukraine. That concludes the overview of the new and amended chapters.

Now, there are some potentially predictable effects that would encourage us to support the principle of this agreement. Even though trade between Canada and Ukraine is up by one-third since the 2017 agreement was signed, Ukraine remains a small trading partner for Canada. In 2022, the value of Canada's merchandise exports to Ukraine was \$150.2 million, or 0.02% of the \$760 billion in goods Canada exported last year, even in the context of a country at war. The top three exports to Ukraine were motor vehicles and parts, fish and seafood, and pharmaceutical products. Again in 2022, imports from Ukraine were valued at \$271.2 million, or 0.04% of the \$780 billion in Canadian imports. Canada's top imports from Ukraine were animal and vegetable fats and oils, iron and steel, and electrical machinery and equipment.

The trade impact of this new agreement will therefore be marginal, especially given that most of the goods and services are already subject to free trade, because, until proven otherwise, like Ukraine, we are still part of the World Trade Organization. However, this agreement will bring greater predictability than the previous 2017 agreement, which should make things easier.

I will point out that the 2023 agreement provides one extra year of guaranteed access to the Ukrainian market for 20,000 metric tonnes of Canadian pork, a major production sector for Quebec. These provisions should please pork producers. The chapter on government procurement could also become very important during Ukraine's post-war reconstruction, especially for Quebec engineering firms, some of which are very successful internationally. They could be enlisted to help rebuild the country's infrastructure. Dam building, for instance, is an area where our expertise is internationally recognized.

I will now address the concerns we have. As usual, the main one is transparency. Parliament's ability to amend Bill C-57, the subject of today's debate, is fairly limited. Amendments must relate only to the bill and cannot affect the agreement itself. This limitation of parliamentary powers is not exclusive to the Canada-Ukraine agreement; indeed, the people's elected representatives in this House, the issue of a monarchical culture, have very little involvement in international treaties. Their power is limited to saying yes or no to whatever the government has signed. We have this agreement before us and there is very little we can do. We cannot say that one item or another needs to be improved or that we are opposed to certain aspects. It is just not possible. We cannot influence the contents of these agreements in any way. By the same token, while provinces are responsible for implementing the parts of the treaty that pertain to their jurisdictions, they are not involved in the negotiations, as opposed to what is done in Europe, for instance, where member states play an integral part. Even if the treaty is with the European Union, negotiations happen with the parliaments of member states.

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Again, these democratic shortcomings are not exclusive to the Canada-Ukraine agreement. The entire Canadian approach to signing treaties has to be reviewed. Regardless of the issue or political stripe, governments do not really appreciate it when their opponents look too closely at what they do. When it comes to trade agreements, secrecy is in order. Canada, with its deep-seated monarchical traditions, keeps the treaties it signs in the dark, afraid that they might turn to ashes like vampires if they see the light of day. As a member of Parliament, I have had the unfortunate opportunity to experience that first-hand. In November and December 2020, at the Standing Committee on International Trade, we were forced to examine the Canada-United Kingdom free trade agreement without seeing the text of the agreement. During that sad bit of absurd theatre, we had witnesses, experts and groups telling us about an agreement about which they knew as much as we did as elected representatives, which is nothing at all.

When Canada's foreign affairs department was created in 1909, the minister was supposed to table before Parliament an annual report on the department's operations. This report would logically include an overview of Canada's international discussions and commitments.

• (1310)

In 1995, when globalization was in full swing, the legislation governing the department was amended to give the minister a freer hand by granting him jurisdiction over international trade to the detriment of the institution of Parliament. The requirement to submit an annual report was abolished. A Parliament worthy of its name should have procedures to increase democratic control over agreements. The Bloc Québécois tabled seven bills on this between 1999 and 2004.

The other irritants in this agreement are the investor-state dispute settlement provisions. They are in there. This mechanism allows foreign multinationals, foreign investors to sue a state if a policy hampers their ability to turn a profit. This is extremely serious. These types of dispute settlement mechanisms found their way into each and every agreement when signing such agreements was all the rage during the aggressive, triumphant neoliberal years, but it is very serious that Canada is continuing to persistently accept, negotiate and encourage these kinds of agreements.

There are a few things we need to remember about this. These are clauses that have enabled multinationals to sue governments over increases in minimum wage, environmental measures, taxes on soft drinks to counter obesity epidemics in certain countries and moratoriums on drilling. These are protection clauses, a legal tool available to foreign investors to undermine the government's ability to act by leaving the perpetual threat of legal recourse from foreign companies dangling overhead. It is a threat to national sovereignty. It makes it increasingly difficult for governments to legislate on issues such as social justice, the environment, working conditions and public health if a transnational company believes its right to profit has been infringed. This is censorship of the democratic will.

According to a 2013 UN report, states won these suits 42% of the time and corporations, 31% of the time. The remaining disputes were settled out of court. This means that plaintiffs were able to override the political will of states in 58% of cases either in part,

through agreements, or in whole, by winning their case. This quantitative figure, however, overlooks one important factor, namely, the pressure put on states by investor protection clauses. States give up on certain policies early in the discussion and decision-making process to avoid being sued. They self-censor for fear of ending up in court.

In 2014, a report by the European Union's Directorate-General for External Policies stated that these investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms were indeed a public policy roadblock. I remind members that this is the Bloc Québécois's fight. In 2021, I presented a motion that led my committee to undertake a study on the impact of these mechanisms. At our last convention, opposing these mechanisms became part of our platform.

After a health crisis, there is no reason for Canada to stubbornly continue to support such provisions, especially since they were removed from the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, or CUSMA. They were included in NAFTA, but removed from CUSMA. Why continue to defend the sovereignty of multinationals and the right to profit, rather than democratic rights and the sovereignty of states?

In the specific case of Ukraine, let me first point out that it will be a rather fragile post-war state. Even though there are opportunities for Quebec and Canadian companies, do we want to colonize that country with a mechanism that could be embarrassing for Ukraine and could incite it to adopt certain measures, because it would be afraid of the backlash from Canadian and Quebec companies looking to make a profit?

At the same time, allowing a company to sue a foreign country directly without obtaining the consent of its home country could have consequences for us. In the case of Ukraine, we know that it has sanctioned several of its own citizens for collaborating with Russia. These sanctions could go as far as seizing their assets. If these Ukrainian citizens who collaborated with Russia also have investments here, and Ottawa decides to mimic the Ukrainian government and seize their assets here, the federal government could be sued for discriminatory expropriation under the agreement.

• (1315)

I will close by urging the government to move forward with an exchange of letters if this agreement is adopted in order to remove this dangerous and unquiet provision.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is much like the legislation a few years back that was signed off on. It seemed to have received virtually unanimous support of the House, very close to it, and there was a high sense of cooperation in trying to get that legislation through. The legislation now before us would be a modernization of that legislation.

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The member talked about how the province of Quebec could really benefit by this, and jurisdictions all over Canada would, in fact, benefit. The member made reference, for example, to the pork industry. Manitoba is very much into the pork industry and also would benefit, not only in that sector but also in other areas. In Canada, there are 1.3 million-plus estimated people of Ukrainian heritage, not to mention the hundreds of thousands, perhaps into the millions, of other Canadians who are following what is taking place in Ukraine today.

My question to the member is this: Would he not agree that this legislation would be in good part a win-win for both nations? Now is a great time to try to see this legislation pass, before the end of the year. Would he not agree that this would be a good thing to see happen?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, in response to my colleague's question, I can say that there is indeed some good. We support the principle and we have no interest in dragging out or disrupting the natural process. Indeed, sooner would be better.

However, I want to reiterate what I was saying at the end: I do not want our reservations to be diminished. I am calling on the government to commit to us, whether through an exchange of letters or through other means, that it will remove the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism, as worded in the agreement.

[*English*]

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a situation with the government where international relations are a mess. Our relationship with India is a mess. We just had the Quint, five members of the G7, write a letter condemning Hamas, without even asking Canada. Canada was not even an afterthought in the writing of that letter.

I want to ask the member, given the government's track record with respect to its relationships with other countries and its bungled negotiation of the free trade agreement with the United States, how we can trust the government to implement an agreement, in terms of free trade, with Ukraine.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, our level of confidence in this government is as low as the official opposition's. We sometimes wonder whether the government truly deserves our trust.

In this case, one of the irritants is transparency and, frankly, the Conservatives are no better in that regard when they are in power. There are models out there in the world. It is not necessary to present an agreement like this and tell us that it is urgent, that we have to adopt it, take it or leave it, and that we cannot change it. Conservatives are no better when they are in power. It is part of Canada's monarchic culture, but it does not have to be that way.

In other countries, for example, in the United States, they have a habit of consulting their elected representatives. The European Union is also in the habit of holding debates. We are the elected representatives of the people. Before sending a negotiator out into

the world, we should be given an opportunity to share our views, to be asked what we do not want to see included, what we would like to see as part of the negotiations, what our fundamental values and interests are within this negotiation process. It is the Canadian culture of transparency in trade agreements that needs a thorough overhaul, and this one is highly problematic.

• (1320)

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we Quebeckers have worked really hard to protect supply management. My colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot in particular has taken up that fight. The minister seemed to be saying this morning that supply-managed sectors would be excluded and therefore protected. There is definitely a lack of transparency. There are still many aspects of this bill that are worrisome.

Can my colleague reiterate the importance of making the risk of prosecution the same for multinationals as for countries? What does he think should be done next to ensure that we get our fair share and that we can monitor the government's lack of transparency?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, we can rest easy about the supply management aspect, because the text excludes those sectors. There is nothing that resembles the order the government made on the sly, somewhat surreptitiously, in 2022. We can rest assured on that front.

As for the power of multinationals, we will assess how much flexibility we have because, as I said, there is very little we can change. However, that would be part of it, based on our understanding of the bill at this stage, and we will be able to delve into this further in committee. If it is in the bill, there is nothing to stop us from rejecting this provision during the clause-by-clause study in committee, while supporting the agreement overall. I will vote against this provision, but that does not stop me from reiterating my request to the government for a commitment to remove this provision.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would point out the fact that Canada is very fortunate. We have a team of negotiators who have a great deal of experience, years and years of it. I would suggest that Canada is probably second to no other nation in the world in terms of its ability to negotiate. We have always taken the position that it has to be in Canada's best interest first and foremost.

The member seems to be very concerned about the government's going it alone. I would provide some assurances that through the agreements in the past, a few dozen agreements, we have witnessed a team that has achieved a good deal for Canada. Canada has been consulted by the many different stakeholders.

Would the member not agree that at some point in time, we have to allow the negotiators to do their job and get the agreement, and that we cannot change the agreement after it has been signed off on?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how to unpack everything I just heard.

Government Orders

First, yes, in its agreements, Canada has some experience in undermining supply management three times, failing to protect aluminum in CUSMA, not pushing for our interests and fundamental values multiple times, and hiding several things from us.

To the question from my colleague who says that we should allow the negotiators to do their job, I say, of course. I never suggested that elected members be sent to negotiate in the negotiators' place, that goes without saying. That idea never even crossed my mind. I do not think that the United States or the European Union are bad negotiators, yet they consult those who have been elected by the people. When the member says that nothing can be changed once the agreement is signed, what option do we have other than to fight the agreement? We cannot say that we are 75% in favour and 25% against the agreement and then choose what we will take and what we will leave. In other words, we have to take all or nothing. We cannot cherry-pick here. I call this a miscarriage of democracy.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to speak to Bill C-57, the new Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. This bill would update the agreement made in 2017. Much has happened in the past six years, as we all know.

First, I would like to speak a bit about the original agreement, as it forms the core of the present one, then cover some of the changes outlined in Bill C-57. I will wrap up with some comments about how free trade agreements are presented to Parliament for the debate that they deserve.

The NDP is very much in favour of free trade agreements. We hear catcalls from both sides every time we debate free trade agreements here, saying that the NDP is always against them. We are not. We have voted for free trade agreements in the past and we voted for the Ukraine free trade agreement when it was presented. Our main caveat for these agreements is that they be designed to protect and create Canadian jobs, protect the ability of Canadian governments at all levels to care for our environment, and promote the well-being of our citizens. The measure of success of free trade deals must not be just the profits made by Canadian companies. It must also include measures of good labour agreements, both here and in the countries we are making deals with, and measures of good environmental and human rights laws on both sides as well.

These agreements must be beneficial to the people of both countries involved. I have to say that this new agreement with Ukraine and the bill before us that would implement that agreement seem to do a good job in that direction. The Canada-Ukraine friendship is very special. In fact, when Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Canada was the first western country to recognize that act. Today, there are more than 1.3 million Canadians of Ukrainian heritage. They are very proud of that heritage and their cultural traditions.

Canada has consistently supported Ukraine's development and reform efforts, providing over \$460 million in international assistance between 2014 and 2021. Of course, Canada and Canadians have been strong supporters of Ukraine since the illegal invasion by Russia in February 2022. Since then, Canada has committed

over \$8.9 billion in assistance, including financial, development, humanitarian, military security, stabilization and immigration aid.

With respect to trade, Canada issued remission orders to temporarily open up trade with Ukraine, allowing supply managed products, such as poultry, to enter Canada. We have heard some concerns about these remission orders in the international trade and agriculture committees, but I think it is fair to say that Canadians are happy to help Ukraine in any way during these horrific times in their struggles.

I would like to step back a bit in time and spend some time talking about the original agreement. I would like to thank Tracey Ramsey, who is the former member for Essex, the NDP international trade critic when the first Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement was debated and came into effect. Tracey was and remains a passionate defender of Canadian workers, and she took her role very seriously. She recommended that the NDP support the original Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement because it upheld those basic principles I mentioned previously.

The Canada-Ukraine trade relationship is relatively small. Ukraine represents less than 1% of the total Canadian global exports. Following the signature of the original trade agreement, Canada's non-coal exports to Ukraine grew by 28.5% between 2016 and 2019. Total merchandise trade reached an all-time high of \$447 million in 2021, although that of course declined in 2022 because of the illegal invasion.

The original free trade agreement eliminated most of the tariffs on Canadian imports to Ukraine and Ukrainian imports to Canada. Canadian exporters have largely welcomed the deal. Canadian products that benefit from the free trade agreement include iron and steel, industrial machinery, pulses, canola oil, and fish and seafood.

● (1325)

While the original free trade agreement includes a state-to-state dispute settlement mechanism, it did not include the investor-state dispute settlement system, ISDS provisions. It is important to note that these provisions actually existed before the free trade agreement came into place because in 1995, Canada and Ukraine signed a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, which included these investor-state provisions.

Government Orders

The NDP, in general, does not like ISDS provisions because they allow foreign corporations to literally tell Canadian governments at all levels how they should be protecting their environment or protecting their people. We believe that is an infringement on our sovereignty and we think that ISDS provisions do not have a place in any foreign free trade agreement. We are happy to see that the new Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement did not include them. They were in both the Canada-Europe trade agreement and the CPTPP. We believe that foreign investors should be obligated to go through domestic courts before being granted access to a special court where they can sue our governments, and that should be done at the state-to-state level.

New Democrats analyze trade deals as a whole. As I say, we have supported trade deals in the past, including the Ukraine agreement and the South Korea deal.

The original Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement entered into force in 2017. It has a review clause that it be reviewed within two years of entry into force with a regard to expanding it and that was done. In 2019, Canada and Ukraine agreed to modernize the free trade agreement with expanded sections. There were public consultations held in the winter of 2020, but those consultations did not seem to include the Parliament of Canada. I will talk more about that later.

Canadian and Ukrainian officials conducted negotiations from May 2022 to April 2023. The new agreement includes more chapters on a broader array of services and business. It covers professional services like engineering, legal, computer services and telecommunications. It covers investment. It covers temporary entry for business persons. There are other sections that promote more broad interactions around trade and commerce. These are chapters that are included in other free trade agreements that Canada has with other countries and we welcome them here.

The agreement also has an updated environment chapter, which is subject to dispute settlement, aiming to ensure parties do not lower the levels of environmental protection to attract trade or investment. Again, that is obviously an important part of trade agreements. Trade agreements should raise the level of the standard of living of people in both countries in commercial and financial terms, but also in terms of their environment, human rights and labour dealings.

This bill has an updated labour chapter, which is again subject to dispute settlement provisions. It aims to improve labour standards and working conditions in both countries.

As I say, the NDP in general supports this kind of free trade agreement. Whether we support this bill or not, I would like to say here that, unfortunately, this bill was tabled only last Tuesday and I have not had time to bring it before the NDP caucus for discussion, which happens on Wednesdays, as we all know. This is a big, complex agreement and the NDP caucus likes to discuss all legislation before we decide whether we will support it.

• (1330)

We think it is important to allow Parliament to have input into trade negotiations before they begin. It is also important to allow ample notice once the treaties are signed for debate in this place be-

fore they are ratified. When the first Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement was tabled, the government followed that policy. It tabled the enabling legislation along with an explanatory memorandum and a final environmental assessment more than 21 sitting days after tabling the treaty. However, the government did not follow any of these standard procedures when introducing CETA, the Canada-Europe trade agreement. We were happy when it followed those procedures in the previous first version of the Canada-Ukraine agreement, but it seems that the government has forgotten those policies with this new agreement.

When the government negotiated CETA and CPTPP, Canadians were kept in the dark about what was being negotiated. When we finally learned what was on the table, the deal was already finalized, and the government said that there was absolutely no way to change anything at that point. It is not too much to ask for input on these important policies. The United States Congress has the right and ability to debate what the priorities of their country will be before entering into free trade negotiations.

The member for Elmwood—Transcona wrote a letter, in December 2019, to the Minister of International Trade, who is now the Minister of Finance, regarding increased transparency around the negotiations for the new Canada-U.S.-Mexico free trade agreement. In response to that letter, the minister agreed, on February 19, 2020, to change the policy on tabling treaties in Parliament. Those changes:

To require that a notice of intent to enter into negotiations towards a new free trade agreement be tabled in the House of Commons at least 90 calendar days prior to the commencement of negotiations. Under normal parliamentary procedures, the notice of intent would be referred to the [committee on international trade].

To require objectives for negotiations towards a new free trade agreement to be tabled in the House of Commons at least 30 calendar days prior to the commencement of negotiations. Under normal parliamentary procedures, those objectives would be referred to the [committee on international trade].

As I mentioned previously, there were discussions with some stakeholders about the scope of changes to this free trade agreement in the winter of 2020, but as far as I can tell, and we have done some research on this, the matter was never referred to the international trade committee or tabled in the House.

The government also seems to have broken standard policies on introducing implementation legislation for free trade agreements and other treaties. There should be 21 sitting days between the tabling of treaties and tabling of legislation, and that did not happen with this agreement. On top of that, as I mentioned, the minister tabled this legislation last Tuesday and here we are debating it on Monday. This is a big, complicated bill. There was no opportunity for opposition parties to discuss this in caucus last Wednesday.

Government Orders

To conclude, the NDP is very much in favour of free trade. We supported the original version of this agreement with Ukraine and we will be discussing this new legislation in caucus on Wednesday. I urge the minister and her government to follow the standard policies on how to introduce treaties and implement legislation before Parliament. These are not minor details; these are important points on how Canadians expect us here in this place to hold the government to account.

• (1335)

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned that the NDP voted in favour of trade agreements in the past and will be reviewing this one on Wednesday, but does he believe that this agreement in Bill C-57 will make life better for workers both in Canada and in Ukraine and vote in favour?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, we were in favour of the previous agreement, and this agreement seems to be an improvement and an expansion on that.

There are many details, the devil is always in the details in free trade agreements, and we will be taking a closer look at that agreement over the next couple of days. However, as I said, there is supposed to be 21 sitting days between so that we can have that time to really look at things closely. I think there might have been 10 sitting days between the time the treaty was signed and the enabling legislation tabled and only a couple of sitting days since the actual implementation legislation was tabled. That is where I think the government should have done better.

• (1340)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay gave a fulsome review on such short notice. I really appreciate the amount of research he has done already on it.

I want to ask a specific question on article 13.10 of the free trade agreement, which focuses on climate. That section commits both parties to “work together to pursue domestic and global efforts to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels”. That is the globally recognized amount to prevent climate breakdown. It is a really important number.

What is also true is we are in a country right now that is continuing to build new fossil fuel infrastructure, including owning and expanding the Trans Mountain pipeline, in which we have invested \$30 billion. The UN Secretary General has called this “moral and economic madness.” We continue to invest around \$20 billion a year to subsidize the very industry most responsible for the crisis we are in. I would love to hear a comment from the member on how he reconciles what he is seeing from the federal government right now when it comes to continuing to subsidize the oil and gas industry and yet committing to a treaty that would purport to ensure we do our part on the climate crisis.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for taking part in a press conference I held with the member for Timmins—James Bay on that subject last week, where we called both the government and fossil fuel companies to account for the fact the International Energy Agency has said we cannot move forward with any new fossil fuel projects and

here we are, as he mentioned, \$30 billion into the Trans Mountain pipeline. I could go on and on about other projects.

This is something the government and the fossil fuel industry need to face. The fossil fuel industry has known since the 1980s where we are headed. It warned in the 1980s that it could not go down that path, and then it decided that would be too expensive and there was too much money to be made. We need to call both the government and the industry to account on this and make some very important changes very quickly.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we heard that two years ago the Deputy Prime Minister had informed our finance critic, the member for Elmwood—Transcona, that on all future free trade agreements, the government would give 90 days' notice to this House, that 30 days before the start of negotiations the government would notify the House of the objectives of the free trade agreement and that at the same time as the implementing legislation was tabled in the House, the government would also table an economic impact assessment.

Can my colleague share with us why this is so important for us to be able to do our job in this House and for the input from outside the House from different stakeholders who would be impacted?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, we heard the member for Winnipeg North say that we have had good negotiators and that, once they finish the negotiations, that will be it as we will not have any opportunity or reason to intercede. We have real reason to intercede beforehand, when we can talk and discuss in this place what our priorities should be in free trade agreements or any treaty regarding this country.

The member for Elmwood—Transcona brought this to the minister before we were negotiating the Canada-U.S.-Mexico agreement because the United States was already holding debates within their congress about what priorities they should have in these negotiations. We did not have that opportunity. There was a commitment made in policy that this would be the way things move forward, yet for this agreement, which is really the first agreement we have entered into since CUSMA, this has not been followed. I asked the member for Elmwood—Transcona and the member for Windsor West, who was our international trade critic, if it had happened. We queried the clerk of the committee on international trade on if this happened. Nobody could find any evidence of it happening.

This is what we have been pushing for. We want to help the government really form good policy to negotiate good treaties. We should have some discussions before our good negotiators take their jobs and negotiate the treaties. We should give them some direction that comes from all of us here.

We come from different parts of the country and from different backgrounds. We have to have that input in these negotiations to make sure that they will benefit all Canadians. That is what the NDP really stands for, that these agreements should help not just corporations but all Canadians.

Government Orders

• (1345)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are in favour of free and fair agreements, although we still have not had a chance to really review this one.

One of the principles of a free trade agreement is that it help the economies of both countries. I was wondering if my NDP colleague could comment on this. Right now in Ukraine there is a noose and a stranglehold because of Russia, especially with the energy side. Looking at lower emissions, does it not really make sense that Canada would really focus on exporting clean, liquid natural gas to Ukraine and to Europe in general to help, not only from a geopolitical standpoint, but also from a practical standpoint? If we want to improve its economy, does it not make sense to give Canadian, clean, liquid natural gas to Ukraine instead of having Russia have a stranglehold over that entire country?

Could he comment on the common sense of that approach?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I will avoid a long debate about how clean liquid natural gas is and the whole idea of liquid natural gas actually being a good way to move forward with climate action, but I will say that there are liquid natural gas projects that are well on the way to completion in British Columbia. They take time. They cannot be built overnight. They are being built very quickly.

I would hope that this illegal action, this war in Ukraine, would not be going on by the time they are eventually shipping liquid natural gas. There are countries around the world that are much better placed, because of their situations, to supply that liquid natural gas to Ukraine, but Canada is moving in that direction. I just hope that the war is over by the time we are able to help in that regard.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would basically like to follow up on the last question and answer it because I think that is something that needs to be taken into consideration. The overriding thing has got to be the issue of trade agreements in principle and how it is that Canada has been a major benefactor through world trade.

