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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, June 1, 2016

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 1, 2016

The House met at 2 p.m.

• (1405)

Prayer

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the pages.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

RUGBY

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of a formidable group of men, women, and youth.

The Balmy Beach Club is a historic local landmark in Beaches—East York, home to the greatest rugby club in Canada. As winners of back-to-back provincial championships in 2014 and 2015, and after a perfect 20-win, undefeated season in 2011, it has the most provincial championships in Ontario rugby history.

My friend, Cory “Applesauce” Appleton, leads the back-to-back champion seconds team, and its under-25 academy team won the Toronto rugby union men's championship last year.

We should all speak proud of our national programs, as two of our teams prepare for the Summer Olympic Games in Brazil, while Rugby Sevens joins the sports program.

This month, our national senior men's team will be hosting a series of international matches in Vancouver, Calgary, and my home town, Toronto.

Let me close by acknowledging Rugby Canada's world-class safe-sport program, PlaySmart, and by thanking Gerry Allen, a long-time Beaches resident for his tireless work promoting the club and the game.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the past few years, many of my constituents have been involved in an effort to raise awareness of the proposed CN intermodal facility in my riding of Milton. Today, I hope to present petitions signed by more than 4,000 residents opposed to this proposal.

While my feelings on the facility are well known, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the leadership and organizational efforts of the following: Rita Post and Milton RAIL; Stacey Newman and Milton Says No; Milton town council; the mayor of Milton, His Worship Gord Krantz; and Gary Carr, the regional chair.

It is never easy for volunteer organizations to compete with the resources of a much larger corporation, but these petitions are a testament to their hard work and determination.

I made a commitment to stand with my constituents, and I do so today. I encourage the Minister of Transport to work with our community to help find a solution.

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RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to salute an old friend and colleague, Jim Harrison of CHNL Radio in Kamloops, on his forthcoming retirement as news director.

Jim has led one of British Columbia's most celebrated newsrooms for over 40 years, practically since the station signed on. In that time, he distinguished himself as a leader, the one who moulded many fine news reporters and founded NL's reputation as one of BC's best radio news operations.

Jim's instincts and integrity as a reporter, his deep understanding of the roots of the community, and his storytelling skills, be it for a news item or the daily editorials he produced over all those years, have produced numerous awards for his newsroom, and for himself in 2007, the Bruce Hutchison Lifetime Achievement Award.

Statements by Members

Retired, but never retiring, Jim, like so many recovering broadcasters, will still be a presence on the air. I want to take this opportunity to pass on my best wishes for many more years of service and success at Radio NL.

* * *

WORLD EATING DISORDERS ACTION DAY

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, June 2, is the first ever World Eating Disorders Action Day.

I voice sympathy for those we have lost to eating disorders and our compassion and encouragement for those battling an eating disorder, and for their families.

About 80% of people with eating disorders are girls or women. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness, yet full recovery is possible.

In Canada, organizations such as Windsor's Bulimia Anorexia Nervosa Association work hard to advance awareness, research, and treatment of this misunderstood illness. The Government of Canada should work with them, allocate more funding for research, and work with provinces and territories to establish a national strategy for the elimination of these eating disorders.

* * *

HODGSON SENIOR PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of Hodgson Senior Public School, an outstanding institution that has dedicated a century to nurturing generations of local youth.

Located in midtown Toronto in the heart of Don Valley West, Hodgson opened its doors in the middle of World War I. Since then, it has been committed to serving the north Toronto community, offering unique programs designed to accommodate students from varying backgrounds and learning styles.

I am proud to salute the students, faculty, and alumni of Hodgson Senior Public school for 100 years of exceptional work.

Hodgson, quite importantly, provides students with an extensive co-curricular program, a safe learning environment, and a faculty that encourages students to follow their passions and achieve their full potential. A special shout-out to its music program, especially the percussion section.