We are very much a trading nation. For us to be able to hit the potential that Canada has in the future, we are very much dependant on international trade. All one needs to do is to take a look at any province, territory or community and the impact that international trade has had on every one of us in Canada. It affects us all. When we talk about good-quality, middle-class jobs, these are the ways in which we are going to be able to get many of those middle-class jobs.

This government has been focused on that virtually from day one, the importance of the middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. That has been a priority of this government. How can one make it a priority and not deal with the issue of trade? That is the reason, and I put this forward in the form of a question earlier, there is no government in the history of Canada that has signed more trade agreements than the current Prime Minister and the government.

Contrary to how the member tried to respond in his question, one cannot change history. That is the reality. The reason why we have

recognized the value of international trade and how that helps all of us is that we have seen the results of it, the growth in the economy. Prepandemic, we had already exceeded over a million additional jobs. That was prepandemic, based on the type of economic policies that were being developed and implemented here in Canada. It was having a positive impact.

The original Ukraine agreement was one of the first ones that was signed off on. I believe it was the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister who went to Ukraine and signed off on it. A few years later, President Zelenskyy and the Prime Minister met and had a discussion about how important it was that we modernize that particular agreement. There were a number of things they felt could be done to improve the agreement.

There were sound negotiations, which I made reference to earlier. We are very fortunate because of the number of trade agreements and memoranda of understanding we have been able to put into place. We have an incredible team of negotiators who negotiate on Canada's behalf. I would ultimately argue that they are second to no other team in the world. They have been at it, and we have accomplished so many agreements.

Members ask about this or that region, what is taking place in this or that region or how we feel as the House of Commons. I suspect that, whether or not it is in debates after previous agreements, the experiences and the discussions that take place with the many different stakeholders, whether municipalities, provinces, indigenous people or many other stakeholders, leading into the negotiations, give a very good sense of what would work well for us as a nation.

Ultimately, one could say that the proof is in the pudding. Look at the number of agreements that Canada now has with other countries. No other country has the same sort of access as Canada does around the world, even the United States, with those formal agreements. We have been aggressive in recognizing the importance of achieving these agreements because all of us benefit through them.

• (1350)

I define the benefits as raising the standard of living for Canadians and creating thousands of good-quality middle-class jobs, which provide the type of revenue that supports the government in bringing forward good government programs. This is where the focus of the government has been.

We look at the agreement being debated today, and I am sensitive to what is being said with respect to the input before signing. Why are we now being asked to either agree or not agree with it by way of a question?

I think it is important to recognize the process by which the negotiations take place. The Prime Minister cannot take a document, sit down with the President of Ukraine and say that this is the agreement per our negotiators and the feedback we have received from literally hundreds if not thousands of stakeholders, who are now signing off on it, much like we would not expect the Ukrainian Parliament to try to change the agreement itself. That is how it has worked for a while now, and it has been very successful.

Statements by Members

Members have made reference to wanting to see a bit of a change. Let us put that in a different perspective. I could be wrong on this, but if memory serves me correctly, this could be the first time in modern history where a trade agreement is being achieved when one of the countries is at war. Ukraine has a lot of things on its plate right now, yet as a country, it recognizes just how important it is to look at securing the modernization of a trade agreement.

It says a lot when a country at war is looking to Canada, which has been a dear friend to Ukraine, saying how important it is that we have a modern trade agreement. That was a president to a prime minister. It was signed off last month, in September. Given all the other issues we are facing, how often do I stand in the chamber to talk about the impacts of inflation, how it is hurting Canadians, the issue of interest rates and so many other issues? As a government, we recognize how important it is that we continue to push on the file between Canada and Ukraine in a tangible way. If we put it in the perspective of Ukraine being at war, given our previous negotiations and achievements through trade agreements, in particular the Ukraine trade agreement, I think there is a valid argument to be made that there is absolutely nothing wrong with allowing this legislation to, at the very least, go to committee.

I realize this is day one of the debate, but what concerns me is that the Conservatives' critic, in particular, has indicated that they want to have a more thorough debate, but there was no indication as to how long they would like to debate it. I am hoping that they, in particular, will not use House and procedural tactics to filibuster this legislation.

The stakeholders, whether in Ukraine or Canada, see the benefit of having this type of legislation pass. Personally, I would like to see it go to the Senate before Christmas because it still has to pass at the Senate, which is very much doable.

I want to emphasize this: We all talk about what is happening in Ukraine today, with the illegal invasion of Russia into its sovereign territory. Here we have an opportunity to make a very powerful statement by believing in our negotiators. Members have a copy of the agreement.

• (1355)

Even New Democrats voted in favour of the original Ukraine trade agreement. Collectively, as a House, we can send a very strong message to Europe and to Ukraine by saying that Canada is going to be there for Ukraine in a very real and tangible way. This trade agreement would empower more economic commerce between the two nations. It would enable a wider spectrum of services and goods. It would put into place dispute mechanisms.

Ukraine will prevail over Russia. When that happens, it is going to need and want to see its allied countries come to the table. Canada will be there. This is one of the ways we can be there in a real way. That is why I would suggest that we should deal with this legislation in the same format as we did for the first piece and allow it to pass relatively quickly.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

HOUSING INITIATIVE IN BRAMPTON

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Brampton is one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, and housing is top of mind for its residents. That is why our government has taken historic action to build 24,000 homes in the next 10 years in Brampton.

One hundred and fourteen million dollars from the housing accelerator fund will allow the City of Brampton to expedite 3,150 units and build them within the next three years. This partnership with the City of Brampton and municipalities across Canada will allow the removal of barriers to housing supply, accelerate growth and support the development of low-carbon and climate-resilient communities that are affordable, inclusive and diverse.

We will continue to work hard to make housing more affordable for Canadians from coast to coast.

* * *

MEMBER FOR KAMLOOPS—THOMPSON—CARIBOO

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour two people without whom I would not be here today: Giuseppe and Alba Caputo. My parents were both born in the province of Cosenza in southern Italy. My grandfather, Pasquale Spina, first made the trip to Canada in 1952. He left behind my mother, two-year-old Alba Libaretta. Her name means “freedom at dawn”, and she was so named because my grandfather was freed from being a POW in the early morning. My mother would follow with her mother in 1957, and my father arrived in Canada with his family in 1961.

My father was a mill worker, who displayed an unparalleled work ethic. I worked at his sawmill as a summer student; after two shifts, I knew I could not do the job he had done for 30 years. My sisters, Ellie and Rosie, are both teachers; in the family, we count eight degrees.

As my mother once asked: What would my grandfather say if he could see me in Parliament? I am not sure, but today I say thanks to my parents for all their sacrifices.

* * *

LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Latin American Heritage Month, a time to recognize the many contributions that Latin American communities have made and continue to make to the socio-economic development of Canada.

Canadians of Latin American descent have enhanced the cultural mosaic of Canada through their artistic and culinary traditions. This month, we had many opportunities to discover the long and rich history of the many Latin American communities here in Canada, and we celebrated their culture, resilience and heritage.

I would like to recognize Jaime Marulanda, editor of *Eco Latino*, and community leader Carolina Izaguirre-Campos for their services to the community. I would like to thank Professor Luis Abanto Rojas, chair of the University of Ottawa's Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, for inviting me to a Latin American Heritage Day event.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER APPRECIATION DAY

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the National Firefighter Appreciation Day ceremony, the Government of Quebec awarded the medal for meritorious acts to five firefighters from the Val d'Or fire department for their response to an incident that occurred on April 14, 2022, in Val-d'Or.

On arrival at a 13-unit building that was engulfed in flames, the firefighters heard two people, who were blocked by fire and smoke, calling for help. It was during that perilous intervention that they were able to pull out the victims, one of whom was unconscious. Their heroic actions, their physical efforts and their composure allowed them to evacuate the building and avoid the worst.

I want to thank and congratulate the chief of operations, Yves Barbe, and firefighters Jonathan Alarie, Francis Duchesne, Kristian Fortin-Chartier and Tomy Joly for their courage, their professionalism, their teamwork and their quick action.

Congratulations to them for this well-earned distinction.

* * *

120TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE HALIFAX

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Alliance Française Halifax on its 120th anniversary. This organization has been promoting the French language and culture, including Acadian culture, since 1903.

Thirty years ago this year, I began working with people in this organization and we have been working together ever since. Their hard work has led to a stronger economy, better public services and more opportunities for all Canadians to build stronger ties with each other.

I want to once again congratulate the entire team for these many years of success and offer them my best wishes for the future.

Statements by Members

• (1405)

[English]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight long years, the NDP-Liberal government creates so many questions for Canadians. Canadians question the charade of a 12-month price freeze that retailers have imposed on producers, which will only see major price increases later. This was done just so the Prime Minister can put this problem off until after the next election. Canadians want to know how these suppliers absorb the increase in the carbon tax applied at every step of the food value chain. How do producers absorb the costs of higher interest rates and un-thought-through label and inspection charges imposed by the CFIA? Why is the government allowing a price ceiling to be imposed by retailers on suppliers, which are forced to absorb these costs? Why not instead remove or reduce the costs? The Prime Minister is all hat and no cattle; he is not worth the cost.

Canadians want to know, and Canadians want the Prime Minister to go.

* * *

TARO EAST LANDFILL

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1996, I joined residents of Upper Stoney Creek and Hamilton East in opposition to the planned operation of the Taro East landfill. Against stiff opposition to the plan, the Conservative Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris, approved its operation. To fast-forward a quarter century, with the landfill poised to close in 2019, Premier Ford ignored overwhelming community opposition. He approved the landfill's expansion and continued operation for another decade.

This past summer was unbearable for Stoney Creek residents. Odours from the expanded landfill prevented them from enjoying their properties and local parks, and many were physically affected by its operation.

Ontario's provincial government has yet to act. I rise today to voice my support for local residents, who have called upon Premier Ford and other elected representatives to immediately close the landfill until the company implements measures to eliminate odours at the site.

* * *

CREEK 53 CONSERVANCY TRUST

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the steadfast and dedicated team at Creek 53, a conservancy trust based in my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges. Made up of landowners, trustees, academics and environmental stewards, the team at Creek 53 is working toward the environmental preservation of the Hudson escarpment and the creek 53 watershed, an area rich in biodiversity that is located in Hudson.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

This initiative was made possible through the vision and hard work of administrators Richard Adler, Bernard Blouin, Christopher Buddle, Lindsay D'Aoust and Brian Grubert. Thanks to them and the generosity of donors who share their vision, Creek 53 is ensuring that this magnificent ecosystem supports research, education and awareness initiatives and that future generations can benefit from it.

[English]

On behalf of everyone who calls Vaudreuil—Soulanges home, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the volunteers, supporters and trustees at Creek 53. They are pioneers not just in conservation but in truly living the ethos of environmental harmony and preservation.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, young Canadians cannot afford to move out of their parents' homes; now seniors are forced to sell their homes because they cannot afford them anymore. After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, inflation is so high that Canadians who have worked for decades, saved up for their retirement and contributed their entire lives are forced to sell their homes. Worse than that, they cannot even afford to rent.

The Prime Minister needs to admit to Canadians that his so-called sunny ways policies have cost seniors their retirement. With housing costs more than doubling, they can no longer afford to live in their homes. Many, even those who have been retired for more than 10 years, are trying to re-enter the workforce to pay for the basics: food and rent.

Common-sense Conservatives would start by capping spending and bringing inflation and interest rates down, so that people can keep their homes. It is now obvious to the young people who cannot afford to move out, and it is painfully obvious to the parents who have to move back in with their kids: The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

* * *

● (1410)

FILM INDUSTRY IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from Apple to Disney and the CBC, the film industry has noticed Newfoundland and Labrador: our talent, our creativity and our beautiful backdrops.

I had the privilege of joining the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency this past week in St. John's East to announce \$1.5 million for PictureNL and the Newfoundland Independent Filmmakers Co-operative, or NIFCO. This funding will help the film industry in our province keep its competitive advantage, so that the next great production chooses Newfoundland and Labrador as its cast of characters.

The film industry is worth over \$9 billion in Canada, and we have approximately 1,400 full-time jobs in the province. With this funding, our government is continuing in our commitment to an industry that has become an integral part of the community.

* * *

[Translation]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal government, the cost of living just keeps going up. Massive spending and endless deficits are causing record rates of inflation. Quebeckers are getting poorer by the day.

While our people are unable to make ends meet, the Liberals find that this is the perfect time to add to Quebeckers' burden by imposing the carbon tax 2, which applies in Quebec and adds 17¢ per litre at the pump.

It is no surprise to see Bloc Québécois MPs rallying around the Liberals because they are out of touch with the realities of Quebeckers who are suffering. Not only do they agree with the tax, but these so-called defenders of Quebec have said loud and clear that they want to drastically increase it. It is very costly to vote for the Bloc Québécois.

At a time when people are struggling to feed themselves and put a roof over their heads, the only thing the government and its Bloc allies can do is raise the tax that drives up the price of everything.

The Conservative Party is the only party that will make life more affordable by scrapping the carbon tax and bringing back common sense.

* * *

[English]

DISCRIMINATION IN CANADA

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, imagine someone having lunch in a Jewish-owned business in downtown Toronto, only to be shouted at because they are Jewish. Imagine someone being harassed outside their children's school, where they have been told they would be safe, as they are escorted in by uniformed police officers. Imagine someone being told they should not come to the office on a Monday morning, or maybe that it would be wise to take the religious identifier that was meant to signify their faith off their front door because it would make them a target.

We do not have to imagine it. It is all happening here, and it is being further fuelled by the irresponsible statements pushed by the Prime Minister, who, six days after repeating Hamas's talking points, still has not corrected the record.

Imagine someone being terrified in their own community and having a Prime Minister who has not said a word about it. It is quite the opposite: He took the word of a terrorist organization over the words of his own military and our allies and still has not retracted his statement.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

BRAIN CANCER AWARENESS DAY

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October 24 marks Brain Cancer Awareness Day in Canada.

Thanks to the Hats for Hope campaign, this date has become a symbol of solidarity in response to this devastating disease. Every day is a struggle for patients, but support and hope grow every year.

Tomorrow, let us wear a toque or hoodie, take a photo, share it on social media and be a bearer of hope. It is an opportunity to pay tribute to all those who bravely face brain tumours, like my beloved mother. I am making this statement in her memory.

This life-altering disease can impair vision and hearing and affect memory, balance and mobility, leaving lasting physical and emotional scars.

I want to thank the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada for its hard work in helping patients and families and in advancing the search for cures.

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[English]

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, humanity faces unprecedented danger from climate change and biodiversity loss, yet while the earth is on fire, government inaction is equivalent to pouring gasoline on the flames. This past summer, the CEO of Suncor made troubling remarks about the need to maximize profits in an industry that has seen record profits over the last two years. CEOs of big oil companies raked in billions of dollars while communities across Canada were ravaged by forest fires. These companies are taking no responsibility for their decades-long pollution.

The Liberals have given big oil free rein to fuel the climate crisis and maximize profits. The NDP wants to see an end to subsidies and to see stronger emissions caps on these big oil and gas companies to stop their decades-long free ride. It is time to end their greed and protect the future of our planet.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

ÉRUDIT PLATFORM

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Érudit, a Quebec leader in disseminating scientific knowledge in French, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

Érudit is a digital platform created to promote scientific publications. It owes its existence to the vision and genius of a consortium comprising the Université de Montréal, the Université Laval and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Today it offers 250,000 publications in 35 fields in the humanities, social sciences, arts and literature to more than five million users worldwide. The best part is that the vast majority of this content is available in French free of charge to everyone. Érudit is therefore an invaluable showcase for

our researchers and for the knowledge they generate. It allows Quebec's star to shine across all of Francophonie.

We are proud of Érudit for its 25 years of service to science in French.

Congratulations, Érudit and continued success to a true Quebec treasure.

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[English]

ARRIVECAN APP INVESTIGATION

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-NDP government is once again in the midst of a scandal and criminal investigation. The RCMP is currently investigating allegations of identity theft, forged resumé, contractual theft, fraudulent billing, price-fixing and collusion in the creation of the \$54-million ArriveCAN app.

Two whistle-blowers trapped in this scandal came forward to the media. This is the only reason we now know about it, as government officials were forced by their political masters to lie to Canadians about this contract. This investigation was hidden by GC Strategies, the Canada Border Services Agency and numerous Liberal ministers during our study last year. They deliberately withheld the truth from this House and from Canadians.

The Liberal-NDP government will engage in criminal behaviour to pay their friends millions and continue their cover-up before they tell the truth. The Prime Minister once again has shown that he is not worth the cost.

* * *

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I counted 158 times that Conservatives claimed things that demonstrated they were, let us say, factually perplexed. It is like the Liberal-NDP agreement of 18 months ago that delivers important help for Canadians. Conservatives turned that into a “coalition”. Then they mutated that into a “Liberal-NDP government”. Then they said, “an eight-year Liberal-NDP government”. Really? We have told them a million times to quit exaggerating.

Conservatives blame the price on pollution for high food prices. I checked, and no big grocery CEOs are selling pencils on street corners. I am sorry, but there is no \$120 Tory turkey driving those mega grocery profits either.

Oral Questions

Conservatives preach again and again that deficits, less than 1% of Canada's GDP, drive inflation. Either they do not really know what causes inflation, which makes the Conservatives far too risky, or they do know and they are deliberately, dangerously deceptive.

ORAL QUESTION

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost. The cost of housing has doubled since he took office. The CMHC said that there has been a 63% increase in the number of Canadians who are using alternative loans. They pay as much as 15% per year for these alternative mortgages. Will the Prime Minister finally bring down his inflationary deficits to allow the Bank of Canada to lower interest rates so that Canadians can keep their homes?

• (1420)

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues opposite have no shame claiming that they want to march towards prosperity on a path of austerity. Canadians know that all the Conservative Party stands for is chop, chop, chop, cutting funding for small craft harbours, cutting support for fishing communities and cutting the crucial programs our communities depend on. The Conservative Party is like a shark that claims to be a vegetarian. They have no credibility. They are not worth the risk.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are already living with austerity. They keep chop, chop, chopping at the grocery store, at the gas station and now at home. We are seeing the rise of a new phenomenon of homelessness among middle-class seniors ever since the cost of housing doubled. One man in Calgary had his rent raised by \$1,600. Now he is unable to find an apartment to rent. Will the government finally reverse its inflationary policies to allow for lower interest rates so that our seniors can keep their homes?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the sad duty to announce that members on the other side of the House can no longer see clearly. They are so determined to make cuts everywhere that they have cut back on their own glasses. They have no plan, no vision. That is all the Conservatives have to offer us. They should put their glasses back on and keep them on, for heaven's sake.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost of housing, which has doubled. We now see there has been a 63% increase in the number of Canadians who are going to alternative lenders to get mortgages because they can no longer get approved by the main banks. That means interest rates as high as 15% per year. We have not seen those types of rates since the last Trudeau was in power.

Will the Prime Minister reverse his inflationary spending in the upcoming fall economic update so we can bring down interest rates and our Canadian people can keep their homes?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important that people understand that the hon. member's plan to have more homes built seems to be to cut funding to build homes.

I was in Brampton last week, where we announced \$114 million to help Brampton build more than 24,000 homes over the next decade. He plans to cut that. When it comes to getting more homes built, we are removing the GST on new apartments in this country. He plans to put it back on.

We are going to continue to make the investments necessary. We agree that there are people struggling. The difference between us is we have a solution to the problem.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he is absolutely right that he has a problem, a problem that he and his government created.

After eight years, the Prime Minister has doubled rent and doubled mortgage payments, and now his plan is a \$4-billion program that two years in has not built a single, solitary home. He also wants to target tax benefits for the construction of \$10-million penthouse apartments.

Will the Liberals instead reverse their inflationary spending so we can bring down interest rates and let Canadians keep their homes?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to talk about housing program delivery, when he was the minister, he had \$300 million go toward building only 99 homes over years. We are continuing to roll out programs that are literally changing the ways that cities build homes. We have helped build or repair nearly half a million homes through the national housing strategy, which his party voted against. He is now opposing measures that will make it cheaper to build the homes that Canadians need. We are going to get it done by continuing to incentivize home building and supporting the people who are going to put roofs over the heads of our neighbours. It is the right thing to do. It is a shame that he opposes it.

* * *

• (1425)

SMALL BUSINESS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the national housing strategy of which he speaks has doubled housing costs. It doubled the cost of mortgages, rent and down payments. Yes, it cost many billions more than what we spent when we were in government, but we delivered housing that was half the cost of what it is today.

Now, on to restaurants: Today, we learned that one-third of restaurants are losing money. That leaves them three choices: shut down, cut wages or raise prices for Canadians.

Will the government reverse the carbon taxes and the inflationary increases to interest rates that are forcing our restaurants to go under and costing waitresses and servers their jobs?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a former small business owner myself, I know that small businesses are the backbone of these communities. As a small business owner, I am glad the Conservatives are not in charge. Small businesses would not be saving \$1 billion in credit card transaction fees. Women entrepreneurs would not have \$7 billion of investment through our women entrepreneurship strategy, nor the \$10-a-day child care that has put more women into the work force.

The Conservatives have been voting against these efforts to support small businesses, including women entrepreneurs. They are not worth the risk.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 250,000 businesses are at risk of closing as early as 2024 if the government does not extend the repayment deadline for the CEBA loans. Imagine if we were to lose a quarter of a million businesses all at the same time.

It is not surprising that, on Friday, the premiers of Quebec and the provinces all wrote to this government. They are calling on the government to extend the repayment deadline for our businesses by one year, without the loss of the forgivable portion of the loan. The premiers are responsible.

Will the government grant their request?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are offering additional flexibilities for small businesses to repay their CEBA loans. They include a full one-year extension on the term loan repayment deadline, more flexibility on refinancing and more time to access loan forgiveness, which is both a balanced and fiscally responsible approach.

We will continue to listen to small businesses across the country.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again, the government cannot see beyond the end of its nose. That is not what the premiers are asking for. They are asking for a one-year extension.

Do the Liberals really think that the 250,000 businesses will be able to pay the money back faster if they close? How many workers will end up on EI if these businesses close? Have they calculated that?

The premiers of Quebec and the provinces are unanimous. They understand that it is not right.

When will this government understand that it is not right?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. As he well knows, most companies

have told us that if our government had not been there during the pandemic, many companies would have closed.

We came up with a flexible solution that fits with our fiscal framework. We are going to continue to be there for companies, for all kinds of things. We have again made historic investments in companies in Quebec, and we are going to continue to do so.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for two weeks, Israeli families have lived with the pain of loved ones either killed or still held hostage. In the last two weeks, the situation in Gaza has grown dire. Humanitarian aid is trickling in. Thousands have been killed, many of them children. Diverse voices are calling for a ceasefire, including the head of the UN, Canadian aid agencies and even some Liberal MPs.

Will the Prime Minister join the NDP's call for a ceasefire now?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza was dire before these last weeks. We are doing everything we can to support Canadians on the ground. We are also committed to working diplomatically to prevent the conflict from spreading. We are working with our allies to ensure the protection of all Israeli and Palestinian civilians. We have been consistently calling on international humanitarian law to be respected.

We were the first government to move to provide substantial humanitarian aid to both Israeli and Palestinian civilians, and we will continue our efforts in that regard.

• (1430)

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Hamas terrorist attacks continue. Rockets are being deliberately fired at civilians. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is worsening. More and more innocent Israelis and Palestinians are losing their lives in this horrific war.

When will the government get serious about protecting the innocent and call for a ceasefire?

[English]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been active from the very beginning. We are the first western country to provide an initial amount of \$10 million to go to humanitarian assistance. Recently, we announced an additional \$50 million, bringing the Canadian total to \$60 million.

Oral Questions

We have been consistent in the call to respect international humanitarian law by all parties in this conflict. We have been consistently working very hard with our friends and allies in the region to make sure that the humanitarian corridors are not only open, but that they are maintained and that the essential life-saving supplies get through on a daily basis.

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HOUSING

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, nearly half of all Canadians with a mortgage say that they are having a tough time paying it. The Prime Minister told us that interest rates would stay low forever, but his reckless spending and higher taxes have caused rates to skyrocket faster than ever.

Now struggling families are paying the price. Young people cannot even imagine getting in. There is a mortgage crisis on the horizon until the Prime Minister reins it in.

When will he stop the inflationary deficits and balance the budget so Canadians can keep their homes?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I hear the Conservatives make arguments that we should be spending less in the context of housing, I would point out to them that it takes investments to build the housing necessary to put a roof over the heads of the same Canadians whom she seems concerned about.