Please join me in celebrating 100 proud years of Hodgson Senior Public School.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hard-working people of Alberta contribute greatly to Canada's economic well-being. However, Liberal and NDP policies have resulted in over 100,000 unemployed Albertans. Let us be clear. These skilled workers are not looking for handouts; they want to get back to work.

One of these hard-working Albertans is Jason Dubrule, an out-of-work oil field worker from my riding who is frustrated with watching investment leave our country because of the government's dithering.

Jason is tired of seeing hard-working families lose their homes and face bankruptcy. Therefore, last month Jason started a campaign to draw attention to the lack of support for our energy sector. He left his home in Falher, Alberta and walked 430 kilometres to deliver his message to the Alberta legislature.

Today Jason has brought his campaign to Parliament Hill as the voice of over 100,000 unemployed Albertans.

I hope the Prime Minister and the Liberal government are listening to Albertans like Jason and will stop dragging their feet on pipelines, while countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Russia are all too happy to pick up the slack.

* * *

● (1410)

TOWN OF MOUNT ROYAL

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I was joined by Town of Mount Royal Mayor Philippe Roy and the TMR town council as we unveiled a plaque declaring TMR a national historical site of Canada.

[Translation]

The city was designed by Frederick Todd, an urban planner strongly influenced by the City Beautiful and Garden City movements. It was incorporated in 1912 as part of a Canadian Northern Railway initiative.

[English]

With a train station at its centre traversed by two wide major boulevards which cut through the town, with setback streets and a ring of parks spread through the municipality, TMR is one of the most beautiful spots on the Montreal island.

[Translation]

Its residents belong to both of Canada's official language communities and represent a broad range of cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

[English]

Like Canada, TMR's diversity is its strength.

[Translation]

Congratulations, Mount Royal.

* * *

[English]

FESTA DELLA REPUBBLICA

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the Italian national holiday *Festa della Repubblica*.

Statements by Members

Seventy years ago, on June 2, 1946, the people of Italy demonstrated exceptional resilience in the aftermath of the Second World War by voting to establish the modern day Italian republic.

Festa della Repubblica not only serves as a commemoration of that landmark in modern Italian history, but also as the beginning to Ontario's Italian Heritage Month in June, a month-long celebration of the tremendous contributions that Italian Canadians have made to Ontario.

Italians have played an instrumental and invaluable role in building strong communities across Canada. Through their ingenuity, hard work, and cultural endowments, they continue to drive Canadian development into the 21st century.

I invite my colleagues to join me in this opportunity to salute the heritage, culture, and values of over one and a half million Italian Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Grazie mille.

* * *

PRIDE MONTH

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge that today, June 1, is the beginning of Canada's first Pride Month.

In far too many countries around the world lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer individuals are among the poorest, most marginalized members of society, found jobless, homeless, and struggling to survive. In some cases, LGBTQ individuals, as a result of who they are, are rejected by their families, kicked out of their homes, and pushed out of school.

Our nation was built on common values such as tolerance, openness and diversity, and we must continue to be a model of an inclusive society.

As a country, we must show future generations that the best way to advance our shared goals is to embrace all members of our human family, regardless of who they are or who they love.

I implore all Canadians to stand with me in encouraging our LGBTQ brothers and sisters to be proud of who they are, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

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MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recently had the privilege of visiting Tanzania to see first-hand how the Government of Canada was working with partners like World Vision to improve the health of women and children, while helping communities overcome poverty and injustice.

We saw development aid at work. Communities have been transformed and empowered through World Vision's long-term health and livelihood programs. We also saw that much work remained to be done if the poorest women and children were to have access to family planning, skilled help during pregnancy, and better nutrition for themselves and their babies.

Reaching the sustainable development goal of zero preventable deaths is possible in places like Tanzania. I am proud to say that this remains a top priority for Canada.

I look forward to working with my fellow parliamentarians to increase our focus on empowering the most vulnerable women and children to achieve a high level and sustainable quality of life.

* * *

ALS AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is the start of ALS awareness month. ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, does not have a cure nor an effective treatment. In Canada, up to 3,000 people are living with ALS, and about one-third of them will succumb to the disease, this year.

Last year, the ice bucket challenge raised \$15 million for ALS research, but we need to do more.

[*Translation*]

As we all know, our good friend and colleague, the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, has this terrible disease. Several MPs and I will be walking in his honour in the Walk for ALS here in Ottawa on Saturday, June 11.

I encourage all Canadians to take part in one of the 90 walks happening across Canada and to support ALS research by donating at ALS.ca.

• (1415)

[*English*]

Please spread the word on social media using the hashtag, #ALSawareness.

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AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise for a moment today to talk about a friend of this chamber, our current ambassador to Ireland, Mr. Kevin Vickers, who we all recall, on October 22, 2014, responded in the face of danger and prevented a tragic day from becoming far worse.

He has a lifetime of service to our country with 29 years in the RCMP, eight years as our sergeant-at-arms, and many decorations, including Canada's star of courage.

On October 23, the Prime Minister, then the third party leader, said to Kevin, "without your courage a terrible situation would have become much worse".

Last week in Ireland there was a situation that developed at an event. Mr. Vickers responded instinctively to make sure there were no threats to those attending as our ambassador, using minimal force. He responded out of instinct to make sure that a situation did not get worse. He made Canada proud.

Therefore, I ask all members of the House, and I ask the Prime Minister, to show their support for our ambassador in Ireland, Kevin Vickers, here today in the House.

*Oral Questions***PORTUGUESE HERITAGE MONTH**

Mr. Ahmed Hussien (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the month of June represents Portuguese heritage month. The Portuguese Canadian community is a vibrant community that has enhanced the Canadian mosaic with its history, language, and culture. Portuguese explorers were among the first Europeans to see Canadian soil.

[*Translation*]

My riding, York South—Weston, is home to one of the most vital and vibrant Portuguese communities in Canada. Every year, the Portuguese community gathers in the streets of Toronto to celebrate its history by displaying its sense of harmony and cultural uniqueness in multiple ways to other Canadians.

I look forward to attending many of these festivities.

[*English*]

I encourage all Canadians to take part in these commemorative events in their communities.

* * *

FORT MCMURRAY FIRE

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today will be a very emotional day for Albertans as the first group of Fort McMurray residents returns to their city to witness first-hand the fate of their homes.

There is likely not a single Albertan, let alone a Canadian, without a family member, friend, or colleague impacted by the fire. My own cousin, a nurse in Fort McMurray and her husband, a senior airport employee, were evacuated and are now kindly hosted by Edmonton friends. Both look forward to returning home.

Everyone is grateful for the valiant work by the firefighters, from local indigenous firefighters to those from across the nation and the globe, and for the generous donations from near and far.

Recovery will be a long process. Fort McMurray Strong needs a long-term commitment from the federal government to help tackle the daunting task of recovery, rebuilding of critical infrastructure, and fire mitigation. Canadians will be here for them for the long term.

* * *

ALS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, June is ALS awareness month. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis is a rapidly progressive, fatal, motor neuron disease that leaves those affected in a state of progressive paralysis.

In 2005, my father succumbed to ALS after a four-year fight, so it has affected me personally. All members have witnessed the courage of the member for Ottawa-Vanier as he battles this terrible disease.

Each year at this time, friends, family, and supporters of those suffering from ALS dedicate their time and energy to raise awareness for treatment and a cure. In dozens of communities across the country, the Walk for ALS is taking place to help raise funds for critical research and support.

I encourage each member to wear a cornflower today to demonstrate our support in the fight against ALS so that together we can support victims and families and promote research to find a cure.

* * *

● (1420)

[*Translation*]

TOURISM WEEK IN CANADA

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is Tourism Week in Canada.

[*English*]

Let us celebrate what makes Canada one of the best countries in the world to visit. From the breathtaking scenery and inspiring natural surroundings in our national parks to our beautiful and vibrant urban centres, Canada gives travellers amazing experiences and memories that keep them coming back.