In this regard, we are cutting the tax on new apartment construction in the country. The Conservatives want to put it back on. We are moving forward with a plan to fund cities so they build more homes. They plan to cut it.

When we put measures on the floor of the House of Commons to support some of society's most vulnerable, they vote against them. Every step of the way, the Conservatives try to block progress for people. We are going to advance at all costs.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is false. The Liberals act like everything is okay. They have not built a single home with their accelerator fund. The number of people who say that paying their mortgage is very difficult has doubled in six months. As mortgage payments and anxiety go up, Canadians cut back on essentials like food and home heating. One should not have to choose between heating one's home and putting food on the table, but that is the reality after eight years of the Prime Minister. Canadians are realizing that he is not worth the cost.

Will the minister finally realize that too?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, part of the reason it is difficult to find affordable housing in the country is because, for 30 years, federal governments failed to make the investments necessary, including the previous Conservative government. When the Conservatives were last in power, the country lost 800,000 homes that were on the market at affordable prices.

We are going to continue to make the investments necessary to get more homes built. I would ask the hon. member, in response to

her question, why she wants to raise taxes on home building and cut funding for home builders.

We need to make the investments necessary to build homes, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

The Speaker: I will ask all members, even those who are not sitting in their normal seats, to please listen to the response. When they have the floor, they will be able to ask their questions.

The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, spending is out of control and inflationary deficits are pushing up mortgage costs. The Parliamentary Budget Officer says that the deficit this year will increase to over \$46 billion. Everyone now agrees that spending is driving interest rates.

Every month, 70,000 households are renewing their mortgage and they are realizing that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Will the government rein in inflationary deficits and put forth a plan to balance the budget so Canadians can keep their homes?

• (1435)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can speak to the fact that Canada has created over one million more jobs compared to pre-pandemic levels, has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio, the lowest deficit in the G7 and lower inflation than our comparative partners around the world. The IMF and OECD project the strongest growth in 2024.

We know that Canadians are struggling right now, but the real difference between us and the Conservatives is that our government will not abandon people in need like the Conservative leader has made abundantly clear time and time again.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, maybe the government has not received the memo. Nobody cares about meaningless G7 comparative statistics. After eight years of prolific spending, the bills are finally coming due.

The government borrowing is driving interest rates. This year, the government has to borrow \$421 billion. Next year, the government has to borrow over \$350 billion. That pushes up mortgage costs for everybody.

Once again, will Liberals acknowledge that they need to rein in their spending and produce a plan to balance the budget so Canadians can keep their homes?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will share what Canadians and Albertans care about, and that is the Canada pension plan.

After three weeks of silence on behalf of the Conservative leader, finally a comment on Danielle Smith's idea to take Albertans out of the CPP, a weak, timid response at that. Guess what. Thirty MPs from Alberta, Conservatives every one of them, are silent on the issue. Why? Because they talk a big game in the House, but when it comes to defending Albertans and Canadians, they are silent. We are on the task. We are going to defend Albertans on the CPP.

* * *

[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal government, unfortunately, we no longer recognize the Canada we loved so much. Rents are much more expensive, actually twice as expensive. More and more people are being forced to live in their cars. In Canada, a G7 country, it is outrageous that men and women are having to live in their cars.

Meanwhile, those folks over there have come up with the brilliant idea of inventing and implementing a new carbon tax, with the radical support of the Bloc Québécois.

Seriously, can anyone in this government stand up and say that introducing a new tax is a good idea?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question. There is a lot to unpack there.

I would start by saying that tackling climate change is about more than just taking care of the environment, which the Conservative Party does not want to do. It is also about building a transition economy. Fighting climate change means creating jobs. That is exactly what we are doing on this side of the House.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how could anyone think that saying that would change for the better the lives of people living in their cars? That is completely disconnected from the actual experience of those struggling with this government's inflationary reality. For eight years, the Liberals have never controlled their spending. They created the inflationary measures that are making everything so expensive today. If that were not enough, now they want to radically increase the carbon tax with the complicit support of the Bloc Québécois.

Again, is there anyone in this government who can stand up and tell me with a straight face that it is a good idea to invent and implement a new tax when everyone is struggling?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I can say with a straight face is that the Conservative Party has voted against every measure proposed by this side of the House to provide support to families. The Canada child benefit and every investment we have made in housing come to mind. We still expect the

Oral Questions

Conservatives to vote in favour of Bill C-56, which will stabilize grocery prices and get rid of the GST on new housing construction.

On this side of the House, we are taking care of people every day.

* * *

● (1440)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Israel has the right to defend itself. Let us be realistic: The conflict in Gaza will not end any time soon. We also have to be realistic about the inadequacy of humanitarian aid that is trickling in. Canada must ask Israel for a humanitarian truce to allow for aid to reach civilians in need. The UN made a similar request last week. The European Union is considering it at this very moment.

Will Canada support the idea of a humanitarian truce?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is our collective duty to defend human decency and ensure everyone's safety. We remain firm in our position in the face of such a humanitarian crisis: Innocent civilians need more aid, not less. That is why we have announced a total of \$60 million in aid to address the needs of Palestinians of Gaza and the surrounding regions.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the humanitarian aid needs to get through.

Everyone would prefer peace to war, but it is unrealistic to ask Israel to observe a full ceasefire when its people are not safe. It is, however, realistic for Canada to support the United Nations' more nuanced request of establishing a temporary, multilateral humanitarian truce to bring food in, keep humanitarian corridors open and protect aid distribution centres so that NGOs are safe. That is a reasonable proposal.

Will Canada support a humanitarian truce?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we would like to reiterate the need to keep humanitarian corridors open and unfettered so that critical humanitarian aid can quickly reach those who urgently need it.

We are encouraged by the fact that a second humanitarian aid convoy has crossed the Rafah border crossing. We are calling for the ongoing, unfettered passage of essential aid to those who need it.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that was not clear. Was it a yes or a no? It will come up again after question period.

Oral Questions

Since the horrific and tragic events of October 7, Canada and Quebec have seen a rising trend in hate between pro-Israel and pro-Palestine factions. We have seen graffiti, swastikas and endless intimidation of people who follow the Jewish or Muslim faith. It is as though they want to transport the war, hatred and division experienced in the Middle East to Quebec and Canada, as if we needed more division on this issue.

Could the Prime Minister ask for calm before a tragedy erupts, as it happened in the United States or France?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for this very important question.

I think everyone in the House is truly concerned about this right now. There is no place for hatred or violence here in Canada. We know that both the Jewish and Muslim communities, both the Israeli and Palestinian communities, are really hurting right now. They are scared.

We all need to come together because, first and foremost, we are Canadians. We should be there for each other.

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[English]

HOUSING

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister's high inflationary deficit and punishing tax hikes, seniors are being forced out of their homes and onto the streets. John, a senior, had a monthly mortgage payment of \$1,000, but today it ballooned to \$2,600. He was forced to sell his home, but with rent increases, he cannot find an affordable apartment. He will soon find himself homeless.

The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. Has he finally learned that the budget does not balance itself?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is fascinating that the hon. member would ask a question about seniors trying to find a place that they can afford, when her party put forward a housing plan that mentions seniors precisely zero times.

Over the course of my time in the chamber, I have seen the Conservatives oppose taking the age of retirement from 67 back to 65. I have seen them oppose increases to the guaranteed income supplement. I have seen them oppose increases to the old age security pension for seniors aged 75 and more.

If it is finally time for the Conservatives to recognize that seniors need help, I welcome that, but they are new to this game.

* * *

● (1445)

[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax, which is pushing up the price of everything and which the Bloc Québécois wants to radically increase, is making Quebecers poorer.

After eight years of this government, a young retiree has had to go back to work to pay her heating and grocery bills. The woman said that all her bills have gone up.

It is costly to vote for the Bloc Québécois. The Prime Minister must finally realize that his inflationary policies are hurting people.

When will he scrap his costly carbon tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people watching us can sometimes get a little cynical about politics, especially when they hear this kind of thing from an opposition member who was part of a provincial government that happened to be the first government in North America to put a price on pollution.

She supported putting a price on pollution. She was part of a government that campaigned for years to put a price on pollution, not only in Quebec, but throughout North America. Now, all of a sudden, she is flip-flopping and changing her mind with the weather, all because she has a leader who, ideologically, does not believe in climate change.

It makes for a fair bit of cynicism among the public.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, things are so bad in our beautiful Canada that retired seniors have to go back to work to cover basic needs such as food and home heating. It is shameful. That is the reality after eight years of this Liberal government that is supported by the Bloc Québécois. Quebec was the province most affected by inflation for the fourth month in a row. It is costly to vote Bloc Québécois.

When will the Prime Minister cancel his disastrous carbon tax, which is radically increasing the price of everything?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it would be a stretch to describe former premier Jean Charest as a dangerous Bloc member, yet the opposition party member served under that premier for years. She believed in climate change at the time, but not anymore. She also used to believe in carbon pricing and implementing programs to support public transit and the electrification of transportation.

Today, she no longer believes in any of that, because she belongs to a party that is ideologically against fighting climate change and is against the idea of helping Canadians in the green transition.

*Oral Questions***HOUSING***[English]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, The Auditor General has reinforced findings from two Pollara reports of racist outcomes in Canada's immigration system. Regional disparities continue to create longer processing times for those in sub-Saharan Africa. Meanwhile, new AI tools discriminatingly double wait times for Haitian citizens. The Liberals said they would address regional disparities in 2016, but the Auditor General found they have done nothing. This is outrageous. People's lives are hanging in the balance.

Will the government take immediate action to put in place an independent ombudsperson to end the systemic racism in IRCC?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important not to deny the reality that systemic racism exists within IRCC, as well as the fact that it exists throughout the public service. We need to address it. It has real impacts on people who are looking to come to Canada. There are also some of the facts the member has stated.

I would note that, thankfully, the Auditor General produced a report that will help as a guide. I have asked my deputy minister to continue her work in fighting systemic racism. I would also note that some of the thresholds have gone up in western Africa since the reference point, but it is not enough; we have to do better.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister must call for a ceasefire in Israel and Palestine now. We must protect children from injury, death and the desolation of their futures. Canada's voice used to be a leader that stood up for human rights and dignity for all, not standing on the sidelines like we are seeing now. If Canada does not act, more families will mourn, as the violence will escalate. It has already spilled into Lebanon and the region. The government's lack of concern for Canadians trapped in Gaza is disturbing.

Why will the Prime Minister not call for a ceasefire now? How hard is it to say the word "ceasefire"?

• (1450)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were the first western country to provide humanitarian assistance to all civilians in the region, and we topped it up with an additional \$50 million. As a result of that, our friends and allies have been incentivized to follow our early example. I just spoke to the German minister for international development, and she told me that this morning, Germany announced \$50 million to help civilians caught in this conflict.

We are providing the leadership necessary to get aid flowing and to fight for the respect of international humanitarian law. We are putting our money where our mouth is to get life-saving materials to civilians in the region.

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are concerned about the cost of housing and finding a home at a price they can afford. While the Leader of the Opposition continues to blame municipal mayors and councillors, we are committed to working side by side with all levels of government to increase housing supply.

Can the minister explain how he is working with the local government to build more homes in my community of Brampton?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for hosting me and the Prime Minister last week, when we announced an investment of \$114 million, alongside Mayor Patrick Brown, for the city of Brampton. This investment is importantly going to fast-track the construction of more than 3,100 homes over the next three years and more than 24,000 homes over the next decade.

By working with municipal council and identifying the most ambitious plans in the country, we are going to be able to solve Canada's national housing crisis, starting right in the member's community in the city of Brampton.

* * *

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, farmers can no longer carry the burden of the NDP-Liberal government.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, vegetable farmers warned Canadians about why the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. The price of fresh vegetables is already up 12%. The Liberals' front-of-pack warning labels on food will cost the industry \$2 billion. Now, the Prime Minister's nonsensical package changes on produce will increase the price of food 30%. These are costs that will be passed directly to the consumer.

Why is the Prime Minister increasing the cost of food by 30%?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is fully aware that we are dealing with the food chain in order to deal with the cost of food.

Oral Questions

We understand the price of food is too high. However, we need to deal with climate change, which is a major problem with the cost of food. There are floods and fires in British Columbia, and straw is worth \$300 a bale across the Prairies. There is no possibility of keeping food prices down when we have extreme weather conditions.

We are dealing with climate change and will continue to deal with it.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no chance of keeping food prices low if the government keeps adding red tape, bureaucracy and carbon taxes on farmers.

Farmers cannot afford increased carbon taxes and red tape, and neither can Canadians who are already struggling to put food on the table. The price of beef and fresh vegetables is up 12%. The carbon tax will cost Canadian farmers close to \$1 billion by 2030. It is this simple: If the government increases costs to farmers, the price of food goes up. If the government increases costs to retailers, the price of food goes up.

Why is the Prime Minister not worth the cost? It is because he is increasing food costs by 30%. Why is he?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that climate change has many times the impact on general and food inflation that the carbon price has, but we do not see Conservatives jumping up and down to raise ambitions on fighting climate change. Why is that? When Canadians want more action on climate change, the Conservatives are regressive and promote climate denial.

Let me also clarify that the vast majority of low- and middle-income families get more money back than they pay, through the quarterly rebate. When Conservatives want to take away those payments, whom are they actually advocating for?

* * *

● (1455)

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is an agricultural powerhouse, which is something that farmers of eastern Ontario and across Canada are all very proud of.

After eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, fanatical pursuit of failed, ideologically driven economic policy is crushing Canadian farmers. Too many families cannot even afford nutritious food. The reality is that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

When will the morally and politically bankrupt government wake up and stop punishing farmers with the inflation-inducing carbon tax?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Conservatives really care about grocery prices, then why are they not supporting our affordability bill in the House? They have stated repeatedly that they are going to vote against measures that would increase competition and bring down food prices for Canadians. Do

they expect us to believe that common sense means working against the interests of Canadians?

We are fighting for affordability for Canadians every step of the way. The Conservatives should get onside and support our affordability bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the government continues to punish Canadians with its harmful carbon tax. Canadians are struggling to feed their families, and record numbers of them are turning to food banks. For the fourth month in a row, Quebec is the province hardest hit by inflation.

This is what happens when the Bloc-Liberal coalition agrees to impose a second carbon tax that applies to Quebec. Worse still, they want to radically increase it. It is costly to vote for the Bloc Québécois.

Will the government and its Bloc Québécois partners agree today to cancel their infamous carbon tax?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is pretty incredible to see a colleague from Quebec who does not believe in climate change.

I just want to tell him all about the warming oceans, fishing industry concerns, endangered species and the tornadoes that destroyed our docks, our shorelines. We have to deal with shoreline erosion.

It is easy to see that the Conservatives have no plan. They are even cutting plans. That is who the Conservatives are.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. President, groups and unions held a protest in Quebec City on Saturday to demand an end to closed work permits for temporary foreign workers. They are right. Closed permits leave workers totally dependent on their employer. Unfortunately, some employers take advantage of the situation.

The Bloc Québécois has finally managed to bring this issue forward for study in committee. Can we count on the government to tell the temporary foreign workers who are watching that it is working on solutions and that closed permits will soon be a thing of the past?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

Temporary foreign workers come here to work temporarily in fisheries, agriculture or other extremely important sectors like tourism. I should note that the current program is not the same program that existed under the Harper government.

As for sector-specific work permits, we are working on this important issue. We have systems in place to protect workers. The companies' obligations are real and must be met.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we need answers.

Closed permits lead not only to abuse, but also to absurd situations. Radio-Canada reported on a good example, specifically the case of Mr. Bérard, who is from Mauritius. He works in Beauce and wants to stay in Beauce, but the plant where he works is shutting down. Because he has a closed permit that binds him to that employer, he cannot look for a job, except in another plant belonging to the same company. He will either be forced to leave his region or forced to leave Quebec because he is losing his job.

Does the government agree that it is time to put an end to these absurd situations?

• (1500)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I appreciate my colleague's question and I am sympathetic to the plight of temporary foreign workers in Canada. That is why we have improved the quality of employer inspections. We need to work with organizations that support migrant workers here in Canada.

We have also opened up pathways to permanent residence. We are working on sector-specific work permits.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia has stated that homelessness has gone up by 400% in Halifax since 2019 because the cost of everything has gone up, which has been caused by the current NDP-Liberal government. Even Atlantic Canada Liberal MPs agree that the cost-of-living crisis is caused by the carbon tax.

This Prime Minister is just not worth the cost, and Canadians are suffering. When will the NDP-Liberal government axe the carbon tax so Canadians can keep their homes?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is fascinating. I was with the head of the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia just a couple of weeks ago when we were announcing a \$79-million investment in Halifax that is going to build more homes in that city. It happened to be on the location of an affordable housing project that only exists because it was funded through the federal government's national housing strategy.

If the hon. member wants to address housing policy, I would suggest he talk to some of his colleagues who plan to raise taxes on

home builders and cut funding for home building. We are going to continue to make the investments necessary to put a roof over the head of Canadians. I hope the member gets with the times and joins us.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the current NDP-Liberals driving up the cost of living in Atlantic Canada, this Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. Liberal MPs from Atlantic Canada have again decided to punish us by quadrupling the carbon tax to 61¢ per litre. Atlantic Canadians have had enough of the carbon tax. Will the Prime Minister now admit that the carbon tax is punishing Atlantic Canada and the most vulnerable people in our society?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now is probably as good a time, and specifically right now, to remind this House that just about every member on that side of the House ran, of course, on a carbon tax. They had some way of going about it where people would collect green points that would go toward some sort of government-run Amway catalogue where they could collect some sort of greenie things that would be selected by the government. They can remind me, if they can. I can only assume that members from that side of the House would form this government committee where people could cash in their points.

We prefer, on this side of the House, to put cash back into the pockets of hard-working Canadians.

* * *

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if RBC takes over HSBC, it will mean that Canada's number one bank will swallow up Canada's number seven bank and its 800,000 mortgage customers in one big gulp. What does that mean for Canadians? This week's variable mortgage rates show that HSBC's variable mortgage rate is 6.4% compared to RBC at 7.15%. That means that families in Toronto or Vancouver with a half-million dollar mortgage will pay \$312 more per month over the \$1,000 they are paying when they remortgage.

Will the minister reject this merger or will she prove once again that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance takes her role as the regulator of the financial sector very seriously. As the Department of Finance stated on November 29 of last year, "The Minister of Finance's decision [on the acquisition] will be informed by all required regulatory review processes", including those administered by the Office of Superintendent of Financial Institutions and the Competition Bureau.

Oral Questions

I want to assure everyone that our government is committed to supporting competition because we know competition is in the best interest of Canadians.

* * *

• (1505)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, international, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing causes severe harm to species such as wild Pacific salmon and the oceanic whitetip shark. It not only causes economic harm to the thousands who rely on the regulated fishing industry, but also further endangers at-risk species and impacts indigenous communities that rely on certain fish stocks for food, and social and ceremonial purposes.

Can the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard provide an update to this House on the critical work our government is doing to combat international illegal fishing?

Hon. Diane LeBouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his strong advocacy for fish species at risk. This fall, Fisheries and Oceans Canada successfully led the first high seas patrol to detect and prevent illegal fishing in the north Pacific. This operation led to the seizure of over 3,000 illegally fished shark fins.

Our world message is clear: Canada will continue to fight illegal fishing by foreign actors both in Canada and abroad.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP ended the SNC investigation due to the Prime Minister's refusal to give access to cabinet documents.

It does not stop there. During my recent inquiry of the Auditor General, the NDP-Liberal cover-up coalition adjourned the meeting, leaving crucial questions unanswered.

Over the last eight years, the Prime Minister has spent years concealing his role in the SNC scandal. He is not worth the cost. When will he finally produce the documents as requested by the RCMP?

The Speaker: I want to remind all members to please refrain from using mock names.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the RCMP has confirmed, there is no active investigation. The case was fully looked into and is now closed. As the member opposite knows, all RCMP operations are managed independently.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that response is the opposite of the definition of transparency and accountability.

In 2019, after being found guilty of breaching the Conflict of Interest Act, the Prime Minister claimed he took full responsibility

for his mistakes, yet here we are after five years and the RCMP confirms that the Prime Minister refused to release all the documents as requested.

Canadians have questions. Unlike the NDP-Liberal cover-up coalition, Conservatives want answers. What is he hiding?

The Speaker: I want to remind all hon. members once again to please refrain from using mock titles.

The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that question, but I also appreciate who it is coming from. The member opposite is somebody I have worked with in the past on the justice committee, somebody who knows the criminal justice system in this country and the difference between political operations and policing operations. There is a bright line in a democracy between those two things. In a democracy, we do not instruct police officers how to do their job.

The RCMP conducted an independent investigation and concluded there was no further investigation merited. We trust the RCMP in this country to do their jobs independently. I wish my colleague opposite would do the same.

* * *

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, we see that the Liberals cannot help but line the pockets of their friends. The Prime Minister simply is not worth the cost to Canadians. His green tech slush fund is being used to funnel money into the pockets of insiders. The chair of the board is a friend of the Prime Minister: Annette Verschuren has received millions of dollars from the same fund for which she is chair.

How many more Liberal insiders have gotten rich from this slush fund?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said in this House numerous times now, when the minister learned about the allegations of mismanagement at SDTC, he immediately acted to hire a third party to do an independent, impartial review. It came back with a report. Those findings are now being turned into corrective actions, which are part of an implementation plan that SDTC is implementing by December.

Let us make one thing clear. We expect the highest standards of governance from all of our federal agencies.

• (1510)

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, SMEs account for more than 99% of the businesses in Quebec, and they are still facing challenges. During the pandemic, our government was there with support for employees' wages, subsidies for rent, and emergency loans.

Can the Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec tell us how Canada Economic Development, or CED, is supporting our SMEs and actively participating in the economic recovery in every region in Quebec?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, our government knows that SMEs are still facing challenges. I am proud that CED is supporting SMEs with its 12 regional offices throughout Quebec.

Over the past year, we have invested over \$200 million in more than 580 economic projects and \$33 million in more than 50 CFDCs that provide businesses in every small municipality in Quebec with assistance to spur economic development.

I look forward to meeting with representatives of the Grand Roussillon chamber of commerce and industry and with businesses in the beautiful riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the City of Coquitlam has had to foot the bill to save affordable homes because the federal government is missing in action. Renters in my community are being displaced at alarming rates as their homes are being sold off to for-profit developers. Homelessness in Coquitlam is soaring. We cannot afford to lose more co-ops and rentals. The Liberals are turning their backs on local governments that are doing their best to protect low-income renters.

How many more people need to go homeless before the Liberals take this housing crisis seriously?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank my hon. colleague for her concern regarding the need to invest in affordable housing and homelessness prevention.

I would remind her that we had the opportunity not only to make an initial multi-billion dollar investment to address homelessness in Canada, but also to then double it. Shamefully, certain parties in this chamber voted against that measure.

This builds on eight years of work, where we have returned to the affordable housing space through the national housing strategy and now are working very closely with local governments, municipi-

Oral Questions

palities from coast to coast to coast, to build more homes. I look forward to doing that in co-operation with the NDP.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, everyone is talking about the urgent need to act on climate change and the energy transition. Citizens are being asked to take action.

However, when it comes time to get reimbursed through the Canada greener homes grant, urgency takes a back seat. The provincial portion is reimbursed within two months of filing the paperwork, while at the federal level, Canadians have to wait more than 18 months to get their money. What is more, it is virtually impossible to talk to an official. If someone manages to get through, they are told that the system is overwhelmed.

Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. Will the minister take care of this problem, once and for all?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recognize that there were initial problems with the program's implementation. However, Natural Resources Canada has since put in place a series of measures to improve and facilitate access to the program so that people can actually renovate their homes, make them more energy efficient, save money on their energy bills and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, something the Conservatives are opposed to. In fact, if they came to power, they would abolish this program. We will continue to work with Canadians on both climate change and affordability.

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier in question period, twice you referenced a mock title that members are not supposed to use. I know a number of us are confused as to what that may be, so I am wondering if you could clarify what the term is so we do not make that mistake again going forward.

• (1515)

The Speaker: I thank the member for South Shore—St. Margarets for raising this issue. The issue that came up was the mock name: the NDP-Liberal cover-up coalition. I might not have the correct term, but that is what I was referring to.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

CANADIAN SUSTAINABLE JOBS ACT

The House resumed from October 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-50, An Act respecting accountability, transparency and engagement to support the creation of sustainable jobs for workers and economic growth in a net-zero economy, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:16 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-50.