The \$90-billion per year tourism industry is an integral part of our economy, providing nearly 640,000 jobs directly and over a million jobs indirectly. We recognize that when the tourism industry flourishes, so do the hundreds of thousands of Canadian families supported by the industry. That is why we added tourism as a new category to the building Canada fund, and why we provided an additional \$50 million for new marketing campaigns in the United States and other key markets.

As we get ready for Canada's 150th, let us all get out and enjoy our country's awe-inspiring natural wonders, our vibrant cultural life, and support our local economies across our nation from coast to coast.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we learned that Canadian special forces recently came under fire in a battle near Mosul in Iraq. This directly contradicts the Prime Minister's claims that Canada is only doing training. On this side of the House, we have been clear that Canada should be taking the fight to ISIS, but it was the Liberals who, for purely political reasons, claimed that all we would be doing is training, insinuating that this would be much safer.

How can the Prime Minister claim this is just a training mission when our troops are under fire?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): What we have said from the beginning, Mr. Speaker, is that Canada has an important role to play as part of the coalition against ISIL. Indeed, training on the ground, advising and assisting local troops, and being able to bring the fight effectively to ISIL and reclaim their lands and territories is exactly what we have committed to do.

On top of that, we are adding extra intelligence and medical support to ensure that Canada has the best impact in empowering local troops to defeat ISIL. That is what we committed to do and that is exactly what we are doing.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our troops are doing extraordinary work in the fight against ISIS, but the Liberals have put them into a more dangerous mission, tried to call it training, and have withdrawn our CF-18s that are a key pillar to degrade the enemy.

Make no mistake, if our troops come under fire, they should always respond with overwhelming force, but what the government should not do is mislead Canadians about the nature of this mission. It is more dangerous and it is combat.

Is the Prime Minister finally prepared to admit that Canada's mission in Iraq is combat?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the mission in Iraq is support and assist, and that is exactly what it is. It is focused on training. It is not a direct combat mission. It is not a combat mission, it is focused on empowering local troops to counter ISIL, but, of course, Canadian troops will always be allowed to defend themselves while they support local troops taking the fight to ISIL.

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DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to ram through his change to our voting system without giving Canadians a voice. He has rigged the process to get the results that he wants. Canadians know that this entire thing is a sham and it shows a complete lack of respect for our democracy.

When is the Prime Minister going to climb down from this mess he has created and give Canadians what they want, which is a referendum?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Actually, Mr. Speaker, on October 19 of last year, Canadians indicated what they wanted. The majority voted for parties that were committed to ending first past the post. That is exactly the commitment we made and that is what we are moving forward with.

Of course, as is our custom and as is our responsibility, unlike the opposition, when it was in government, we will be consulting, working with opposition parties, working with experts, ensuring that we have the best possible electoral system going forward.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, by limiting the debate to the House of Commons alone, the Liberals are making it impossible for all Canadians to have their say on this.

Considering that 73% of Canadians want a referendum, I think that the Liberal Party needs to listen to them.

The Prime Minister mentioned how people voted on October 19. Why, then, will he not let them vote in a referendum?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have no intention of limiting the debate to the House of Commons, although I do encourage a good, full debate here in the House and in committee. That said, we have also committed to consulting Canadians directly on how to improve our electoral system, and we plan to work very hard to ensure that Canadians play an important role in choosing how we improve and replace our electoral system.

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, their system was created by the Liberals and is being run by a Liberal-dominated committee to ensure that the Liberal Party is re-elected. We are against it. This is very important. It is about changing the way Canadians choose their representatives to make decisions for Canada.

We must listen to the public and have a referendum on this.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the member is talking about listening to the public when it comes to something as important as voting. I find that a bit odd because it was his party that eliminated and limited the right to vote for many people, all without consultation. That party made it more difficult for minority groups to vote. Despite that, Canadians made themselves heard and chose a party that is going to replace our electoral system.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2007, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police illegally spied on two Canadian journalists for nine days.

The commissioner of the RCMP said that he never authorized the illegal surveillance. This is serious. Freedom of the press, one of the fundamental tenets of our democracy, is under attack.

Will the Prime Minister agree to hold a public inquiry into the RCMP's illegal actions, as called for by our party and journalists?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is an extremely serious situation and, as I have said many times, it is completely unacceptable for this to happen in Canada.

The RCMP took action. Public safety took action. If the journalists involved or anyone else has questions, the commissioner of the RCMP will be pleased to respond.

It was a mistake, it was fixed, and we learned from the situation.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, no, it is not a mistake. It is an illegal act.

The RCMP spied on journalists. That is serious. This requires something other than more rhetoric, clichés, and platitudes.

Oral Questions

[English]

The RCMP has been caught breaching the rights of Canadians by gathering data on people who simply ask for government information. Worse, it is not even the first time that this has happened. It is a troubling trend when it comes to the government spying on Canadians. As we know, they also spied on journalists at the RCMP.

Bill C-51 was the Conservative attack on our rights and freedoms. Why has the Prime Minister done nothing to get rid of Bill C-51?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, we have engaged in significant consultations with stakeholders. We are going to continue those.

We have made clear commitments about improving Bill C-51. We have made commitments to bringing in an oversight committee of parliamentarians in which all parties will be able to participate, to ensure that our national security agencies and security services are behaving both within respect of the law and the charter, and also doing everything they can to protect Canadians. That is what Canadians expect.

* * *

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect their rights to be protected by their Prime Minister.

Today the Liberals plan to force through their bill to strip protections for thousands of aerospace workers here in Canada by using closure and shutting down debate at third reading.

The Prime Minister once stood shoulder to shoulder, chanting “solidarity” with the very workers he is now abandoning. While other governments are making investments in our aerospace sector, will the Prime Minister provide one single reason why he is in such a rush to sell out Canadian aerospace jobs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the first issue that the hon. member brought up, Canadians expect two things. They expect their government to protect their physical security and defend their rights. We are the only party that indicated, time and time again, in the last election and since, that we knew we needed to do both of those things together.

On the question of an aerospace industry and the strong jobs that go with it, this government has been working tirelessly to ensure that Canadians have good jobs in the aerospace industry, and that we have an aerospace industry that is good in the short term, medium term, and long term. That is what we are working on. That is what Canadians expect of us.

* * *

● (1430)

[Translation]

AIR CANADA

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Government of Quebec announced more significant investments in the aerospace industry. Meanwhile, here in Ottawa, the government is asleep at the switch. It has not announced anything for Bombardier and we have heard no word of an aerospace

policy. The only thing on the Liberal government's record so far has been the loss of 2,600 jobs at Air Canada.

Why was the Prime Minister in such a rush to hand Air Canada a blank cheque, even though the company never obeyed the law? There were never any consequences. Why is he so naive to believe that Air Canada will keep its word this time?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is working tirelessly to create jobs in the aerospace industry in the short term, medium term, and long term.

That is why we are working with partners like Bombardier and Air Canada across the country to secure investments in innovation and good-quality jobs in this valuable industry, and we will continue to support and encourage investments in the aerospace industry across Canada.

It is important for Canadians, important for jobs, and important for our economy.

* * *

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Democratic Institutions is actually interested in having a conversation on electoral reform, she cannot just keep repeating random verbs and nouns. She actually has to listen. Consultation, conversation, and listening are all great nouns and verbs.