Call in the members.

• (1530)

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

*(Division No. 428)***YEAS**

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desjarlais	Dhillon
Diab	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid

Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendicino
Miao	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh
Sorbara	Sousa
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thompson	Trudeau
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi — 175	

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genius

Speaker's Ruling

Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shipley	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 144

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron	Joly
McGuinty	Murray
Rempel Garner	Therrien— 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now, colleagues, ready to rule on the point of order raised on October 20 by the member for Calgary Shepard

concerning an alleged use of unparliamentary language by the member for Whitby.

In his intervention, the member for Calgary Shepard stated that the member for Whitby accused the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes of making false claims in his oral question. The member for Calgary Shepard asserted that this was akin to claiming a member had deliberately mislead the House, had lied and that it was a breach of privilege to do so.

[Translation]

The Deputy House leader of the government countered that it did not appear clear that the exchange was in fact problematic. The member for Timmins—James Bay made the point that there was nothing wrong in stating that another member had “falsely claimed” a given assertion, noting that the expression has been used in the House frequently.

[English]

In reaching a conclusion, I am guided by precedents from my predecessors. On October 13, 1966, Speaker Lucien Lamoureux, at page 8599 of Debates, made the following point:

...is not, per se, unparliamentary to say of another Member that the statement he makes is false, untrue, wrong, incorrect or even spurious, unless there is an improper motive imputed or unless the Member making the charge claims the untruth was stated to the knowledge of the person stating any such alleged untruth.

I have also reviewed past Debates when similar occasions occurred. I note this expression being used with a certain regularity from all sides in the House.

[Translation]

Members may disagree about facts or argue that certain assertions are false. What is unparliamentary is to suggest that a member has deliberately stated something that is false or misleading, as it implies a dishonest intent.

In examining the exchange from last Friday and in considering past precedents, given the frequent use of similar expressions, I cannot find that the language itself was unparliamentary or that it constituted any sort of breach of privilege. That being said, it is incumbent upon the member for Whitby and all members to stay as far away as possible from imputing intent or motives to their colleagues and to not look for ways to do indirectly what they cannot do directly.

[English]

Mindful of my recent statement on decorum of October 18, members may find themselves looking to the Chair, from time to time, for guidance in how to interpret these new guidelines. I would ask all members to show mutual respect and good faith toward each other during the course of debate or in asking or responding to questions, and to abide by the spirit of Speaker Lamoureux's wise words.

While I cannot find anything unparliamentary in this instance, I would like to reiterate a point made in last Wednesday's statement, on page 17593 of Debates, “too frequently our ideas and thoughts are expressed in provocative terms leading to tense exchanges that harm the necessary collegiality for our work.”

Routine Proceedings

I implore members to take this message to heart when interacting with one another here in the House. Being judicious with our choice of words will, I think, reduce the frequency of disputes that arise between us and will lead to a more collegial environment for all.

I thank all members for their attention.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

[*English*]

It is in relation to Bill S-12, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the International Transfer of Offenders Act. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

* * *

PETITIONS

CANADA CHILD BENEFIT

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the most traumatic experience a parent can experience is the sudden loss of their child. Unfortunately, the Government of Canada has made this experience even more challenging for many families, by continuing to pay out child benefits and then seeking to claw them back. This puts undue stress and financial burden upon families that are grieving.

Today, I present a petition on behalf of Canadians who call on the federal government to extend the Canada child benefit to parents of deceased children for a period of at least two months after the traumatic loss of a child.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of the local Sudbury chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby. It is a non-profit, non-partisan grassroots advocacy climate change organization focused on national policies to address the global climate crisis.

The petition is in regard to the implementation of Bill S-243, an act to enact the climate-aligned finance act. The petition has 43 signatories.

The petitioners ask the Government of Canada to be a leader on aligning financial output with climate commitments.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise for the 16th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of

crime. The people of Swan River are calling on the Liberal government to fix the out-of-control crime wave that has swept across the country and their community. Crime continues to terrorize the people of Swan River, damaging its people and businesses.

The people of Swan River support the calls from Conservatives for jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders. The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies that directly threaten their livelihoods and their community.

I support the good people of Swan River.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who bring to the attention of the government the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, which sets dire circumstances and indicates the drastic reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

Specifically, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to move forward immediately with bold emissions caps for the oil and gas sector that are comprehensive in scope and realistic in achieving the necessary targets that Canada has set to reduce emissions by 2030.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT
IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-57, An Act to implement the 2023 Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, prior to question period, we were talking about the importance of trade agreements to the nation. At the beginning of my comments, I highlighted how Canada was very much a trading nation. When I look at this modernization of the Ukraine trade agreement, I note that the original one was signed not that long ago, but a lot of things have changed since that. With respect to modernizing the trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine, I cannot help but think about what is taking place in Europe today and everything Ukraine is going through.

Allied forces and others have said, both in the House and beyond Canadian borders, that they are in solidarity with Ukraine. There is support for Ukraine in a very real and tangible way. Trade relations with Ukraine go back to 2014 when Ukraine made the decision to try to build stronger, healthier economic links with the European Union. That was one of the reasons why we saw what took place, the attack on Ukraine independence and the Maidan Square. When I was in opposition, I had the opportunity to go and witness some of the aftermath. The people of Ukraine wanted to have enhanced trade relations with the European Union.

The president of Ukraine, who was elected after 2014, came to Canada and spoke on the floor of the House of Commons, albeit in Centre Block. He said to former prime minister Stephen Harper and the government that Ukraine and Canada had a very special relationship, that their legislatures and members of Parliament should look at ways to enhance that. He cited the importance of trade and the potential of a trade agreement.

I remember discussing it years ago with the minister, the current Deputy Prime Minister. We had the opportunity to travel to Ukraine, to be in Kyiv. We talked about the important relationship between Canada and Ukraine, the constitutional changes, the institutions and economic trade.

I was very pleased with one of the very first agreements that began prior to 2016, when the first agreement was signed. I was very proud of the fact that it responded to original speech in 2014, that there was some movement. However, I was especially proud of the fact that the Prime Minister of Canada and the Deputy Prime Minister today were in a position to sign that formal agreement shortly after taking office. That in itself speaks to the special relationship between Canada and Ukraine.

Let us fast forward to Russia making an illegal attack on Ukraine sovereignty. The reaction throughout the world was very profound and positive in favour of Ukraine, recognizing the importance of sovereignty. It has been at a substantial cost. Ukraine today is fighting for, and demonstrating the importance of this throughout the

world, democracy, rule of law and sovereignty. The Ukrainians have really stepped up to the plate. With all the things that are taking place in Ukraine today, the Ukrainians have recognized the importance of trade agreements.

• (1540)

The Prime Minister and the president met a couple of years ago. September 2022 is when the agreement was signed, but it was back in July 2019 that President Zelenskyy and the Prime Minister agreed that we needed to do some sort of modernization to make some changes. These changes would ultimately broaden the goods and services, ensure a dispute mechanism and ensure better labour and working standards. We can look at how it would deal with environmental issues, and that is all within this particular trade agreement.

The Prime Minister and the President of Ukraine came together, recognized the importance of it and, just last month, signed an agreement. Now that agreement is before us, and we have an opportunity, through this legislation, to make a very strong, powerful commitment to our dear friends in Ukraine. We talk about that special relationship. Canada has a very special relationship, which goes back to 1991, in declaring our support for Ukraine as an independent country.

We often hear that 1.3 million-plus people who call Canada home are of Ukrainian heritage. There are tens of thousands of people who have been displaced from Ukraine because of the war who are now living in Canada, many in my home city of Winnipeg.

This particular agreement makes a very powerful statement. Ukraine does matter. This agreement does matter. Both Canada and Ukraine will benefit from it. Trade agreements are one of the ways to ensure that we continue to provide and grow middle-class jobs, both here in Canada and in Ukraine. This is legislation that has been negotiated, as I indicated earlier, by some of the world's best negotiators when it comes to trade. I am confident that the deal would be advantageous, not only for Canada, but also for Ukraine.

The Conservative Party's initial comments on their desire to have a lot of people speak to this legislation concern me. Hopefully we can get this legislation passed, through the Senate and all, before Christmas.

• (1545)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in what we can do with our Ukrainian allies.

My concern is the \$54 billion in damaged housing in Ukraine, destroyed or damaged, which is almost 9% of the housing stock. There is massive damage to the energy grid and to the infrastructure, which makes it almost impossible to run an economy. There is massive environmental damage.

Government Orders

I want to know, beyond signing an agreement, what steps the government would take to work with Ukraine on that. The government here is having a very hard time addressing our own housing crisis, our own need to build an energy grid and infrastructure, and the climate disasters that has hit us.

How can we honestly say to Ukraine that we will be there to deal with the horrific impacts of the war Putin has caused, there for Ukraine to rebuild, while also saying to Canadians that we will be here to make sure we get the necessary housing, build the electricity grid and address the horrific costs of the climate fires?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that we took a holistic approach to dealing with the relationship between Canada and Ukraine. At this time, with the war taking place in Europe, it is important to recognize that the trade agreement is one aspect of the type of support we can provide.

There is the issue of infrastructure. As the member points out, there has been incredible damage to infrastructure. There are discussions taking place between Canada and Ukraine dealing with infrastructure. Even this trade agreement would assist in the rebuilding of Ukraine. Ukraine will prevail, and this trade agreement we are talking about today would assist in the rebuilding of Ukraine.

Just the other day I met with a young man by the name of Max. He is a Ukrainian intern I had a couple of years ago here in Canada, and he was talking about the importance of infrastructure. He understood that one of our standing committees will be looking at the issue of infrastructure, possibly dealing specifically with Ukraine. Over the lunch discussion I had with him, he was hoping to come back to add to that particular debate.

Canada is supporting Ukraine in many different ways, but today we can send a very strong and powerful message, an economic message, talking about the trade relations and how both Canada and Ukraine would benefit by them.

● (1550)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think that the study of Bill C-57 will go quite well. The Bloc Québécois supports the bill. In any case, parliamentarians have a rather limited ability to amend a bill like this one. We know that Canada is the one that negotiates state-to-state agreements and that we then amend our internal laws to include those new provisions.

In this case, we do not necessarily want to amend the agreement. However, in the event that we did have proposals or changes we wanted to make, should we not review the way the Parliament of Canada, or Canada in general, deals with these international agreements to perhaps give more freedom to parliamentarians and even to the provinces, which may have valid input on areas under their jurisdiction? Only the leaders get to have a say in the actual negotiations between Canada and other countries.

Should we not review that entire parliamentary structure?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, our trade negotiators, as I indicated earlier, are the best in the world. They really and truly are.

We can just take a look at the number of agreements we have been able to achieve and what we have been able to achieve.

They do their homework. Part of their homework is to take a look at the very many stakeholders in Canada. Canada is a big country with many different regions. One of that member's colleagues made reference to the pork industry. Manitoba and Quebec have very significant pork industries, and this trade agreement, at least in part, would enable more pork, from what I understand, to be sold.

The negotiators ultimately put forward an agreement, which ultimately we and the Prime Minister have signed, much like Ukraine signs an agreement. If we already have the agreement signed, we really cannot change the agreement through legislation because that would potentially void the agreement that was signed. We are very much dependent on what was said in the standing committees and debates that take place here. They make sure our negotiators are informed and have a very good sense of what the different regions are and what the many different stakeholders are wanting to see, in how we develop as a nation and in world trade.

All in all, I believe they have done exceptionally well, and our numbers clearly demonstrate that. As I say, we have created literally hundreds of thousands of jobs, and just over a million jobs pre-pandemic. A lot of that had to do with the many trade agreements we have signed.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has really been letting down our allies when it comes to responding to their needs in the area of energy security. Most of the world's democracies are geographically small and densely populated nations, such as our partners in Europe and the Asia-Pacific, that need the import of natural resources to not have to rely on hostile actors, such as Russia, to meet their energy needs. However, while Europe has been crying out for more energy exports from countries such as Canada, the Prime Minister has effectively shut the door because of his extreme anti-energy ideology.

This agreement would be an opportunity for Canada to say more and do more to promote the export of our vital energy resources to Europe to make our European partners less dependent on energy imports from hostile powers, but the government was more interested in facilitating the export of Russian energy to Germany when it granted the Siemens turbine waiver than in supplying Canadian energy fuelled by Canadian workers to those Europeans.

Why is the government letting down Ukraine, and Canadian workers, by hanging onto its ideological opposition to Canadian energy?

Government Orders

• (1555)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the member's assessment. For those people who might be following the debate, let us be very clear on the whole issue of energy. In 10 years of the Stephen Harper government, how many miles of pipeline were put into place to tidewater? It is a bit of a trick question, but the short answer is zero. In 10 years, it was zero.

We can contrast that to the first few years of this government, and there is absolutely no comparison. Conservatives are trying to spread misinformation, I would suggest, to say that we do not support industries. It is just not true, and we have demonstrated that. We are talking about hundreds of miles compared to not an inch, under Stephen Harper, in 10 years.

When we take a look at it from the perspective of Ukraine and the war, the other thing I would highlight to the member is that one does not just wish pipelines and infrastructure into existence. They take time to develop. In fairness, we need to recognize that.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask my colleague if he could highlight what he is hearing in his riding.

There are businesses across Canada that want to help to support the rebuild of Ukraine. Allowing for free trade agreements creates economic opportunity in Ukraine and allows for businesses here in Canada to support Ukraine and those efforts to rebuild. Could he highlight why free trade agreements give certainty in businesses?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, Canada can demonstrate strong leadership with Ukraine. Let us recognize the fact that Ukraine will prevail. It will win, and there will be a need to assist Ukraine in rebuilding.

Because of this particular agreement and of the relationship between Canada and Ukraine, the people of both Ukraine and Canada will be able to contribute that much more to Ukraine rebuilding to be the nation it has the potential to be. Canada is in a much better position than many other countries, whether it is because of the more than 1.3 million people of Ukraine heritage here or things like this trade agreement, to support Ukraine and make sure it is able to continue to prosper well into the future.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to this implementation bill for the modernization of the Ukraine free trade agreement.

I always welcome opportunities to talk about trade. It is one of my passions, which is why I was somewhat disappointed by the disparaging remarks made by my colleague from Winnipeg North regarding the previous Conservative government's record on trade, especially Stephen Harper's focus on trade as the linchpin of Canada's economic strategy.

During the Harper years, the government set an unprecedented pace for negotiating trade agreements. When the Conservative government was first elected back in 2006, Canada had trade agreements with five countries: the United States, Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica and Israel. By the time we were finished some nine years later, we had free trade agreements with 47 additional countries, an as-

ounding number. That included the Canada-Europe free trade agreement. It included the TPP, which morphed, of course, into the CPTPP. It also included South Korea, which was a very difficult negotiation but was successfully concluded.

One of the agreements that former prime minister Stephen Harper really wanted to get done was between Canada and Ukraine. Even back in 2010, Ukraine was facing difficult challenges. It had a very weak economy and was struggling in trying to deal with Russia. The Prime Minister at the time, Stephen Harper, said the government was going to negotiate a trade agreement with Ukraine that would be unique in that the outcome would be asymmetrical. What that meant is that the benefits flowing each way were not necessarily going to be equal or balanced, at least at the beginning. The phasing in of market access and the elimination of tariff barriers would be done on a differentiated basis so that the outcome was not a quid pro quo in the perfect sense of the term. The Conservatives did that because we wanted to give Ukraine a leg up and help Ukraine re-establish itself as economically viable and strong.

I should indicate that I will be splitting my time with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

When the former Conservative government negotiated the trade agreement, the negotiations started in 2010 and were concluded in 2015. We left office in 2015. These agreements sometimes take a number of years to come into force, so the agreement came into force in 2017 and has served Ukraine well. Our trade with that country has increased. It was not completely unexpected that when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, trade flows declined. In fact, the current government and Ukraine stopped negotiating for a while because of the invasion by Russia into Ukraine.

Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed and made sense out of the fact that Ukraine still needed to move forward economically and put in place the economic structures that would allow it to be successful. Negotiations were then recommenced in 2022, and here we are, a year later, in a position to pass the implementing legislation.

• (1600)

The purpose of modernizing this free trade agreement is that the free trade environment around the world, the playing field, is evolving rapidly. Some things are happening that are not necessarily good. For example, the world is becoming more protectionist. We are putting up more and more tariff and non-tariff barriers.

The United States, under Donald Trump, turned inward. In fact, members may recall that it was former president Donald Trump who pulled the U.S. out of the TPP negotiations. Why? I do not know. He was running for office. I suppose he saw it as politically beneficial.

Government Orders

The whole premise for the TPP was to take advantage of what is called comparative advantage. Every country has its own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to manufacturing goods and delivering services. If we can take the strengths of each country and cobble them together into a coherent trade strategy, we can ensure that the outcome for partner countries is optimal.

Unfortunately, the United States has pulled out, and since that time, it has really turned inward. It is not negotiating free trade agreements. When we go to the World Trade Organization, we notice that large countries, such as Brazil, China, South Africa and India, often block consensus on trade liberalization.

This causes us to reconsider how we engage with the world and open up new opportunities for Canadian companies to do business abroad and expand exports. That is why this agreement with Ukraine, which was negotiated under the former Conservative government led by Stephen Harper, is now being modernized. Many of these factors that were not in play back when we first negotiated this agreement now call for us to update the agreement and modernize it.

For example, there are 11 new chapters included in this agreement. There is a chapter on cross-border trade in services. There is a chapter on investment, which is very important. There is a chapter on temporary entry for business purposes, to facilitate the travel of business people back and forth between our countries. Financial services are covered, as is telecommunications. There is a chapter on small and medium-sized enterprises.

There is also a chapter on digital trade, because digital trade has evolved so quickly that it has left a lot of our trade agreements behind. One of the reasons that our free trade agreement with the United States was updated is that we had no chapter on digital services. People are doing business online now. Amazon has become an obscenely profitable company. Why? It is because of online purchasing, which is digital trade. There is a separate chapter on that.

There is a new chapter on how labour and workers will be treated, and the high standards that both countries want to set. There is also a chapter on the environment.

The bottom line is this: We as Canadians need to step up and stand in the gap for Ukraine. Canada has a large Ukrainian diaspora that expects us to partner with Ukraine in its time of need. That is what this agreement does. That is what the original trade agreement did.

In my home city of Abbotsford, many Ukrainians have fled their home country and made their home, or at least their temporary home, in Abbotsford. We now have something called the Ukrainian village, which is reinforcing why it is so important for all of us to work together with our Ukrainian diaspora and with the people of Ukraine to put in place a trade agreement and structure under which the Ukrainian economy can be lifted back up. Both of our countries can benefit from that.

• (1605)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the member across the way played a significant role in a lot of the trade negotiations that took place. He

would be very familiar with the individuals who have the type of expertise that I said is second to no other in the world. I would challenge him with regard to his conclusions on the trade agreements, but we will leave that for another day.

What I would not challenge him on is that a trade agreement was signed with the Republic of China, and it was done in a very secretive manner. I noticed the member did not make any reference to that particular trade agreement. Can he provide some insight into why Stephen Harper signed that particular agreement without anyone knowing at all that there were discussions taking place between Canada and China?

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I am chuckling a bit because the member talked about a trade agreement. What Canada signed with China was not a trade agreement; it was an investment protection agreement. The purpose of that agreement was to protect Canadian investors when they invest in China, because China does not respect the rule of law the way we do in Canada.

We worked very hard for many, many years to get that agreement in place because we had identified situations where Canadian companies had made significant investments in China. One example was gold mining. After the prospecting was done and after a very productive deposit was found, guess what happened. The Chinese government stepped up and said it wanted to have Chinese businesses develop the mine and take the profits out of it. That is why we needed an investment protection agreement. It is not a trade access agreement. It does not provide new access to Canada for China to trade. It protects Canadians when they do business in China.

I encourage the member to please get his facts right and make sure he understands the agreements that Canada is signing.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I see that just about everyone here in the House agrees with the idea that a free trade relationship should be established between Canada and Ukraine. That relationship already exists and, as we all know, this agreement improves or modernizes it.

Earlier, my colleague addressed a question to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House, and I did not hear a real answer to her question, which I consider extremely important. It is my understanding that, unlike in most other democratic countries, the Canadian government can sign agreements without considering the House's opinion.

We are now coming to the stage where we need to ratify the agreement. Basically, the government does not know what the House is going to say. Since we all agree, we will probably vote in favour of Bill C-57 and the agreement can be ratified.

Government Orders

In the event that we disagree, however, does the Liberal government intend to muzzle the House and prevent MPs from making an informed decision? I doubt it. At least, I hope not. I would have liked to hear my colleague respond to that. I will ask my Conservative colleague instead, since it is his turn to answer questions.

Is it not a bit brazen, a bit freewheeling of the government to enter into international agreements without first ascertaining the House's position on them? What if the House said no to Bill C-57? Would the government retract its agreement with Ukraine? What would happen?

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot speak for the Liberal Party. What I can say is that free trade agreements are always brought to the House for discussion and full debate, as we are having today, and then those agreements have to be ratified by the House. If they are not ratified, it is a big problem because the government cannot move forward with implementing them.

I do not know if the member has a misunderstanding of the process required to get free trade agreements in place and implemented, but I do know that robust discussions take place in this House and have taken place in this House for many years, starting with the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement, which was the first major trade agreement Canada ever had. It morphed into NAFTA, which is now called CUSMA. Since that time, Canada has negotiated trade agreements with a total of 51 countries. It has opened up new trade access for Canadian businesses to export and to have the opportunity to grow.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has been here for a while, which is why I want to ask a specific question.

There was an initiative connected to Parliament to help Ukraine go through its democratic transition whereby MPs went over to Ukraine as observers during its elections. That should not be lost, because we are part of the renewal of democracy in Ukraine.

I would like to hear what he has to say about this connecting to the full transition to further normalize trading agreements, because I think this goes back to a substantial commitment that a lot of MPs made in this place and the successful return we have seen from Ukraine.

● (1615)

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right that the most effective way of speaking to the institutional capacity of countries that are struggling, that are perhaps coming out of troubled histories, is to engage with them on trade. As we do so, it opens up opportunities to speak to their democratic institutions, law enforcement institutions and human rights. It is all based on developing trust. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is that Canada remain engaged.

The negotiation of trade agreements is, of course, at its heart, about our Canadian economic interests. However, it is amazing how these negotiations open up these opportunities to help countries such as Ukraine, Colombia and Peru to emerge from their difficult histories and start to develop strong, democratic institutions.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to address the House this afternoon and to speak about one of the critical challenges facing the world today. That is the ongoing illegal, genocidal invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the important work that Canadians need to do in order to continue to support Ukraine in this struggle. This is an existential struggle for Ukraine, as well as a critical battle for the defence of the free and democratic world.

A critical part of this emerging new cold war is the struggle between free democratic nations on the one hand and the neo-revisionist powers that are increasingly working together to combat the idea of universal human dignity, human rights and democracy on the other. With this broader frame in mind, it is critical for our security and for the values that we share as Canadians that Ukraine be able to prevail in this struggle and that we do all we can to support Ukraine to achieve as quick a victory as possible under the circumstances.

Today, we are of course debating a proposal for a next step with respect to free trade between Canada and Ukraine. It is important to recall that this process of pursuing Canada-Ukraine free trade started under the previous Conservative government. In many cases, we have seen trade deals that were begun and negotiated, and even had the negotiation process completed, under the previous Conservative government, and the current government has accepted that process. In one famous case, the current government fought to rename the treaty that had been negotiated by Conservatives and, of course, now it is eagerly taking credit for those steps. However, it is important to underline the work that has been done and the ongoing work that needs to be done to support a strengthened free trade framework, especially between Canada and like-minded nations. That partnership with Ukraine in the midst of this ongoing struggle and invasion is so important.

It is important to acknowledge that the invasion of Ukraine is not in the news or in public discussion as much at the moment. It is the nature of news to comment on things that are new; to some extent, other world events and challenges are capturing public attention right now. Those situations obviously need to be addressed as well. However, the fact that it is maybe not being discussed as much or is not in the news as much does not mean that the struggle is not going on and is not more critical than ever.

In fact, we are seeing escalating abuses and horrifying atrocities as part of this illegal Russian invasion. We are seeing, for instance, multiplying instances of the abduction of children; children are being stolen from Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine, taken away from their parents and sent to Russia. This is a horrific crime, and I cannot imagine the pain that those families are going through to be living in occupied territories and then to have their children taken away from them.

We are seeing sexual violence as a weapon of war on a massive scale not seen in Europe since at least the Second World War. There are horrifying volumes of sexual violence that are being systematically perpetrated by the Russian regime.

Government Orders

These instances of abduction of children, systemic sexual violence and indiscriminate bombing and targeting of civilians led the House to recognize in the early days of this invasion that it constituted an act of genocide. We stand as this House, I hope, united in continuing to recognize that. We need to recognize that, as people follow this now, a year and a half since the further invasion, we hope that this war comes to an end quickly. We want this war to end in a quick Ukrainian victory. Do we want this war to go on for much longer? No, we do not. We want it to end in a clear, decisive Ukrainian victory where Ukrainians can exercise sovereignty over all their territory, as well as democratic self-determination.

However, we must also countenance the possibility that things will not end quickly. Wars do not always follow the timelines that we hope for. It is an obligation for us to stand firm in supporting Ukrainians in the midst of these circumstances. This is why Conservatives have been there from the beginning. In fact, Conservatives have been calling for more support earlier, at every stage. It was Conservatives who led the G7, after the initial invasion in 2014, in having a strengthened international response. We pushed back when the current government, upon taking office, stopped sharing RADARSAT images with the Government of Ukraine. We fought back against that.

● (1620)

We called for tough sanctions to be imposed on the Putin regime prior to the further invasion beginning last February. Much of the world community anticipated this invasion. We called for pre-emptive sanctions beforehand, to try to deter it. The comment is on the record of the House and committee. The international community failed to really recognize the threat that was coming from the Putin regime and to impose measures in advance that might have stood a chance of deterring this horrific invasion. We called for those sanctions earlier.

We called on the government to do more to support Ukrainian energy security and to supply the needed equipment and weapons. Of course, the government has taken some steps to support Ukraine, but our criticism has been that, in order to bring about a Ukrainian victory, it is vitally necessary not just to make the announcements, but to supply the equipment and support required and get the delivery of that equipment as quickly and as early on in the process as possible. This is what we need in order to have Ukrainian victory, for Ukraine to have the tools and equipment it needs to secure victory; this is very important.

I hear from time to time from people who are skeptical or critical of our support of Ukraine. To them, I would say a number of things. First of all, I welcome conversations with people, regardless of their opinion on this issue. They should not hesitate to call me or my office. There are many good reasons we should be supporting Ukraine, and I am happy to make that case to anybody who is interested in having the conversation and listening.

Some people ask about how much this is costing us. I would point to the costs of inaction. What are the costs of failing to stand up to the bully in the Kremlin? We can look historically at the growing appetite for aggressive action of the Putin regime: where it started and where it has continued. There has been the action in Chechnya, the invasion of Georgia, the continuing Russian pres-

ence in Moldova and the invasion of Crimea in 2014. If, at each of those points, there had been a stronger response from the international community, we might not have seen the aggression move on to the next step. It was much more costly at every next stage, in terms of human life and the response that has been required.

We can now look back and ask, “What if we had done more at some of these earlier points?” There was the continuing strategy by Germany, for example, to be heavily reliant on Russian gas, which continued after Ukraine was already invaded in 2014. Germany continued to pursue Nord Stream 2 even after Russia, illegally, had already annexed Crimea and was continuing to be present in other parts of Ukraine.

What are the costs of inaction? If we did not support Ukraine, then this aggression would continue. It would proceed, I believe, to threaten NATO countries. It could threaten Canada's north. The cost of inaction is very high, because this aggression would continue.

Canada has a unique obligation in the midst of this challenge. Most of the world's democracies are small, densely populated nations. Canada, as a geographically vast energy-producing country, needs to be fulfilling our responsibility within the community of democratic nations to supply the democratic world with the energy security it needs. We need to step up and produce more energy, export more energy and relieve our partners and allies of their dependence on Russian energy. Purchases of energy from Russia are fuelling its war machine and the ongoing slaughter, the systemic sexual violence and the abduction of children. These things are being fuelled financially by those energy exports.

As such, recognizing the unique opportunities and responsibilities we have, Canada needs to expand our energy production. Yes, that would benefit our economy and Canadian workers, but even more importantly, we would be fulfilling our responsibility in the world to provide the energy security that all countries need. It is for such a time and such a responsibility that Canada is here, yet the government has its ideological head in the sand and is missing the opportunity and the responsibility we have to do more on the energy front.

I support expanding our trading relationships with Ukraine and other countries, but we need to do more in the energy security area. We need to make sure that, when announcements are made, we are delivering the goods as quickly as possible to ensure the vitally necessary victory for Ukraine and the forces of freedom everywhere.

● (1625)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise here again. I enjoyed my colleague's speech. I want to ask him about the importance of getting further into the discussions about trading with Ukraine, because some of Ukraine's allies have had some discomfort with grain and other types of trade. It is actually really important, in my opinion, to start sorting out some of the rules of engagement.

Government Orders

There is also what I really believe in, which is that Canada can really pay really good dividends back and forth, with cybersecurity and other things from Ukraine. I have enjoyed having Ukrainian interns in my office during a number of different years, and I have found their work ethic and expertise exceptional.

To my colleague, how important is it to get an agreement and work on that agreement so we can avoid trade disputes and other disruptions that could potentially cause problems among allies? We just have to look at ourselves and the United States, for example. Also, second to that, perhaps with cybersecurity and cyber issues coming up, how could we benefit from that working together as well?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, our party supports having clear, rule-based dispute resolution mechanisms that allow for certainty for businesses and that contribute to felicitous relationships among allies.

The member mentioned a number of sectors that are very important. Of course, there is Ukraine's agriculture sector. Canada has an important agriculture sector as well. One of the things now being explored at the foreign affairs committee, I know, is a study that Conservatives have put forward on looking at the food and fuel security implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Ukrainian farmers play a critical role. We know that the World Food Programme has sourced significantly from Ukraine in the past, and the disruption to the flow of food from Ukraine has significant implications for people in parts of Africa that rely on imports from Ukraine. There are opportunities for more collaboration on cybersecurity between different parts of our agricultural sectors; on energy, as I spoke about; and in many other areas.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan's hon. colleague, the member for Abbotsford, spoke very eloquently just a few minutes ago about the Conservative Party's mantra for free trade, CPTPP, CETA and some other agreements that were signed. However, during the Brexit debate, there were many members across the aisle who were pro-Brexit, who were for tearing up trade agreements and for the U.K.'s leaving. We have seen the results of that.

Here we are debating, and we virtually have unanimity for, an expanded or improved Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. Would the hon. member not agree that anyone who really thought about Brexit was really mistaken about the results, because we have seen the results in the British economy?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, respectfully to my hon. colleague, that is pretty far afield. I have to say that I have many thoughts on the Spanish-Dutch trading relationship in the 16th century as well. I do think some mistakes were made at that time.

I will just say, with a little bit more seriousness, that there are trade agreements and there are also political partnerships that nations pursue. Those questions about the kind of political relationships that nations wish to have with each other, I think, are proper, legitimate debates for the people in those countries to have among themselves and to come to their own conclusions.

• (1630)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about the cost of inaction and the importance of supporting Ukraine through its current situation. I agree. Given the rising cost of living, some of my constituents, who also want what is best for people in other parts of the world, wonder why the taxes they pay are often sent to support other communities in other countries. While I think that doing so is entirely commendable, I can understand why they are wondering this. At a time when we are finding it hard to manage some of our own issues, why are we not investing more here, at home?

I know that my colleague is very interested in international relations. He knows how important it is to support other communities in need around the world. How would he answer a question like that from a constituent?

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, my answer would be that investments in international peace and security, if we make the comparison to domestic life, are like the investments that individuals make in an alarm system. When someone invests in peace and security in protecting themselves, it gives them greater peace of mind and is a way of protecting them from possible threats that may come. The threats may never manifest themselves, but those are still often wise investments to make.

In the case of supporting Ukraine, we are talking about a threat that will potentially come to us and to our other partners in NATO, but Ukraine is on the front lines of that threat. Ukraine stands between us and those kinds of threats. Therefore, investments in international peace and security are not charity; they are, in fact, very much in our own interest. There are several conversations we could have about things that are more in the category of pure charity, but this is clearly a case of our investing in our own collective security with like-minded countries, with Ukraine being on the front line of that battle.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Abbotsford for the leadership he has shown on this file, going back to 2014-15 when he was minister of trade. I had the pleasure of accompanying him on a trade mission to Ukraine when we started this whole process.

As the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan mentioned, he has been a very strong advocate for Ukraine and its ability to defend itself against the Russian invasion and the atrocities that Putin and his proxies are committing in Ukraine. In the trade agreement, the Liberals would be sneaking in one of their ideological platform ideas on carbon taxing and carbon pricing.

Government Orders

Does the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan believe that it is important to put carbon pricing on energy? Every time I have talked to Ukrainians whenever I have been in Ukraine, they want more of our energy and more of our technologies so they can produce more energy there to replace the Russian oil and gas they have to use, which fund Putin's war machine.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his leadership on this critical issue, going back long before I was even in this place.

When I talk to politicians in Europe about energy, they recognize the urgency of the situation. They are looking for all of the above. They want more Canadian energy. They want more energy from other sources. They are in an urgent crunch and they need energy from all sources. The Liberal government continues to put its ideological head in the sand and ignore that situation of urgency.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to rise in the House on this lovely Monday afternoon. It is a nice day outside. I wish to say that I will be splitting my time with my friend and hon. colleague, the member for Sherbrooke, which is a beautiful part of the country in Quebec.

We are speaking about Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. We all know that we have Ukraine's back and the backs of the Ukrainian people who are fighting for their freedom, security and democracy. We know their fight is our fight. We know they are lauding their homeland, and they have to win. There is no choice in this matter.

I have heard some members speak quite eloquently on what faces us. Ukraine must win this battle versus tyranny and the authoritarian dictatorship that not only has unjustifiably and illegally invaded Ukraine and its territorial sovereignty, but also did so in 2014 in another part of Ukraine, Crimea and the surrounding areas. We know that Russia is involved in the Middle East in destabilizing countries. It is fighting against democracy while we are fighting for democracy and human rights. We on all sides of the aisle, along with all Canadians from coast to coast to coast, need to stand and continue to stand with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people for their sovereignty and for the freedom of all Ukrainian people. We know of the atrocities that have been committed by the Russian forces against Ukrainian women, soldiers and the Ukrainian people, and those folks need to be held accountable. We know that Ukraine will have to be rebuilt in many areas.

We know that the trade and investment ties that exist between Canada and Ukraine must continue to strengthen. Bill C-57 would be another step in this process. We know that Canada is a trading nation, whether with CUSMA, the renegotiated free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico, or CETA with the European Union. I hope one day, when we are speaking about CETA and the EU, that Ukraine will be a full-fledged member of the European Union. I know that on June 23, 2022, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for candidate status for Ukraine regarding its EU membership in that process. Therefore, let us look forward to brighter days, as the brave Ukrainian soldiers continue their fight against tyranny.

We know that Canada benefits from free trade agreements and that its trading partners benefit, whether from the Canada-South

Korea Free Trade Agreement, the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement or the Canada-Taiwan investment accord. We know that with Europe, for example, we attained in 2021 a record high growth of \$100 billion in trade. This will be critical as we move forward with Ukraine. The revision of the trade deal with Ukraine, which, to my understanding, is supported by all sides, would help not only the Canadian economy but also the Ukrainian economy.

Canada will be there not only today but also tomorrow to help rebuild Ukraine with our partners who believe in democracy, human rights and the freedoms of individuals, unlike many other countries in the world. It is a sad state of affairs when there are so many countries run by authoritarian governments that are fighting against that and rolling back rights, whether it be the Islamic regime in Iran against its citizens, the Hamas terrorist organization and proxy for Iran in the world doing what it did on October 7 with the slaughter of over 1,400 Israeli and foreign nationals, or other countries as well.

In response to the criticism of international trade that has led to rising protectionism and a retreat from the international rules-based order, Canada is committed to creating more opportunities for people to engage in and benefit from trade. As such, as part of the Government of Canada's trade diversification strategy, we are pursuing an inclusive approach to trade that seeks to ensure that more Canadians have access to the benefits and opportunities that flow from international trade and investment. This includes Canadians who have traditionally been under-represented in international trade and investment, including women, SMEs and indigenous peoples. This means seeking trade policies that are sustainable, transparent and inclusive.

Today, I am proud to announce that the modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, or CUFTA, reaches these high standards with respect to inclusive trade with specific chapters on trade and gender, trade and SMEs and trade and indigenous peoples.

We know there are well over a million Ukrainian Canadians who have helped build this beautiful country. Their contributions are so richly valued. We know there are almost 200,000 Ukrainians who have come over in the last two or three years because of the war.

• (1635)

We know they are working hard to build this blessed country we call home, Canada. Hopefully some of them will return to Ukraine to help rebuild that country, in the parts of the country that have been impacted, and others will stay. God bless them all. Their contributions are noted from coast to coast to coast.

Allow me to give an overview of the new chapters of the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. The chapter on trade and gender aims to promote gender equality and remove barriers to trade for women in all their diversity and facilitate their improved access to the benefits and opportunities of CUFTA.

For Canada, advancing women's equality could add up to \$150 billion to our GDP by 2026. To ensure that the benefits of free trade can be maximized and widely shared, it is important, therefore, for Canada to consider gender-related issues when developing trade policy and negotiating FTAs. As such, this chapter aims to empower more women to participate in trade and benefit from the modernized free trade deal upon its entry into force.

To achieve these goals, the trade and gender chapter includes an article committing parties to enforce, and not weaken, their domestic laws and protections afforded to women in order to attract trade and investment. It also includes a commitment to undertake co-operation activities, as well as the establishment of a committee to facilitate the chapter's implementation.

Additionally, and responding to stakeholder demands to see the enforceability of the trade and gender chapter, Canada and Ukraine delivered by replicating the dispute settlement arrangement found in the Canada-Israel FTA trade and gender chapter. This sends an important signal to Canadian stakeholders that Canada is committed to advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment at home and abroad.

Another new chapter concluded under the CUFTA modernization is the chapter on trade and SMEs that seeks to enhance their ability to participate in and benefit from the opportunities created by the agreement.

Over the 2015-19 period, SMEs contribution to Canada's GDP was, on average, 53.2% in the goods-producing sector and 51.8% in the services-producing sector. Additionally, in 2021, small- and medium-sized businesses composed, respectively, nearly 98% and 1.9% of the 1.21 million employer businesses in Canada. Based on this recognition of the importance of SMEs to the economy, both Canada and Ukraine are committed to working together to remove barriers so that SMEs may be better placed to participate in and benefit from international trade and investment.

It is very important to note that it is not just trade and investment that is really important in this deal. It is also the expertise that Canadian business have here at home that would be utilized by Ukrainian businesses in rebuilding certain areas of Ukraine that have been impacted by war, in strengthening their standard of living and in allowing Ukrainian SMEs to proactively grow their trade.

As economists say, international trade tends to lift all boats. We have seen it throughout the world in the last decades, how trade has literally lifted hundreds of millions, if not billions, of people out of poverty, improving standards of living, not only here at home but abroad.

I wish to end with the belief that we will have unanimous support in implementing this bill. There are over a million Ukrainians working hard today in Canada, making sure that their kids have brighter futures. They are looking to Parliament to pass good legislation, like all Canadians are.

Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement implementation act, 2023, is a good piece of legislation. Much as other members have stated, Canada is an open economy. We are a trading people. We are competitive folks who compete in a global economy.

Government Orders

Our workers are the best in the world. They are skilled, they are hungry, but they are also folks who would like to trade with other like-minded countries in the world. Ukraine is a like-minded partner.

Ukraine must win this war against Russia. There is no question about that. We must always be there for them. I believe we have dedicated almost \$10 billion of resources to Ukraine in their fight against Russia. As a government, we must continue to stand together with Ukraine against Russia, no ifs, ands or buts, to ensure that victory, to ensure that democracy always wins over the evil that Ukraine has faced for the last two years in the unjustified, illegal, atrocious Russian aggression that Ukrainian soldiers are fighting against today.

• (1640)

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech on the need to provide more support to Ukraine.

The member talked about the military aid we provide for Ukraine. I can tell members that when I was in Ukraine earlier this summer, they were very grateful for the support that Canada has given them. However, as Conservatives, we have been advocating for quite some time that the Government of Canada actually provide more military aid to Ukraine, including more weapons.

One of the things that we are about to be decommissioning here in Canada, and some have already been sent off to the scrap heap, is a number of our older armoured vehicles. Armatec, in London, Ontario, has offered to take those old vehicles, refurbish them and send them off to Ukraine to help them win this war. We know that the M113 track LAVs that Canada has would be very welcome along with our old Bisons and Coyotes that are in the process of being retired.

The old M113s that were sent from the United States and Australia have actually helped liberate Kharkiv, and we know that in this fight today, the more Ukrainians are being put in armoured vehicles, the more they can push back and the more they can win.

I would ask the member if he would support having Armatec refurbish old, outdated LAVs that the Government of Canada is retiring from the Canadian Armed Forces.

• (1645)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I will say that whatever we can send in resources to the brave Ukrainian soldiers on the front lines fighting the Russian regime's illegal invasion, we need to assist in. I am not an expert on military equipment or supplies, but if the Canadian defence forces and the Minister of National Defence deem that the equipment identified would be useful and available for the Ukrainian forces, then I am a believer that we need to do everything we can to support the Ukrainian soldiers on the front lines fighting for democracy, human rights and everything we believe in as a country.

Government Orders

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my concern is that while we support Ukraine and we want to make sure that we can deal with the horrific war that has gone on, until we deal with the massive destruction of homes, the massive destruction of the environment, there is not going to be much of a trade going on, and we are now coming into the second winter of a brutal war.

I want to follow up on what my Conservative colleague asked about on the light armoured vehicles. We know that General Dynamics in London can produce them, which is an advantage that Canada has. We cannot compete militarily with some of our allies, but light armoured vehicles from General Dynamics could do the job. Is this government willing to augment the supply force that it has already sent to Ukraine in order to hold the Russians back in what is going to be a very hard winter coming?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, as the chair of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, last week, I was at the Council of Europe meetings. We did have a bilateral meeting with Ukraine.

Yes, winter is coming, the leaves are falling off the trees and the Ukrainian soldiers are going to be more exposed to the air superiority that the Russians do enjoy right now. As I said to the hon. colleague in the prior question, we as Canadians should be doing everything we can to support the brave men and women fighting for Ukraine against Russia. They are fighting for the values we deeply believe in. If it is deemed that there is equipment that can help them, then I am a hawk on this, and we should assist them in all possible manners.

The Deputy Speaker: 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 Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Public Safety; the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Democratic Institutions; and the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Housing.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise in the House today in support of the legislation to implement the modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement and present to the House important new additions that were negotiated in the area of services.

[*Translation*]

Nine specific new chapters and nine updated chapters of the 2017 Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement are the result of extensive negotiations as part of our efforts to bring the agreement up to date and make it ambitious, exhaustive and inclusive.

[*English*]

Among these chapters, five of them concern the general area of services, with new or expanded chapters on cross-border trade in services, temporary entry for business persons, financial services, telecommunications and digital trade, formerly e-commerce.

[*Translation*]

These new commitments will allow Canadian service companies, which accounted for 78.8% of employers in 2021, mostly SMEs, to

operate overseas without any additional barriers and with easier and more predictable access to the Ukrainian market.

• (1650)

[*English*]

Now, if I may, I will provide a more detailed overview of these chapters, which would make this agreement a positive addition for Canadian firms and a model agreement for Ukraine to demonstrate its ability to reach a modern, ambitious and high standard agreement with partners all around the world.

Canada and Ukraine have negotiated a modern and comprehensive chapter on cross-border trade in services, including substantive obligations consistent with Canada's existing trade agreements. This FTA chapter would provide market access, non-discriminatory treatment, transparency and predictability for both Canadian and Ukrainian service suppliers.

Additionally, this chapter includes provisions on the recognition of professional qualifications seeking to facilitate trade in professional services, which is strategically important for both parties in a knowledge-based and digital economy.

The chapter on temporary entry for business persons is another new chapter, which supports economic opportunities for Canadians, including permanent residents, by making it easier for business persons to move between the two countries as well as encouraging highly skilled workers to benefit from jobs in both markets.

[*Translation*]

The temporary entry provisions remove barriers such as economic need assessments and digital quotas and establish new reciprocal commitments in terms of market access for Canadian and Ukrainian business persons who meet certain conditions.

[*English*]

This includes new access for Canadian investors to enter and stay in Ukraine to establish, develop or administer an investment, with a duration of stay of up to one year, thereby facilitating business opportunities and the growth of partnerships. The chapter also includes commitments that would ensure accompanying spouses of Canadian investors, intra-corporate transferees or highly skilled professionals would also be able to enter Ukraine and work.

[*Translation*]

For Canada, this chapter offers options and benefits to Canadian employers, who will have greater access to highly skilled Ukrainian talent on a temporary basis in a wide range of professions, such as engineering, programming, development and architecture.

*Government Orders**[English]*

As part of the CUFTA modernization, Canada also negotiated a comprehensive and progressive stand-alone financial services chapter with Ukraine that would provide a level playing field through a framework of rules tailored to the unique nature of the financial sector. This includes ambitious commitments for financial services through legally binding rights and obligations while maintaining flexibility for regulators to preserve the integrity and stability of the financial system.

[Translation]

The chapter on telecommunications offers more legal certainty to telecommunications service providers operating or investing in the Ukrainian and Canadian markets.

This chapter also facilitates trade, including e-commerce, in a broader sense by making sure that companies in fields other than telecommunications can access and use telecom networks and services.

[English]

Lastly, the digital trade chapter includes updated language previously contained within the CUFTA e-commerce chapter, ensuring that customs duties would not be applied to digital products transmitted electronically. This modernized chapter also contains ambitious commitments to facilitate the use of digital trade. This includes protections against unnecessary requirements to store data locally or provide access to proprietary software source code, as well as commitments to facilitate public access and use of open government information to support economic development, competitiveness and innovation.

Additionally, commitments regarding the protection of individuals online have been included, which would ensure frameworks are in place to protect personal information and address online fraudulent and deceptive commercial practices in order to build trust and confidence to engage in digital trade.

[Translation]

I am also proud to announce that this chapter contains a provision that forbids government authorities from using personal data collected from private organizations in a manner that constitutes targeted discrimination on prohibited grounds. This is the first Canadian free trade agreement to contain such a provision.

● (1655)

[English]

With increasing concerns about how governments are using personal data, this commitment is intended to improve user confidence in the digital economy.

[Translation]

The new and updated chapters present a great opportunity to build a strong foundation that is in line with the new realities of modern trade that Canada and Ukraine can build on to strengthen their trading relationship. I hope that all members of this House will support the legislative amendments contained in Bill C-57 that will bring into force the new Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for 607 days now we have witnessed Ukraine valiantly fight back against the Russian invasion. For 607 days, we have watched Russia carry out mass atrocities, and we know that Vladimir Putin wants to commit a genocide against the people of Ukraine.

One of the things that Ukraine is begging for is Canadian energy to make sure that Ukrainians are able to survive another cold winter since this war has started and not be dependent upon natural gas and oil from Russia. Will the member commit today to making sure we can send Canadian ethical energy, our liquefied natural gas and oil, to Ukraine so that it can have a comfortable winter and not be putting money into the fuel tank of Putin's war machine?

[Translation]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, Canada has been there to provide assistance, whether military, humanitarian or financial. My colleague's question about the need for heating fuel in winter is obviously a very important one. I would even go so far as to say that it is a human rights issue. Staying warm in winter is a basic necessity.

I am certain that Canada will continue to be there, as we have been since the beginning, and that we will do everything in our power to support our Ukrainian friends.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, free trade agreements are one way that Canada can not only improve the economic conditions for our businesses here but also do so on a mutual basis. In many ways, they extend preferential conditions to the recipient host country.

Like a lot of post-Soviet republics, Ukraine has struggled with establishing a strong rule-of-law system in that country and, like a lot of post-Soviet republics, has also struggled with corruption. I wonder if my hon. colleague could point to any provisions in this agreement that may assist the parties in strengthening those institutions, which are very important to establishing credible and legitimate economic relations.

[Translation]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Mr. Speaker, as the member said, international trade agreements are one way to help countries. This agreement creates a lot of opportunities, both for Canada and for Ukraine, notably by creating good jobs for the middle class. Specific chapters have been added, such as those my colleague was discussing earlier, on trade and gender, as well as on trade and the environment. This demonstrates that provisions have been included to modernize this agreement, update it and address the new trade realities between Ukraine and Canada.

Government Orders

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always find it interesting to see agreements Canada reaches with other international partners. The special context of this agreement with Ukraine, which will modernize the 2017 agreements, is the war that Russia is waging against Ukraine, our partner in the agreement.

I would therefore like to ask my colleague how this agreement will improve the economy and quality of life for Canadians, but also for Ukrainians.

• (1700)

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his important question.

As we said earlier during our initial answers, we have been there to help Ukrainians from the start. This agreement will allow Canadian businesses to participate in the economic rebuilding of Ukraine and its recovery after Russia's illegal and unjustified invasion. With the addition of new chapters, we will be able to help women become more independent, and people will be able to come to Canada and Canadians to go to Ukraine on a temporary basis. These are two practical examples of how this agreement will help people here, in Canada, and people in Ukraine.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

The trade agreement with Ukraine was done in 2015 and was originally negotiated under the Conservative government. It removed tariffs on 86% of all exports. That agreement really showed support to Ukraine when it needed it. It was there to give it a hand up. It laid the groundwork for creating perfect and good partnerships with Canada and Ukraine and for building on our relationship, which has been going on for years and years.

My riding of Prince Albert has a strong Ukrainian community. Ukrainians are very active in the community. In fact, there is a big festival coming up in a couple of weekends, at which they will be celebrating their heritage again. There are also a lot of Ukrainian refugees in the riding who contribute to our economy. They have basically fit right in and are pulling their weight. I am sure they would rather be back in Ukraine with their families, but we are glad to have them in Saskatchewan, in the riding of Prince Albert. We are making them feel at home, and we are there for them.

This new agreement lays out what I expect in a trade agreement. I am not going to lie. I was actually surprised we made an agreement while the war was ongoing, but looking at Ukraine, I thought we should think about it in a practical sense. Ukraine is going to win this war. I think everybody here believes that Ukraine will win this war. It is going to have to rebuild after the damage that Putin has caused in Ukraine. There is no question about that.

Who is in the best position to help it do that? That would be Canada. That is why we make an agreement like this. We position ourselves to be there not only during the war but also after the war to partner with the Ukrainian people to rebuild their country, to make it the modern country it can be and make it a progressive part of the EU, which I think it will ascend to one day.

We say that is what we expect out of a trade agreement. I expect a trade agreement, first of all, to take advantage of the Canadian skill sets we have. Let us look at the agriculture sector. I used to be the marketing manager in eastern and western Europe for Flexi-Coil, which was owned by Case IH at the time, and for a brief stint, Ukraine was my marketplace. It was one of the areas that I covered.

I went to Ukraine once, and its potential to grow crops was phenomenal, but it did not have the technology. We shipped it air seeders and tractors and got it new genetics. I know other companies go there with cattle genetics and dairy genetics. Canada had all these resources that we shared with Ukraine to build it up, and what did it do? It helped feed the world. Now, with this war, people in northern Africa and places like that may die of hunger because Ukraine is not there to help feed them.

In a scenario like that, with the war and the amount of damage being done, Canada can step in again on the agriculture side to be there for Ukraine, to help rebuild its agriculture sector, its food production and food manufacture. If we look at our manufacturing sector, we have some of the most efficient manufacturers in the world. They have to be. With the carbon taxes and everything they have here, they have to be efficient to compete on the global stage. They are that much better than anywhere else in the world. Canada would be a natural ally to go into Ukraine to help it rebuild its manufacturing sector and their facilities and plants.

We can look at uranium power generation and nuclear technology. Saskatchewan is where uranium is mined, and it is processed in Ontario. When we look at the facilities we have in Canada and what we offer for sale around the world, there is a great partnership to offer to the world. Canada and Ukraine working together could provide green power moving forward. That makes so much sense. I expect a free trade agreement to start to facilitate those types of partnerships and that type of growth.

When I was in western Europe this spring with the foreign affairs committee, one of the discussions was about how to rebuild Ukraine and make sure it has the skill sets, the plumbers, the electricians, the people who would go back to that country after the war to rebuild it. We have talked about how we could use the education system in Canada with the women who are here right now. How can we give them the skill sets so that when they go home, they can contribute to rebuilding their country?

That is something the province of Saskatchewan is looking at very seriously. It is saying that, through its education system, it can do that, making sure people have the proper skill sets, the technology and the know-how to do that, but they also need the resources to do it. They are going to need the lumber, the cement and all the things to finish those projects.

Government Orders

● (1705)

What of those things can come from Canada? Which items can actually be imported from Canada, or maybe from somewhere else, but where the technology and knowledge are transferred into Ukraine? I think there is a tremendous amount of potential there.

As we look at the Canadian Ukrainian community working together, just think about how that partnership can be in the world. When one sees a business that has Ukrainian strengths and Canadian strengths put together, if we think about it, it will compete anywhere in the world.

Ukrainians have one little hurdle, which is Mr. Putin. They have the war to overcome; I am amazed and maybe speechless about just how well they have done and how they have been there, pushing back the Russian forces and fighting for their country and for their people.

One thing I have to say is this: We had a staff member in my office who was from Ukraine, and when the war broke out, she left my office to go back. There is no question of the commitment from people in Ukraine to their country.

Not only Ukrainians from Ukraine but also Ukrainians from around the world are saying the exact same thing: They want to free Ukraine. They want to see their country grow and prosper. Can we give them a hand up and do that?

Can this free trade agreement actually do that? Can it give them a hand up? Can it provide the tools for a prosperous Ukraine after the war?

We need to be there. We cannot neglect things. We cannot say that there are other issues in the world, so we have to water down our support for Ukraine. No, we have to be steadfast, with our chin out, with Ukraine. We have to do what we can to get it through this crisis, this war, and get it back on its feet afterward.

I will tell everyone this: If Canada can do that, we are going to have a good ally and friend for years to come. I just see us building on those strengths. The trade agreement is a great way to do that.

In a trade agreement like this, I expect the markets to be open, with goods coming out of Ukraine. I expect goods to come out of Canada and go to Ukraine. I expect the exchange of technology, labour, knowledge and education systems.

As I said, I expect the uranium sector, the nuclear sector, to be focused on, as well as the commitment to bring that sector together, to actually grow it and to offer that technology throughout the world. We can take our strengths, bring them together and put them on the marketplace.

An FTA can do that. If it is written right, it can do all those things. One thing about an FTA, even now, for the people of Ukraine, is this: They can look at that and say, hey, if it is written right, it is a good agreement.

It is just another reason why we need to fight, to steel our resolve and actually push the Russians and Putin back and get back to some normalcy. I think this FTA could do that. I am looking forward to seeing that as a possibility.

If I look back to the riding and people of Prince Albert, they are free traders. Saskatchewan is a trading province. We export. We produce so much that we have to export. Therefore, we are always in favour of trade and good trade agreements.

With Ukraine, we have technologies that are so common and that have so many advantages we can work together on, and we can work for each other's benefit. It could be a really good relationship moving forward.

I look forward to seeing what is in this agreement. I like the idea of a trade agreement with Ukraine; I always have. I have always liked the idea of giving Ukraine a hand up and being there for them, not only during the war but also after the war. I think there is a possibility of a win-win, if it is done properly.

I think the Ukrainian people will look at us and thank us for being there, both during and after the war. I think they will thank us for being there all the time and consistently.

We have been there since the early 2000s. When the wall came down in Berlin and the Communists left, Canada was one of the first countries to actually start throwing resources into Ukraine. After the war, we will be there to help it again.

● (1710)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate many of the comments that the member made. I think it is fairly profound, when one thinks about what we are debating today and the impact that goes even far beyond trade. It sends a very powerful message even to Putin, in Russia.

It says a great deal for morale in Ukraine, and it says so much about Canada's general attitude toward Ukraine and wanting to see Ukraine succeed. However, Canada itself will also benefit through this particular agreement. It is an all around wonderful thing to see.

One thinks about second reading, committee stage, third reading, report stages and the Senate. Would it not be a powerful statement if we could somehow get this thing through the Senate before Christmas?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, in theory, I would say yes. We still have to see what is really in the agreement to make sure it will actually meet the requirements of Ukraine and Canada. It has to be a partnership. Any trade agreement, at the end of the day, will not work if it is not a partnership between the two countries.

I like the idea. I like the notion of Canada standing behind Ukraine and fast-tracking it, but we still have to do our due diligence as a government and as an opposition party.

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I think we would have to look at this very closely. However, I think we should try to get it to committee as quickly as possible so that the committee can do its job and then go from there. If it comes out of the committee, the committee is happy with it and all parties say that is the way we should go, then we should explore those options just to show that support.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to actually get my colleague's response on cybersecurity. I enjoyed it when we co-lobbied in Washington, D.C. a number of different times. I think the possibility we have with Ukraine about cybersecurity is that it could give us very much an advantage over even our current allies, including the United States. Cybersecurity is also good for the economy in many respects, in terms of protecting businesses and public institutions, as well as a lot of different things.

What a lot of people do not know is that we punch above our weight in the video game industry, for example, in electronics and other types of new technologies. The same is the case with cybersecurity at the moment. I see this as an opportunity for us to flesh out more opportunities for young people in cybersecurity out of trade with Ukraine.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, the member for Windsor West brought up another really good example. There are so many examples showing where Canada and the Ukraine can work together and use the knowledge from Ukraine and Canada. If we package that together, it will be a great partnership.

I am no cybersecurity specialist. However, when looking at cybersecurity, I would assume that Ukraine, with what it has been going through in this war and the cyber-attacks from Russia, is probably getting up there. It probably understands and knows a lot more about the actual implications of cybersecurity in its fashion. That is knowledge we could probably use back here in Canada. I would encourage those types of exchanges to happen. If an FTA can actually facilitate that to make it even easier, that is just another reason why we should do it.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are very few things that I can top the member from Prince Albert on, but one of them is the fact that I have been to Ukraine three times. I think he referenced in his speech that he has been there once. Twenty-five per cent of the world's topsoil is in Ukraine, so I agree with all the comments that he made.

When he talks about partnership with Ukraine, could he elaborate on where those synergies especially lie? My own perspective, which I will share more about tomorrow, would be exactly in our agricultural backgrounds.

The Deputy Speaker: I am just glad it was not about who was the better farmer.

The hon. member for Prince Albert.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I will not ask him that question, because I do not want to put him on the spot. He is speaking after me, so he gets the last word.

Looking at the agriculture sector in grains and oilseeds, the soil is phenomenal. The member talked about that beautiful soil. As a farm kid and somebody who grew up on a farm and farmed myself, when I was over there, I was just drooling. It has such a basket to

grow crops in and a variety of crops, from beans to wheat, canola and tomatoes. I think there is probably some good technology transfer between Canada and Ukraine on tomato production. I am sure the member will talk a bit about that tomorrow when he is speaking.

On the grains and oilseeds side, as well as carbon capturing on the no-till side of things, there is some great technology there that we can share with our Ukrainian friends. If we were to look at the University of Saskatchewan or University of Guelph, the University of Saskatchewan's agronomics is phenomenal; the University of Guelph is great at genetics, especially dairy genetics.

Again, I can see all sorts of ways we can work together to not only take care of each other, business-wise, but also to feed the world.

• (1715)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of constituents in the democracy-loving riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke to speak to the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement.

I stand proudly alongside my Conservative colleagues in our unified support for both Ukraine and Israel's right to defend their democracies from attack. That is why I would like to take this opportunity to speak to Canadians about the importance of Canada's unwavering support for a free and democratic Ukraine.

First, I want to speak to Canadians who are skeptical about the dominant narrative surrounding Ukraine, Putin and NATO. I became involved in politics under Preston Manning's Reform Party because it was standing up for people, and it was doing it against two old parties dominated by the interests of the elite. I was first elected as a member of the Canadian Alliance in a seat that had been held by Liberals for 80 years. The previous MP had put the interests of his party above his constituents. That is why I have always put the interests of my constituents first. It is why I have always stood up against the globalists.

My constituents do not support enlarging unaccountable, international bureaucracy at the expense of national and individual sovereignty. I was speaking out against agenda 2030, while con artists like Maxime Bernier were sipping champagne in Davos. I voted against the Paris Agreement while Max was hiding behind these curtains. I opposed the dangerous amendments to the international health regulations, which seek to strip out language protecting individual freedom and human rights.

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For over 20 years, I have stood up for common Canadians against the systemic elitism practised by groups such as the World Economic Forum. I know what it means to oppose the dominant narrative being pushed by the elites. The CBC ombudsman recently reported on how CBC had accused me of being part of a vast right-wing international conspiracy to destroy democracy using cricket memes. When I told a group of young Conservatives that Liberals supported making dangerous drugs legal, the Liberal member for Pickering—Uxbridge accused me of spreading an anti-Semitic conspiracy theory.

If people question the dominant narrative, the Liberals accuse them of being a conspiracy theorist. The Liberals will call them racist. The Liberals will refuse to listen to anything they say, simply screaming “misinformation” over and over again. I have been subjected to this progressive propaganda for 20 years, but I am still here. I am speaking up for what I believe to be the truth.

If people begin questioning the dominant narrative about COVID, climate or anything else on the Liberal agenda, I want them to know that I hear them. However, let me be clear. NATO is not the United Nations. NATO is not the World Economic Forum. NATO is not a threat to Russia. NATO is the greatest defence alliance in history. As the longest-serving member of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, and a former chair, I have seen first-hand how Putin treats his neighbours.

I have heard directly from elected officials in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. I have heard their hopes and their dreams for their countries, dreams which could only be fulfilled through peace and security, yet their security is under constant threat from Vladimir Putin and the oligarchs who control Russia. They are under constant threats for the same reason Taiwan is under threat from the Communists who control China, for the same reason Israel is under threat from the ayatollahs who control Iran and the Hamas terrorists who occupy Gaza.

Every free and democratic country is a shining beacon of hope, exposing the corruption and the cruelty that is autocracy. Democracy is an existential threat to tyranny. Individual liberty is an existential threat to authoritarian socialism. It does not matter if it is the national, ethnic socialism of Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, or the religious socialism of Hamas and Hezbollah.

As long as free and democratic countries exist, we undermine the power of tyrants. Canadians, Ukrainians, Taiwanese and Israelis, along with most people, in most of the world, just want to live a simple life. The same is true for the common people of Russia, China, Iran and Gaza.

As long as those people can look abroad and see what it is like to live freely, what it is like to vote out tired and corrupt leaders, then the survival of the tyrants is threatened. That is why they censor foreign news, culture and entertainment. That is why they lash out and attack their neighbours.

• (1720)

Since the people of Ukraine threw off the Communist tyrants, they have struggled to build a free and democratic country. Since the collapse of the Soviet empire, former KGB goon Vladimir Putin

has meddled, interfered and invaded Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Is it any wonder they seek to join NATO?

The people of Russia have nothing to fear from an expanded NATO. NATO is a defence alliance. The reason NATO exists is not to provoke war or threaten the people of Russia. NATO is not an aggressor. It exists to deter aggression.

Unfortunately, since Pierre Trudeau began to demilitarize Canada, the Liberal Party has forgotten the logic of deterrence. The reason we should be spending at least 2% of GDP on defence is so that we do not have to spend 20% on defence. Right now, 21% of Ukraine’s entire gross national product is being spent to defend its free and democratic country. Either we spend enough to deter the tyrants from attacking, or else we will spend 10 times as much fending off attacks.

While Canada must support and defend all our free and democratic allies, when it comes to Ukraine Canada has a special interest. It should be among the highest goals of any Canadian foreign policy to prevent a powerful, nuclear-armed country from dominating its smaller neighbours. We must be steadfast in shoring up international support for Ukraine.

Canada's sense of security is buttressed by three oceans and a reliable ally to the south, but just across those oceans are powerful states hungry for the resources we have in abundance. That is why it has always been our policy to fight our enemies on their ground instead of ours.

Ukraine is at the front line of the 21st century’s battle for freedom and democracy. It is our highest national interest to prevent the powerful from dominating the weak. It is our highest moral interest to prevent a fledging democracy from failing and falling to tyranny.

I ask those who may remain skeptical of Canada’s support for Ukraine to listen carefully to how Putin lies. Putin says he is fighting far right Nazis in Ukraine, Hamas says it is fighting far right Nazis in Israel, and the Prime Minister funds left-wing groups that labelled a podcast fan club as far right Nazis.

Putin accused the Jewish President of Ukraine of standing with Nazis, and the Prime Minister accused the member for Thornhill of standing with Nazis. I am not suggesting the Prime Minister is the same as Vladimir Putin. I just want Canadians who have been unfairly labelled by the Prime Minister as racist or sexist to ask themselves if it is possible Putin is doing the same thing to Ukrainians.

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My colleagues across the aisle need to ask themselves if calling everyone they disagree with a far right conspiracy theorist is the most effective way to counter Russian propaganda. The most effective propaganda takes a true fact and wraps it in deceptions, which is why calling everything the government disagrees with misinformation and disinformation is so corrosive.

Free and democratic countries do not resort to censorship. We should never seek to silence dissent or freeze the bank accounts of people we disagree with. The best defence against foreign propaganda is openness and transparency, and Canada must strive to be an example to fledgling democracies such as Ukraine.

Keeping ministers in cabinet who give contracts to their friends is not the kind of example Canada should be setting. Obstructing RCMP investigations is not the kind of example Canada should be setting. Regulating foreign cultural content on the Internet is not the kind of example Canada should be setting.

It is time for Canada to return to the values of individual liberty and democracy that guided Canada through two world wars. It is time for Canada to be an example to our NATO allies and to those aspiring to join. It is time we exceeded our commitments and increased defence spending. It is time to equip Ukraine with the best resources we can build or buy.

The enemies of democracy see our very existence as a threat to their power, and they can only defeat us with weapons, but we can destroy them with words. Free trade and free markets give us the wealth we need to defend against any threat, while corruption and socialism under tyranny weakens them.

Today, the front lines in the war to preserve democracy are in Ukraine and Israel. Tomorrow it could be Taiwan. Canada must stand ready. We must fight tyranny overseas so we can bring home peace and security.

• (1725)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member used the word “trade”. One thing I recognize, and I think there is some merit to it, is that the importance of this whole debate goes far beyond the issue of trade; it is also in regard to Ukraine.

The previous speaker talked about the powers of this particular agreement and the benefit not only to Canada but to Ukraine, which is going through a very difficult time because of the war. Every one of us has opposed this illegal occupation and the terror that Russia is putting on Ukraine. This is a silver star that we can all look to as something of great benefit. I am pleased the member made reference to that aspect.

I am sure the member would be aware, because she was part of the Stephen Harper government, that defence military spending went just below 1% then. We have never come close to that. Does she believe Stephen Harper was wrong to let it go below 1%?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I did mention trade in the last minute of my speech. In fact, I think I mentioned it twice.

During the time of Stephen Harper, our military was the best equipped it had been since the conflict in World War II. We got

Globemasters. We got Chinooks. We got LAVs. We got other planes. We finally got our TAPVs. All those were initiated then. We also got the national shipbuilding strategy. We would not have any functioning vehicles or equipment for the military were it not for the days of Stephen Harper and our past defence ministers Gordon O'Connor and Peter MacKay.

I thank the member opposite for reminding us what a great military we had and how strong it was under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the speech by my hon. colleague. How does the member feel a free trade agreement with Ukraine, particularly as it defends itself in the ongoing war with Russia, will affect the relationship between it and the conflict?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, Ukraine is under an existential threat. If Ukraine does not defend itself and then does not exist, we will not have the basis for a free trade agreement because there would be no Ukraine. We have to do first things first and make sure it has what it needs to defend itself. We have to send good equipment and good ammunition, not junk to empty out our old garages. It is a good thing people are being strong here and getting that mission started.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, can the member provide her thoughts on the less than 1% spending on defence by Stephen Harper? Was that a good thing or a bad thing?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, during the leadership of Prime Minister Harper, more money was spent on defence than there had been since the decade of darkness. The country is stronger and envied by many because of what we have in our professional military and the women and men who make Canada look good on the world stage.

• (1730)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we continue to see duplications of events around the world. We have seen what is happening with Israel and Gaza right now.

As it pertains to foreign conflicts and the information out there, can the member talk about how this deal may help the redevelopment of Ukraine going forward?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, if given the chance, trade with Ukraine will strengthen itself and perhaps prevent another invasion by Russia or another entity.

The real problem here is the Communists who run China. This Ukraine-Russia conflict is a wonderful and welcomed distraction for China. Our overarching concern is making sure that Canada is well defended and the world is well defended against greater aggressors yet to come.

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[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the member for Nepean.

I have the honour of rising today to support the bill to implement the free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine. As we have already mentioned, modernizing this agreement not only enabled us to add new chapters, but it also gave us an opportunity to update the existing chapters so as to make them consistent with the highest standards and best practices in regard to agreements.

I would like to begin by talking about the very important, innovative, modern and comprehensive updates that were made to two chapters: the labour chapter, which I will talk about a little later, and the environment chapter. The modernized provisions of the agreement between Canada and Ukraine seek to meet the highest labour rights and environmental standards.

[*English*]

These updates would make the agreement a full and comprehensive modern trade agreement that levels the playing field and ensures that there is sufficient flexibility so that both countries can implement their policy objectives in these areas.

Allow me to quickly give an overview of the nine modernized chapters of the agreement.

[*Translation*]

With regard to rules of origin and procedures, Canada and Ukraine have agreed to activate and operationalize the principle of cumulation of origin, a principle that allows materials originating in any other country with which Canada and Ukraine have a free trade agreement to have originating status for goods exported under preferential tariffs. The result is that our producers will be entitled to greater flexibility in deciding whether to source raw materials from countries with which Canada and Ukraine have free trade agreements.

I would like to talk briefly about the chapter on digital trade, which is very important and updates the old chapter, which was called e-commerce at the time. Things have evolved quite a bit. This is a good update and provides regulatory certainty for companies looking to engage in the digital economy in both markets.

[*English*]

The chapter now contains ambitious commitments to facilitate the use of digital trade as a means of trade between Canada and Ukraine. The chapter includes commitments relating to cross-border data flows, which are very important, and also data localization, source code disclosure, open government data, and personal data protection.

[*Translation*]

The modernized agreement includes a chapter on competition policy with new, updated obligations intended to promote a competitive marketplace. This chapter helps achieve objectives for Canada and Ukraine that relate to an equitable, transparent, predictable and competitive trade environment. What does this mean in practical terms? In practical terms, it means obligations that are

reinforced by competition authorities with respect to procedural fairness and transparency, and new obligations respecting the identification and protection of confidential information. These new obligations ensure that basic principles like the rights of defendants are upheld during investigations and proceedings.

• (1735)

By the way, I would like to draw special attention to the chapter on monopolies held by state-owned enterprises. This chapter was also enhanced to include important definitions concerning state-owned enterprises and designated monopolies, with updated commitments on transparency and technical co-operation.

[*English*]

In the modernized government procurement chapter, Canada and Ukraine have clarified that they are allowed to take into account environmental, socio-economic or labour-related considerations in their procurements. This means that it is now clear that the agreement does not prevent parties from adopting domestic policies and programs to support initiatives such as green and social procurements.

A big important chapter is the upgraded labour chapter. This chapter is now robust, comprehensive and fully subjected to the dispute settlement mechanism in the agreement. This chapter is important because it aims at improved labour standards and working conditions in the two countries by building on international labour principles and rights.

I want to highlight two very important articles. The first is an import prohibition on goods made in whole or in part with forced labour. The second is a stand-alone article on violence against workers.

This chapter confirms that Canada and Ukraine are fully committed to the highest labour rights standards and agree to co-operate further in the field.

[*Translation*]

Another very important chapter that I feel strongly about is the one on the environment. It is the most comprehensive and ambitious of all Canadian free trade agreements. For the first time, this chapter includes provisions that recognize the importance of trade and climate policies. Both policies complement one another.

It also includes market-based approaches and climate measures linked to green growth targets. This updated chapter also introduces new sections that deal with worldwide environmental issues that are key to our green transition. It also includes sections on plastic pollution, waste, the promotion of trade in environmental goods and services and the circular economy.

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Finally, I will briefly talk about the chapter on transparency, anti-corruption and responsible business conduct. This chapter sets a framework for the promotion of transparency and integrity among public servants and the private sector while increasing the enforceability of anti-corruption laws.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for listening and for allowing me to list the important improvements made to this key agreement. This improved agreement will now be one of our most modern, comprehensive and innovative.

• (1740)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to greet my colleague from Pontiac, with whom I am pleased and honoured to sit on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. The hon. member rightly said that this free trade agreement deals with a number of issues, in particular the environment.

We are all aware of the effects of climate change that must be addressed, and since humans helped create climate change, humans must take steps to reduce pollution.

Based on what my colleague knows about what is happening in Ukraine, what should be the main focus of Canada's action to help Ukraine rebuild, from an environmental perspective?

Mrs. Sophie Chatel: Madam Speaker, at this stage in the global economy, we are well aware that climate change is intrinsically linked to developing a greener, more resilient and more innovative economy.

This agreement, which is central to this environmental chapter, includes a number of obligations and considerations. I feel it is really going to foster technology sharing to develop this 21st-century economy, so that it is beneficial not only for the environment, but for trade as well.

I think this is one example of free trade agreements. All agreements that are modernized in this way are increasingly innovative in this area, where the economy is linked to climate resilience.

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, as I said earlier in an exchange with another member, we think Bill C-57 is a good bill and we plan to support it.

My colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia and I have asked a few questions, but we have yet to get any clear answers. Although we agree with the bill, the process by which it is being passed raises some questions, as is the case with many other bills ratifying agreements that have been reached.

In the United States, Congress mandates the executive branch to negotiate agreements. In the European Union, member states play a central role in the negotiations, because they have to ratify them later. It is much the same in most industrialized countries. It is often parliaments that adopt treaties. Here in Canada, it is customary for the government to negotiate treaties and for Parliament to intervene only at the point of ratification, when the provisions are to be included in a bill.

My question is about whether—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has taken a lot of time. Other members want to ask questions.

The hon. member for Pontiac.

Mrs. Sophie Chatel: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. I think I understood it. If I understand correctly, he is wondering why international agreements are negotiated at the government level and parliamentarians only learn about the results of these negotiations.

I think it is important to pay attention to all the consultations that take place ahead of negotiations with a country. There are a lot of consultations and opportunities to provide information to the government when it is negotiating agreements. That is the time for providing information that is pertinent for the negotiations.

• (1745)

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, for the first time in our history, we have seen a free trade agreement that takes into account reconciliation, particularly the rights of indigenous peoples, and reaffirms the parties' commitment to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Would the member support, in the future, our country supporting similar provisions within future free trade agreements, namely with the United States?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sophie Chatel: Madam Speaker, I think that it is always a good idea to take the best parts of an agreement and include them in new agreements.

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have stood with Ukraine since the start of Russia's illegal invasion and will stand strong when Ukraine is once again free. The introduction of Bill C-57, an act to implement the 2023 free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine, is an important milestone in the implementation of the modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. As the first trade agreement Ukraine has signed since the onset of Russia's illegal war, this modernization would result in a comprehensive and progressive agreement ensuring that everyone feels the benefit of trade. Canada is a trading nation and trade accounts for about 65% of the GDP.

Canada is currently the only G7 country to have free trade agreements in force with all other G7 countries. Canada currently has 15 free trade agreements with 51 different countries and covers 61% of the world's GDP. Together, these agreements cover 1.5 billion consumers worldwide.

I have to give a shout-out to our farmers. Though small in number, our farmers in the agri-food sector are the most aggressive in leveraging every free trade agreement we have signed so far. Canada is the fifth-largest exporter of agri-food and seafood in the world and exports to nearly 200 countries. In 2022, Canada exported nearly \$92.8 billion in agriculture and food products, including raw materials, agricultural materials, fish and seafood, and processed foods. I wish other sectors in Canada where we have resource advantage would follow our agriculture sector in exporting all across the world. For example, the steel and aluminum sector could look beyond the North American market and export to Europe and to the Indo-Pacific region.

Despite challenges, Canadian trade reached record highs again in 2022. Canada's goods and services exports increased by 31.2% to reach \$940.4 billion in 2022 and the imports advanced 20.5% to reach \$936.2 billion.

Even with Russia's illegal and unjustified invasion of Ukraine last year, which caused a horrific humanitarian crisis and sent shock waves around the world, global trade has remained resilient. Global economic growth advanced by 3.5% in 2022, following the 6.3% rebound witnessed in 2021. Canada continues to uphold and promote rules-based trade, providing confidence and predictability for our businesses.

Free trade agreements represent about 80% of Canada's imports and 90% of Canada's exports in 2018. Free trade agreements are essential for several reasons. They promote economic growth by expanding markets and increasing access to a wider consumer base. These agreements reduce tariffs and trade barriers, encouraging the flow of goods and services across borders. This fosters competition and innovation, driving down costs for consumers and enhancing product quality. Moreover, free trade agreements create a framework for resolving trade disputes, ensuring stability and predictability in international trade relations. They also strengthen diplomatic ties between nations, promoting co-operation and peace. In a globalized world, free trade agreements are crucial for spurring economic development, job creation and overall prosperity. Free trade agreements are effective at lowering trade barriers and overall cost of trade.

The original Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement entered into force in August 2017. Upon entry into force, Canada eliminated duties on 99.9% of the imports from Ukraine. Similarly, Ukraine immediately eliminated tariffs on approximately 86% of imports from Canada with the balance of tariff concessions to be implemented over seven years. This will align with the proposed date for the modernized CUFTA's entry into force.

● (1750)

While comprehensive from a trade-in-goods perspective, the 2017 CUFTA did not include services, investment and many other areas. It instead included a clause committing the parties to review and explore expanding the agreement within two years of its entry into force.

On September 22, 2023, we signed the modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. This would support long-term security, stability and economic development in Ukraine while also ensuring high-quality market access for Canadian businesses partici-

pating in Ukraine's economic recovery. This would create good, middle-class jobs in both of our countries.

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The modernized CUFTA would maintain the preferential market access gained in the original FTA for all current Canadian merchandise exports to Ukraine. It would mark a new era in Canada and Ukraine's economic relationship and be fundamental to the participation of Canadian businesses in Ukraine's economic reconstruction and recovery from Russia's illegal and unjustified invasion. The modernized agreement also includes dedicated new chapters on trade in services, investment, temporary entry, telecommunication, financial services, and inclusive trade, and updated chapters on labour, environment, transparency and anti-corruption, among other areas.

The agreement would facilitate enhanced co-operation, improve the ability of parties to resolve trade irritants, promote openness and inclusivity, increase transparency in regulatory matters and help reduce transaction costs for businesses. CUFTA would commit Canada and Ukraine to respecting and promoting internationally recognized labour rights and principles and to effectively enforcing their labour and environment laws.

For the first time in either country's history, the FTA also includes a new dedicated chapter on trade and indigenous peoples, in addition to new chapters on trade and small and medium-sized enterprises and trade and gender. These elements are designed to increase opportunities for traditionally marginalized groups in trade to participate in and benefit from the agreement. When in force, the modernized CUFTA would not only continue to provide preferential market access for merchandise trade but would also establish ambitious new market access terms for services, trade and investment.

Amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the economic devastation it is enduring, a free trade agreement is of paramount importance. Such an agreement can provide a lifeline to Ukraine's economy by opening up new markets, reducing trade barriers and fostering economic growth. It would enable Ukrainian businesses to diversify and expand their exports, reducing reliance on domestic markets that may be severely impacted by the war. Moreover, the free trade agreement would bring in financial aid and investments that are crucial for rebuilding infrastructure and industries. In these challenging times, agreements like this can play a pivotal role in Ukraine's recovery and long-term stability.

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I want to emphasize the significance for Canada and other western democracies of nurturing and strengthening relations with Ukraine. Ukraine, with its rich history and resilience, has been a pivotal player in recent geopolitical events. It is crucial for us to maintain economic relations and strategically prepare for post-war co-operation and the economic rebuilding of Ukraine. Our relationship with Ukraine holds immense importance due to shared democratic values and principles. Ukraine has made remarkable progress in its democratic journey since gaining independence in 1991.

By fostering economic ties, Canada can provide critical support for Ukraine's democratic institutions, helping them to thrive and promote stability in the region. Economic relations are the backbone of any thriving nation, and in this context, free trade agreements are indispensable. These agreements can pave the way for increased economic opportunity and prosperity for both Ukraine and its trading partners. They stimulate job growth, foster innovation and boost the economic well-being of both parties involved.

• (1755)

Post-war co-operation is equally vital. Ukraine has endured considerable challenges, particularly in the aftermath of the conflict in the eastern regions. We must plan ahead for the reconstruction and revitalization—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have been trying to signal to the member. I am sure he will be able to add during questions and comments.

The hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague was cut off early, so I would like to give him a couple more minutes in questions and comments to finish up.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, we must plan ahead for the reconstruction and revitalization of the Ukrainian economy. This includes rebuilding infrastructure, fostering entrepreneurship and strengthening the country's agricultural and industrial sectors. By formalizing our commitment to the process, we can ensure a smoother and more efficient implementation.

In order to unfold the economic rebuilding of Ukraine, we must prioritize investment in key sectors, such as energy, technology and agriculture. Collaborative efforts to develop green technologies and renewable sources will contribute to a sustainable and environmentally responsible future.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the things that I think is going to be interesting about this potential is the work we can do together with Ukraine on cybersecurity. I would like to ask the member a question with respect to that.

We have a number of cybersecurity advantages. I look at Coding for Veterans, for example, which is a Canadian company. Through Jeff Musson, who has been working on a Canadian system for cybersecurity using veterans, it is now employing them across the spectrum, in banks and other institutions. Mr. Musson has been able to help some veterans with new employment and make sure that we are improving our cybersecurity.

Does the member think that these types of ventures would be good partnerships for Canada? I know that Coding for Veterans is

now opening a new chapter in the United States. In fact, it is going to have a float in the Rose Parade for that, which is quite significant.

I would like my colleague's thoughts on how we can use those types of programs, services and benefits to employ Canadians, employ Ukrainians and make our mark in the world very solidly.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague on the potential for co-operation on cybersecurity. Cybersecurity, as we all know, is becoming as big a threat as the physical security of borders. Canada has some expertise in cybersecurity and Ukraine also has good expertise in cyber-related knowledge. In fact, we have heard reports of Ukrainians domestically developing technologies and using them to develop drones to counter attacks from Russia. I am sure that expertise that is available in both these countries can join hands to develop new levels of cybersecurity protocols.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, as this is my first chance to comment on Bill C-57, I would put this question to my friend from Nepean.

It is heartening to see some reference to climate in trade agreements, but we know that for over more than a decade, since the creation of the World Trade Organization, the WTO has wrongly put itself above international climate agreements with respect to its authorities. I think this is a welcome opportunity, as President Zelenskyy is a champion of the call for climate action.

Would the hon. member for Nepean support a call to the hon. Minister of Trade to review the relationship between the WTO and international climate agreements in order to get the WTO to back off on interfering in climate action?

• (1800)

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, the collaborative efforts to develop green technologies and renewable sources will contribute to a sustainable and environmentally responsible future. That is what we have said with this agreement. I am sure the trade minister in future negotiations with the WTO will certainly bring up the climate-related issues that can also be part of future WTO agreements.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I rise to speak to Bill C-57. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

With more than a million Canadians who have Ukrainian heritage, I think it is important not only that we have shown our support for Ukraine in the past, but also, certainly, with what is going on with Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, that we show it now and into the future. Ukrainian immigrants, more than 100 years ago, literally broke ground and planted the roots for Canada's thriving and vibrant agriculture industry in western Canada, so the connections are deep.

However, when it comes to this agreement in particular, I want to emphasize the importance of due diligence and details. The Liberals have tabled a 600-page trade document that is now being rushed through the House of Commons with little opportunity for stakeholders or parliamentarians to review its intricacies. What chapters have been added? What new implements have been suggested? What are the consequences of those new chapters and new policies? When it comes to the Liberal government and its history with trade agreements, the devil is in the details.

To back up a bit, the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement began under the Harper Conservative government. It came into force in August 2017. It eliminated tariffs on 86% of Canadian products and exports to Ukraine. However, the modernization of this agreement is important, and I want to emphasize the fact that we want to see the details and take time to review the wording of the new update. The reason I want to be so adamant about that is just simply that, as I said, unfortunately the Liberal government has a history of failures when it comes negotiating or renegotiating trade agreements. We can go back to the very early days of the Liberal government when we renegotiated NAFTA or the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Trade Agreement, CUSMA. It was clear that the Liberals' goal was to simply get a deal done, tick a box and have a photo-op.

The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister sacrificed a number of critical Canadian industries with trade discrepancies that Canadian industries are still dealing with. Perhaps nowhere were those implications more profound than within Canadian agriculture. The CUSMA agreement impacted a number of agriculture industries, including dairy, where Canada relinquished its ability to export a number of important dairy products, like protein concentrate and skim milk powder. We also added additional access for American products into Canada.

The most glaring error, though perhaps it was not an error but was done on purpose, is the fact that the Liberal government relinquished Canada's trade sovereignty in signing the new CUSMA agreement. That is right. If Canada wants to sign a new trade agreement with any non-market country, we have to get permission or approval from the United States. No G7 country had relinquished that kind of authority to a trading partner. That had never happened, but it is exactly what happened with the Liberals' agreement with CUSMA. Our manufacturers and industry are still dealing with the implications of this agreement, with higher tariffs on aluminum and softwood lumber, which still have not been resolved years later.

There are clearly some important reasons Canadian manufacturers and Canadian industry do not trust the Liberal government when it comes to trade agreements and that it will base those agreements and negotiations on sound economics and the importance of fair trade. It seems, historically, that the Liberals have been basing

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their trade negotiations on Liberal ideology and virtue signalling. That is not the way trade negotiations should be going.

As recently as last year, the Liberals implemented a Ukraine goods remission order so Ukrainian products, like chicken for example, would be getting quota-free and tariff-free access into Canada. They signed this remission agreement with zero consultation with the stakeholders that would be impacted: Chicken Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada and Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council. None of them knew this remission order was being signed. The Liberals signed this at a time when avian flu outbreaks around the world, and certainly here in Canada, were devastating the industry. We had these groups at the agriculture committee letting Finance Canada and Global Affairs know about the impacts of the agreement and saying to please not renew the remission order when it came due last spring.

• (1805)

The Liberal government ignored all that stakeholder consultation at committee and renewed that remission order anyway last spring. This has put our biosecurity and our food security at risk as, again, outbreaks of avian influenza were happening around the world and certainly around Ukraine as well.

Last year, we looked at the Liberal-NDP government's decision to impose a 35% tariff on fertilizer coming from Russia and Belarus. Again, there was zero consultation with Canadian producers, especially those farmers in Ontario and eastern Canada who rely almost totally on that fertilizer.

Now, I understand what the government was trying to do: It was trying to punish Putin for his illegal invasion of Ukraine, but Putin was not paying those tariffs. Canadian farmers paid more than \$34 million in tariffs just to get the fertilizer into Canada to plant their crops this spring. No other G7 country put such a tariff on fertilizer. None of our allies, including the United States, did this. They understood the importance of their farmers being competitive and the impact the tariff would have on commodity prices, not only here at home but also around the world.

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Again, despite every stakeholder telling the government to lift that tariff to ensure that we are competitive and that we have access to affordable fertilizer, the Liberals have ignored them. In fact, when we asked the government on many occasions why it implemented this tariff when none of our G7 allies did, the answer was, "I didn't even know we bought fertilizer from Russia and Belarus". This just shows why there is such frustration from our stakeholders and our industry. When it comes to the Liberals negotiating trade agreements, they are not consulting. They are plowing ahead with these agreements without doing their due diligence. As much as we support a free trade agreement with Ukraine, we want to make sure that we have the time to review the details within this agreement.

Most recently, the Liberal-NDP government has fast-tracked the United Kingdom to join the trans-Pacific partnership, the CPTPP, again without consulting with Canadian ranchers and pork producers. They desperately wanted some major gaps within the trade agreement with CETA and Canada to be addressed for the U.K. to have accession to the CPTPP.

The numbers are stark. Last year, the United Kingdom imported about 4,000 tonnes of beef, worth \$33 million, into Canada. Do members know how much beef Canada exported into the United Kingdom? It was zero; it was not so much as a burger or a steak. Canada's pork industry is facing a very similar trajectory, as the United Kingdom has put in non-tariff trade barriers to block Canadian imports. Not once has the Liberal government stood up to defend Canadian producers.

Free trade must be fair trade, and we are asking the Liberal government to do a side letter, a bilateral, with the U.K. to address this trade discrepancy. It has yet to do that. This is a massive gap, and Canadian producers are the ones paying the price for the Liberal government getting photo ops and ticking a box when it comes to its agenda, without thinking about the consequences for Canadian industries, manufacturers and producers. One thing is very clear after eight years under the Prime Minister: He is failing Canadian agriculture and our industries on the global stage, and our valuable industries are paying the price.

The Conservative Party supports free trade, and we are very proud of the 40 free trade agreements we signed under Prime Minister Harper. However, those agreements benefited Canadian industry and Canadian workers; they did not come at the expense of our hard-working producers.

We want to clearly and carefully review this trade deal and consult Canadian stakeholders to ensure that we reach a free trade agreement with Ukraine. It should be a free and fair trade agreement, not just ticking a box, that will preserve and enhance Canadian industries, including Canadian agriculture, and not follow the same failed policies and failed direction that the Prime Minister has become very famous for.

• (1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I completely disagree with a good part of the member's speech.

Let us talk about facts. He just finished saying "the 43 agreements" under Stephen Harper that they signed off on. That is just not true. Because the member stands up inside the chamber and proclaims something, that does not change history. The history is that it was not Stephen Harper who signed the 40-plus agreements. The member is trying to take credit for those agreements, yet he is being critical of the agreements we signed off on.

The bottom line is that no government in the history of Canada has signed off on as many trade agreements. That directly has an impact on the number of middle-class jobs that have been created, somewhere around a million-plus, pre-pandemic, and the trade agreements did contribute to that.

I wonder if he could—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's speech but just because he gets up and says it does not mean it is true.

In fact, by giving the United Kingdom accession to the CPTPP, an agreement that was negotiated by the Harper government, signed off, barely, almost failed, as a result of the Liberal Prime Minister, they are going to deteriorate this agreement by bringing in non-science, non-tariff trade barrier implements into the CPTPP from CETA because of this, by putting the United Kingdom into this agreement without addressing these issues first.

The CPTPP works because it is science-based. Yes, the Liberals also signed CETA, which has been probably the worst trade agreement we have had as a result of their playing with the end result, same with CUSMA.

Under Harper, we signed trade agreements that worked for Canada. Under this government, they are failing Canada.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I wanted to pay my respects to my hon. colleague from Foothills.

He demonstrates, without a shadow of the doubt, with real clarity, how important it is for our farmers to have the free facility to address some issues, compared to what they have in our counterpart, in America, or somewhere else, with fertilizer, just to give one example.

How could Canada have helped Ukraine and the world if this government had not shut down 15 projects of LNG that we had eight years ago? None of them have been accomplished under the watch of this Liberal government.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, this is probably the biggest impact we could have had on Ukraine, barring anything else with agriculture or free trade. When two of our important allies, two of the most important economies in the world, come to Canada asking for Canadian LNG so that they can stop funding Putin's war machine, our Prime Minister turns his back and says that he is sorry, that there is no business case for that.

What has happened? They are still funding Putin's war machine and then they have gone to sign LNG agreements with Qatar, which certainly does not have the environmental standards, the humans rights standards or the labour standards that Canadian energy would have.

We could have shown that we have a critical role to play on the global stage, and we failed because of this Prime Minister.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have been asking a number of questions related to this on cybersecurity. I have mentioned Coding for Veterans, where we have veterans from Canada who are getting training to do coding for cybersecurity.

I would like the member to maybe talk a little bit about the potential for that, because Ukraine has been under a lot of cybersecurity threats. Perhaps this is also an opportunity to do security and economic development. I think those things are really underestimated in terms of potential but could be really good opportunities for us in Ukraine.

• (1815)

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I do believe there are great opportunities with a free trade agreement with Ukraine, whether that is with agriculture, manufacturing or cybersecurity. Certainly, we could learn some valuable lessons from our NATO allies and what is going on in Ukraine.

However, forgive me if I just have some hesitancy to trust the Liberals on what new chapters and what new details are going to be in this trade agreement, unless we have the time to review it.

That is my only caution to the Liberal government. Do not rush this through. Give parliamentarians and our stakeholders an opportunity to thoroughly review this agreement, to make sure it benefits both parties. The devil is in the details.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is indeed an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-57. As I think everyone in this place knows, I have been unequivocal in my support for Ukraine, and that will never cease, not only because I am proud of my Ukrainian heritage, but also because Ukraine is in a battle for its life and its very existence.

For 607 days, we have watched on TV, in real time, Russia's illegal invasion. For 607 days, we have watched the barbaric acts of the Russian military. For 607 days, we have watched how Russian soldiers have used sexual violence as a weapon as they raped women and children. For 607 days, we have watched Putin trying to Russify Ukraine and commit another genocide on the soil of Ukraine against the ethnic Ukrainian people. He is trying to emulate exactly what we saw from Joseph Stalin in 1932 and 1933 in the Holodomor, except Putin is being more upfront and aggressive in his mannerisms. For 607 days, we have witnessed Putin and his kleptocrats in the Kremlin refuse to recognize Ukraine as a nation and the people of Ukraine as a people.

However, during those 607 days, we have witnessed, against all odds, the people of Ukraine standing up and fighting back. We have witnessed the valour, courage and bravery of the Ukrainian soldiers as they have fought to hold the line. We have witnessed, for 607 days, the resiliency of the people of Ukraine not only in fighting

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back, but also in continuing their lives and continuing to rebuild. After every missile strike, they rebuild. For 607 days, I do not think Putin anticipated that he would unite NATO and our allies to support Ukraine unequivocally in its fight for its freedom against Putin and his Kremlin kleptocrats.

It is incumbent upon all of us in the House and upon our allies to hold Vladimir Putin and his proxies to account for their war crimes in Ukraine. They have to be brought before the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. We know for a fact that Russia has been using sexual violence as a weapon. We know for a fact that it has kidnapped children and families from areas they currently occupy, taken those children, put them up for adoption and are now reprogramming them, or brainwashing them, to be Russian.

This is part of Raphaël Lemkin's definition within the United Nations declaration on genocide. A genocide is when someone is targeting a people based upon their race, ethnicity or religion or when they are going over there, taking people away, replacing them with their own people, taking the children and brainwashing them to become someone they are not.

As Conservatives, we have been very strong in our support for the people of Ukraine. It goes right back to when we were government under Stephen Harper, when the first occupation of Crimea started in 2015 and before that when the revolution of dignity started first on the streets in November 2014. In February 2015, we saw the actions of the illegal occupation and invasion of Crimea, and then war broke out in Donetsk and Luhansk in the Donbas region of Ukraine, and Canada was one of the very first ones in, making sure we were providing military support. We started Operation UNIFIER and started pushing for Ukraine to be included as a member of NATO. That was all done under Stephen Harper and our Conservative government. It is something that I am incredibly proud of.

Since 2018, in opposition, we have been calling on the government to do more to help Ukraine. We asked the government to start sending over weapons, which we were originally going to send to help the Kurdish Peshmerga, the rifles, snipers rifles and ammunition, to Ukraine, so that it would be prepared in case a hot conflict broke out, as we witnessed in February 2022.

• (1820)

We asked the government to start providing RADARSAT images, which did begin under Stephen Harper, but then, of course, that was cancelled under Stéphane Dion when he was foreign affairs minister under the current Liberal government. Only recently, after the hot war broke out in 2022, the Liberals again reinstated providing those RADARSAT images so Ukrainians could see what was happening on their ground by Russian invaders.

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We have been calling, since early last year, to donate our surplus armoured vehicles: our Coyote and Bison LAVs, our light-armoured vehicles; our track LAVs; and our M113s that are all destined to go to the trash heap. The Liberals under this Prime Minister want to send them to the scrap pile. Ukraine can use them to save lives as well as to liberate parts of Ukraine that are currently occupied by the Russian invaders.

We know for a fact that we saw the United States and Australia donate their M113s, and that helped liberate Kharkiv. We should be doing the same thing here because these vehicles are otherwise just going to be decommissioned and torn up and sent off to be melted down. We have a company in London, Ontario by the name of Armatec, which is prepared to take those vehicles, refurbish them and send them to Ukraine to make a serious difference in this war. We have GDLS in London that is already building armoured vehicles for Ukraine but at much slower rates than we would see if we were donating our older vehicles that are being decommissioned.

With respect to the free trade agreement, I will just reiterate what my colleague from Foothills just said, which is that we support free trade. We are a party of free trade and we are going to take our time to read through this very large document. However, I was in Ukraine just in August and I can say that the Ukrainians want to do trade with us. They want us to invest. I met with the Minister for Strategic Industries and he was talking about how they need Canada to go in and invest in industries that will not only support our economy but also could possibly support our war efforts as well, so those opportunities exist.

As someone with an agriculture background, I understand how important it is for us to be able to help Ukraine in its agriculture industries and the infrastructure Ukrainians need to get their commodities to market, especially with Russia bombing out their port facilities in the Black Sea region. Therefore, we need to help them with logistics, with infrastructure and as well with what we can pass on in agriculture production technology.

We know that through trade of things like LNG and ethical oil that we produce here in Canada, it would displace the Russian oil that right now Ukraine and our European allies are dependent upon. We are going into another winter in Ukraine and, again, Ukrainians have to continue to use the very natural gas, to heat their homes and their buildings, from the dictator Putin and his tyrants that he associates with, and make use of his energy, which actually puts cash in his pocket to fuel his war machine against Ukraine. We cannot have that happen.

Something that we need to do here in support of Ukraine is actually start building some things Ukraine is calling for. Now that war in Israel has broken out with the terrorist attack by Hamas, and the U.S. is now supporting Israel in the exchanges that are taking place, there is going to be even more need for Canada to provide munitions to Ukraine. Our production of 155 shells for the M777 Howitzers is abysmal. We are producing only around 2,000 rounds a month. We need to replenish our own stocks; plus, we need to make sure that we are providing munitions to Ukraine so that it can continue on with its attacks. Ukraine goes through 2,000 shells in a day and we are producing only that in one month, so we have to step up our production to help Ukraine.

We already donated eight Leopard tanks to Ukraine. We should donate more Leopard tanks. However, at the same time, what about buying some new Leopard tanks for our Canadian Armed Forces? Whatever we are going to be giving to Ukraine, we have to make sure that we replace those, like the M777 Howitzers, in our own Canadian Armed Forces so that we are prepared. Of course, morale continues to suffer under the current Liberals. The troops are leaving in record numbers. We are 16,000 members short. We have a recruiting and retention crisis because of the policies of the current Liberal government.

In conclusion, I will just say this: We all continue to pray for peace in Ukraine, but we know that the only way that is possible is that Ukraine must win. It must be victorious. Canada must continue to support it. *Slava Ukraini*.

• (1825)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to reflect on the power of trade and trade agreements.

Back in 2013, as the member across the way would recall, the EU trade agreement and the desire of Ukrainian people's to have more trade with the EU, ultimately led and could be tracked to what is happening today in Ukraine and Russia. This is from my perspective and, I suspect, from many people's perspectives. Russia continues to want to dominate the sovereign nation of Ukraine.

Today we have a trade agreement that I suspect everyone would support. At least I would hope that everyone would be supporting it. My question for the member is this: Would he not agree that the power of being able to see this legislation pass, ultimately, even before Christmas, goes far beyond just the economic benefits to both countries?

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, once again, I just want to thank the member for Abbotsford, who actually started the free trade talks with Ukraine when he was minister of trade. I was proud to accompany him on one of those trips before we lost government in 2015. He laid the groundwork. This bill, of course, has additional chapters.

One thing is, if it is going beyond trade, then I would recommend it. If we are talking about agriculture, for example, why do we not see a section in here on getting rid of the land mines? We have heard about some horrific accidents happening right now in the south of Ukraine, in the Kherson region. Farmers are out there trying to plant their winter wheat in land that has been taken back from the Russians by the Ukrainian military. The mine density in the fields is ridiculous. It is very dangerous out there.

We need to be putting more effort into helping Ukraine demine those areas. However, before they can even demine them, they actually have to push the Russian invaders back so they could have control of those lands without being fearful of being bombed while they are out there trying to remove those mines.

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Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, as I listened to my colleague's speech, it detailed a very important issue. We heard that the Liberal government is going to cut \$1 billion from our military. My question for him is this: How can we continue to support these efforts without those funds?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I made an error. I should not have recognized the member, because she is not sitting in her seat to ask the question.

I want to remind members that they should be in their seats. We are not under the previous rules.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, this is an issue that we really have to be concerned about.

The Liberals have already allowed over \$10 billion of the national defence budget to lapse over the last several years. This is money that should have been spent on our armed forces and has not been. Our troops are dealing with a number of crises right now within the forces, including the cost of living and housing. We hear stories about them actually going out and asking for donations to help offset those costs.

We know that the \$1 billion that is coming out now is coming at the wrong time. As I mentioned in my speech, we have donated howitzers, Leopard tanks and armoured vehicles to Ukraine. However, every time we donate, we also have to replenish our own stock of munitions and equipment to make sure that our army, air force and navy are mobile and expeditionary and can do the job that we call upon them to do from time to time.

The world, as we are witnessing, is getting scarier all the time. If we do not have strong Canadian Armed Forces, they are not going to be able to guarantee our peace, security and way of life right here in Canada.

• (1830)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the member about the economic impact assessments of free trade agreements and how wide or narrow those assessments should be. What does the member think about the fact that an economic impact assessment is missing in this case?

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, this is one of the reasons that we should not be rushing through this free trade agreement.

We need to take the time to look at it and study it. We just had it presented to us over the last few days. It needs to go to committee to allow stakeholders to comment on it. We need to make sure that such things as the economic impacts and environmental assessments are thoroughly debated to see whether they are in the interest of both Canadian exporters and Ukrainian importers, and vice versa.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise and debate the issues that are so important to my constituents and Canadians from coast to coast.

I will be splitting my time.

We are debating Bill C-57, the implementation of the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. It is a behemoth of a bill, more than 600 pages. The reason I bring this up is because I want to provide a

little context. The Liberals' track record is that they stand in this place and say they have to pass something without delay or debate and anything that even resembles us doing our jobs in this place would be considered obstructionist. Those are things that the Liberals level often against members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, yet it is our duty to make sure that we comprehensively debate and discuss the issues that come before this place.

This is, indeed, the case when it comes to a 600-or-so page bill that has far-reaching implications, not only for us and our national economy, but also for one of our allies. I would emphasize how important this is for the economic success of Ukraine right now, which is facing something that most Canadians who have grown up in Canada have not faced, and that is conflict at home. Although Canada has about 1.3 or 1.4 million Canadians of Ukrainian descent, the fact is that Ukraine right now is embroiled in a conflict where Russia illegally invaded Ukraine sovereignty, so we have to get this right.

So often over the last four years I have had the honour of sitting in this place when the Liberals are quick to point to anything that would question any part of anything they do. That is pretty broadly speaking, but it rings very true. I am sure my colleagues would agree with me that when we try to do our jobs, they claim it is simply obstruction.

I remember in this place, shortly after I was elected, having to deal with the updated NAFTA, the CUSMA. The Liberal government, instead of releasing comprehensive numbers about the impact of the new trade agreement and some of the factors that would be in place, came with great gusto to a press conference and said that we either do not pass the CUSMA and there is economic devastation or we do pass it and we are okay. It did not outline the myriad of details that were included in what is an incredibly complex thing, and that is international trade negotiations.

When it comes to trade, it is the Conservative Party that has such a tremendous track record. It is the framework and the agreement that this trade agreement is replacing or being built upon, which is a better way to put it, that was started by the previous Conservative government under Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the international leadership that he showed in building free and fair trade with nations around the world. There have been numerous times, including CETA, where the Liberals almost dropped the ball. Virtually all that had to be done was for the agreement to be signed, yet the Liberals almost dropped the ball, which would have wrought economic devastation.

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Then we saw more recently the Canada-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement. The Liberals claimed victory, yet it seems like they forgot to attend the briefings and certainly did not speak to many stakeholders when concerns should have been addressed in the process of trade negotiations. It is a shame, because it is during the negotiations process, when the details are being worked out and the 600 pages are being written, when there is a back and forth, a give and take, in trade negotiations.

I would just note that when I listened to my colleague from Abbotsford, he has probably forgotten more about free trade than most Liberals will ever know. I do not have the number off the top of my head, but there were negotiations with dozens and dozens of countries with which Canada has a positive, free and fair trading relationship because of his work and the work of the previous Conservative government.

An hon. member: There are 43.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, there are 43. It is so impressive that is the legacy of Canada's Conservatives.

• (1835)

We have before us a bill that addresses a host of things, but I would highlight a couple of concerns that have been highlighted to me.

One has to do with some of Canada's protected sectors, including chicken. I know that over the course of the conflict in Ukraine, we need to make sure the concerns of our domestic industries are being noted. It is unclear to me whether these concerns have been addressed.

Some of the other concerns could be of great benefit to both countries, like making sure that our defence infrastructures are brought into alignment and ensuring that we support Ukraine with the weapons and materials that it has to have in order to repel the illegal Russian invasion. There is also ensuring that the tools required for Ukrainian producers, and farmers specifically, are there. I often refer to the breadbasket of North America, which is part of the area that I represent, but many in this place will have learned in their high school textbooks about the breadbasket of Europe, Ukraine, and the rich legacy it has in being able to produce high-quality agricultural goods, many of which have been put at risk because of Russia's illegal invasion.

We need to ensure that when we are negotiating free trade deals, including when it is with an ally facing circumstances like Ukraine is today, we are doing everything we can to ensure we get them right. Specifically, one segment here is so important that it cannot be emphasized enough, and that is the role that energy plays. I will make something very clear: Canadian energy, with the role it plays when prioritized, when promoted and when given the opportunity to displace dictator crude and despot gas, makes the world safer.

The unfortunate legacy of the last eight years under this costly Prime Minister and his coalition partners is that Canada has been restricted from being the peacemaker we should be. When it comes to any conversation around free trade, the more we can prioritize Canadian energy to be the common-sense displacement globally of dictator and despot crude and gas, the better our world is for it. Un-

fortunately, we have a legacy under the Liberal Prime Minister and his coalition partners that has been truly devastating to world peace.

Now, some might say that is a bit extreme, but when we look at the facts, we have a country facing war, Ukraine, which we are talking about now in terms of free trade, and its people are forced to purchase the very gas required to heat their homes and the very fuel required to fuel their vehicles and tanks. In some ways, they are forced to purchase it from none other than their aggressor. That is a shame, and it should be a moral imperative for every single one of us in this place to stand with Ukraine. That includes standing with Canadian energy so that we can get it to market and ensure that we displace the foreign dictator crude and despot gas that have been funding Putin's war machine. The best way to ensure there is peace and security is making sure there is energy security globally. That contributes to food security, and food security contributes directly to peace and security.

It is unfortunate that it is only the Conservatives who seem to see that reality here in our country. I can tell members that when it comes to making sure that Canada has free and fair trade agreements going forward, it will be a new Conservative prime minister, the member for Carleton, who will make sure that it is prioritized globally and that Canada can succeed and prosper. By doing so, the entire world will benefit.

When it comes to Bill C-57, there are so many unanswered questions. I would challenge any member from any other political party in this place to make sure they take the time to get it right, because if we get it right, we can help Canada's role in trade, Canada's role in providing energy and Canada's role in providing our expertise. We can be part of the solution. However, if we get it wrong, we could end up making it more difficult for our own people, and we could end up seeing significant challenges.

I look forward to answering questions on this as we continue to support trade and the people of Ukraine. In any discussion that we have in the House, let us make sure to get it right, because if we do not, the consequences will be dire.

• (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have time for a brief question. The other questions will be taken the next time this is before the House.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if one wants to get the Conservatives upset, just tell them the reality that when it comes to trade agreements, the government has signed off on more trade agreements than Stephen Harper did. That is a clear fact of history, yet the member gets all excited about the importance of trade agreements. I agree; we should be excited about them, especially this one, because it is the first time a trade agreement would be expanded upon when one of the countries is at war. There is a great deal of appetite from a wide spectrum of stakeholders to see this legislation pass.

My question to the member is this: He says he wants lots of time to be able to debate this—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but I did say I needed a brief question.

A brief answer from the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I did not hear a question there, so I will take it as a comment. I will simply emphasize and close my remarks with this: In 2014, a year after the process started with the initial free trade agreement, Stephen Harper led the world in a show of strength when he stood face to face with a dictator and despot, telling Vladimir Putin to “get out of Ukraine.” That is the leadership the Conservatives have shown continually and the leadership we will continue to show when the member for Carleton is prime minister.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to address the House this evening with respect to my private member's bill, Bill C-350. This is the combatting torture and terrorism act, which is part of a now five-year journey I have been on, working with Canada's brave, heroic and patriotic Iranian community as its members struggle for freedom for the people of Iran and call on the Canadian government to do more to support that struggle.

Five years ago, there was a Conservative opposition motion that called on the government to recognize that Iran's IRGC is a terrorist organization in Canada and to completely shut down its operations in Canada. That was a motion we put forward five years ago. Incredibly, it passed. It passed because at the time, there was a Liberal majority government, which voted with us in the opposition for that motion to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

One would think, after the Liberals voted to recognize the IRGC as a terrorist organization and to shut down its operations in Canada, that they would have followed through on that motion. They did not, and over the last five years, we have seen all kinds of horrific acts by the Iranian regime: the shooting down of flight PS752, the murder of Mahsa Amini, support for Hamas and Hezbollah, including support for Hamas through the horrific terrorist attack we have seen against Israel. There are so many more crimes targeting people throughout the Middle East, targeting Canadians and targeting people around the world that the IRGC, the Iranian regime's perpetrator of terror, is responsible for. The Iranian community has been calling on the government to take action to recognize that the IRGC is a terrorist organization and to shut down its operations in Canada.

Five years after that motion passed the House and five years after the Liberal government did nothing, I put forward in the House Bill C-350, the combatting torture and terrorism act. This is a bill that would list the IRGC as a terrorist organization. The bill was seconded by our leader, the member for Carleton. This bill would rec-

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ognize IRGC as a terrorist organization and shut down its operations in Canada, but it would do more to combat torture and terrorism. It would, for instance, allow victims of torture and extrajudicial killing to sue state sponsors of terror in Canadian court. It would allow a parliamentary committee to nominate a state to be added to the list of state sponsors of terror or an organization to be added to the terrorist list, and it would require governments to respond to that recommendation. Finally, it would provide protection for individuals who were involuntarily conscripted into the IRGC. Many of the people who want the IRGC to be listed as a terrorist organization are also calling for some mechanism of protection for those who were conscripted against their will, provided that they were not involved in any atrocities. My bill also contains that mechanism and would solve that problem for those who were conscripted.

We put Bill C-350, the combatting torture and terrorism act, forward with the support of the community and as a result of the advocacy done by so many people. In recent days, we tried to expedite the bill. Our Conservative staff sent a note to all parties asking for support to expedite Bill C-350, recognizing the urgency of the situation, the lack of action over the last five years and all the advocacy that has been done. When I put forward the request to expedite Bill C-350, it was blocked. It was shut down by Liberal members. They were not willing to allow Bill C-350 to go forward.

We will continue this work. We will continue fighting and advocating for Bill C-350, the combatting torture and terrorism act, and calling on the government to shut down IRGC operations in Canada. If Liberals persist in blocking these efforts, then it will take a new Parliament, a new government, to ensure this vital work finally gets done and that we protect Canada, Canadians and the world from the terror of the IRGC.

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• (1845)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I just want to go back to when the member actually posed the question of the government. The Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs specifically addressed the member's question as follows: "As my colleague knows, decisions around listing terrorist entities are based on the advice of our security professionals." I want to underline the words "security professionals." The quote continues, "I have obviously asked them to update this advice for the government and we will take all necessary decisions as soon as it is appropriate." I think it is fair to say that there are some exceptionally intelligent individuals out there to support Canadians through Parliament and provide sound advice to the minister and the minister is seeking to get that updated. The member knows that full well.

On the issue of what has been taking place, the Prime Minister said not that long ago, " Hamas is a terrorist organization that ... [slaughtered] and brutalized innocent people." He went on to say, " Hamas continues to commit unspeakable ... [atrocities] and are trying to instigate further acts of violence against Jewish people...."

Let me be clear about Hamas. Its members "are not freedom fighters, they are not resistance fighters: they are terrorists."

"Terrorism is always indefensible and nothing can justify Hamas' acts of terror and the killing, maiming, and abduction of...civilians."

Let me also be extremely clear that, " Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people nor their legitimate aspirations. They do not speak for Muslim or Arab communities, and they do not represent the better futures that Palestinians and their children deserve. The only thing that they stand for is more suffering for Israeli and Palestinian civilians."

With regard to condemning the Iranian regime and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, IRGC, I would like to emphasize that the Government of Canada uses various legal tools and has robust and far-reaching measures in place against Iran and the IRGC. These measures were undertaken in response to Iran's gross and systematic violations of human rights, ongoing support of terrorism and regional destabilization of security.

Our government has implemented the strongest sanctions in the world, which have made over 10,000 senior officials of the Iranian regime inadmissible to Canada. As an example, back in November 2022, Canada designated the Islamic Republic of Iran under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, or IRPA, for the regime's engagement in terrorism and continuous and gross human rights violations. As a result, tens of thousands of prominent Iranian government officials, including IRGC senior officials, are now permanently inadmissible to Canada.

I am sure I will get an opportunity to add a few more comments in the follow-up question and answer.

• (1850)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, this member's excuse for not listing the IRGC as a terrorist organization is that they have put in place other sanctions and also their security experts are giving

them advice in private which we cannot share, but they will not take action.

Let me just point out that successive administrations of the American government have recognized the IRGC as a terrorist organization. I know the government has shown us in recent days that it has more skepticism about American intelligence than one might have expected, but our allies are recognizing that the IRGC is a terrorist organization and that it is the source of much terror and violence in the Middle East and throughout the world; that it is bringing Hamas, Hezbollah, the Assad regime and other terrorist actors under its control; and that Iran, through its proxy, is responsible for the violence we are seeing today against Israel and impacting Palestinian people.

It is for those reasons, as well as for the threat it poses to Canada and Canadians that the Iranian community here is speaking out about, that it must be recognized as a terrorist organization.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I do not know if the member actually listened to my response at the very beginning. If he had, he would probably have a better understanding of it.

I will repeat the quote from the Minister of Public Safety. He said, "As my colleague knows, decisions around listing terrorist entities are based on the advice of our security professionals. I have obviously asked them to update this advice for the government and we will take all necessary decisions as soon as it is appropriate."

The member is aware of what the minister has stated very clearly, and we look forward to an update on that advice. We will see what then happens in due course.

HOUSING

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am rising tonight to talk about the rising rates of rents in my communities and the inability for people to find a home to rent.

In my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, rent is rising at an alarming rate. As of October 2023, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Coquitlam is \$2,465. This is a 23% increase compared to the previous year. Rentals are priced beyond what many people can afford. With the prices of homes being even further out of reach for many, rental is their only option.

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The number of people who have not been able to secure safe and affordable rental housing is now causing a homelessness crisis in the Tri-Cities. In Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody, there has been an 86% increase in homelessness. The Tri-Cities Homelessness and Housing Task Group released its records this month. The local figures show that 160 people in the Tri-Cities indicated that they are homeless. We have seen their affordable housing being taken down and replaced with luxury condos that are unaffordable to most of our community.

Families are being pushed out of their neighbourhoods. Seniors and persons with disabilities are unable to find a new place to live as their long-term housing has been taken down. We have seen this government promise to invest in affordable housing, but its approach is just not working. The lack of affordable housing is hurting people, especially those living on fixed incomes.

Something has got to change, but this government has only just started talking about housing affordability and, really, there has been no talk about how we get people into affordable rentals now. Our communities do not need more expensive condos. They cannot wait for the much-needed GST rebate. The housing accelerator fund is not helping renters fast enough.

Will this government step up and work now to get some affordable housing in the community of Coquitlam?

I will close with another question. Right now in my riding, there is new development happening almost every day, and there is a large development coming up in my riding. I am wondering how we can get the federal government to come to the table early, to start the discussions on how we can get more affordable housing replaced in my community.

• (1855)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am getting to know my colleague more and more; we work together on the HUMA committee. This is the parliamentary committee that is primarily responsible for housing, an incredibly important issue for this entire country. In her community, my community and everyone's community, housing is the main focus of discussion around kitchen tables, and rent is going up. I will acknowledge that, first and foremost. Canadians are directing more of their income toward housing expenses. It is a provincial area of jurisdiction in the main; however, and I emphasize this point, all orders of government need to collaborate and be around the table to think of ways that they can help and what they can offer the situation in terms of making it better for the everyday person.

The member mentions that rent has gone up 23% in her community. In my own community of London, Ontario, the number is 20%. That is not an acceptable situation, and to address that, we have to understand what underpins all of this. The housing crisis in front of us, including the crisis in terms of rent, is ultimately a function of a supply crisis. That is what drives this. When demand is high and supply is limited in anything, housing included, the result will be expensive. That is what we see here.

In response, the federal government has recognized this situation and lifted the GST on the construction of apartment buildings. This

is something that is especially important if we are going to incent building. We have to work with the private sector. In this case, the private sector is the homebuilding sector. I have talked to home builders in my own community, and they have looked at this measure with great promise. This is something that will help, especially in the coming years, to make up for the lack of supply. Dream Unlimited is not in my city of London, but it is in Toronto, the largest city in the country. It is going to build an extra 5,000 units of housing as a result of this measure alone. That is only one example.

The national housing strategy is also very important in this conversation. As members know, it is a multi-faceted program. There is one element of it, the national coinvestment fund, that sees low-interest loans offered through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, to builders. In my city, this has resulted in Joan's Place, a great not-for-profit initiative that was carried out by Youth Opportunities Unlimited in support of young mothers and expectant mothers who are looking for housing.

This is how we get things done. It is by working in collaboration, not only with different orders of government but also with the not-for-profit sector. I also point to Robert Nicklin Place in the member's community; she knows it very well. Low-interest loans via CMHC in the amount of \$46 million led to the construction of 164 units in the community of Port Moody—Coquitlam, which I visited. It is a beautiful place; it is going through a challenging time, but this is one thing that can be done to get to better results.

That particular project is built near transit, schools and a day care facility. It is built near a park, a library, a hospital and a vibrant community centre. This is how we create housing that is meaningful. We create homes for people and build partnerships to make that happen. It is about the experience. It is about making sure that a home is a place that can have purpose and allow for individuals, students, individuals living with disabilities, seniors and all these folks who are in need of support, to have better outcomes. That is what we will continue to work toward.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I really hope that the member and I can work more closely together and that we can go out together and look at some of those sites in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam. There is a lot of opportunity, but unfortunately, the supply crisis where I live in my community is driven by the loss of affordable units. It is 15 to one that we are losing affordable units.

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When we talk about those units that are along transit or close to shopping, those used to be affordable units, but now they are luxury condos, up to 50 storeys tall. According to some of the housing data that is collected, almost a quarter of them are sitting empty. That is why the Government of B.C. recently brought into place a ban or limit on the Airbnbs, because those units were actually built to be Airbnbs. They are displacing long-term residents, who have rented for a very long time, with luxury units that they can no longer afford.

Yes, let us get together. However, could the member please tell me how we get those conversations started earlier with the federal government?

• (1900)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, with respect to my colleague, the conversations have been happening, and we have seen concrete action.

I just mentioned a project in the member's riding that has made life better for her constituents, with 164 units. Again, I emphasize that I will continue to work with her and with any colleague, and I know the minister feels the same way. He wants to see better outcomes.

The national housing strategy is a particular avenue that can help in the immediate term, but we do have to think about the medium to long term. In the long term, there is the GST measure I mentioned and the housing accelerator fund. There are other examples as well, but those two really stand out, because they will add to supply. When we add to supply, we bring down costs. That is true with respect to rent or purchasing a home.

We can do better, we must do better and, through collaboration, we will.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes not being present to raise during Adjournment Proceedings the matter for which notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is 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 7:02 p.m.)

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