However, I have a noun for the Liberals: referendum. The Canadian people deserve one. Will the Liberals finally commit to one?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continue to believe that listening to Canadians is our priority as members, but also my priority as Minister of Democratic Institutions. It is our responsibility, as a House, to ensure that the voices of our constituents are heard. I am looking forward to this conversation happening in this House in a meaningful and respectful way beginning tomorrow.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the minister is confused about how conversations work. Both parties get to participate; the Liberals cannot just dictate the result. The only person who is taking away from the conversation is the minister, by following the Prime Minister's preconceived notion of where he wants the consultations to arrive. If the Liberals truly wanted to listen, they would let each and every Canadian have a say through a referendum. Will the Liberals drop the act already? Referendum, yes or no?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for this conversation. We listened to Canadians. Over 60% said that we need to review other options and we need to move beyond the status quo. We committed to bringing forward a committee made up of all parties of this House to review the options available, including online voting, including mandatory voting. I am looking forward to continuing a meaningful and respectful dialogue among all parties.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the minister told the House that I had a hard time with the concept of listening, so just for the fun of it I spent a few minutes Googling quotes from reputable political analysts across Canada.

Here is what I found: “[The minister] has so far succeeded in burning bridges where she should have been building some.” “It is an unsustainable proposition.” “The Liberals were responsible for reassuring their political opponents. The Prime Minister did exactly the opposite.”

Clearly, I am not the only one who has a listening problem.

I invite the minister to hold a referendum and consult Canadians. We will see which side of the House has a real listening problem.

[English]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the media. I believe nothing is more important to democracy than a well-informed electorate. I also believe we need to listen to those whose voices have not been included in this conversation, like those with disabilities and exceptionalities, representatives of which groups we met with earlier. What we are hearing from people with disabilities is that the path to voting is an obstacle course. Let us listen to these voices and improve our electoral system and the way people vote.

An hon. member: Shame.

The Speaker: I am going to ask the member for Brantford—Brant not to speak when someone else has the floor. He knows better than that, and we all do. Most members are able to hear things they do not like and disagree with them without reacting. That is what we should all do because we are all adults.

The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

•(1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is lecturing us about partisanship in the House; this is the same minister who thinks that her tweets count as consultation and who set up a committee that is under the complete control of the Liberal Party, without consultation.

After all that, the minister has the audacity to tell us here in the House that the opposition is being partisan.

Seriously, will the minister finally listen to Canadians? Will she commit to holding a referendum so that all Canadians can express their views?

[English]

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have committed to bringing together a committee made up of all parties to review the various options available to us. The purpose of this committee coming together is to hear from Canadians first-hand, and, yes, using 21st century tools like social media is smart and necessary for us to ensure that all voices, as many voices as possible, are included in this conversation. I am looking forward to a respectful and meaningful dialogue with all parties.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister justified the government's hiring of a communications advisor who is a professional advocate for a ranked ballot system, on the irrelevant basis that he was not hired for being a Liberal. That, of course, is not the issue. He was hired because he is an advocate of the ranked ballot system.

Why, when the different proposals have not even been submitted and the committee has not even been struck, is the Liberal Party already hiring someone who has a position? Why are the Liberals putting in the fix before the process is even started? Why will they not allow a referendum?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows quite well that this individual was hired by the Privy Council to work as a communications advisor as a member of Canada's non-partisan public service. We are proud of the professional, non-partisan public service whose members come to work day in and day out with the sole purpose of serving Canadians. I encourage the member opposite to consider doing the same.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is mistaken that the role of the Privy Council and the role of the public service is to be non-biased. It is, however, to represent what the government wants. What the government wants, apparently, is to have a single member district preferential ballot system.

I will ask the question again. Why did the Liberals hire an individual to communicate on behalf of ranked ballots? What possible reason could the Liberals have, unless they have already predetermined the outcome of this entire process. Is that why they do not want to allow Canadians to engage in a referendum?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the member's question, and I would like to reassure him that what we committed to, and the only outcome that we have arrived at to this point, is bringing together parliamentarians in this place to review the options available to us. I know this is a difficult concept for the member opposite to grasp. I know there is lingering cynicism from the Conservatives' practices over the last decade. That is not the way we do things, and I am looking forward to us realizing that, all of us together—

The Speaker: I know members do not want to question the intelligence of members here. We have a very intelligent group, all 337, and then there is me, but that is another matter.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

* * *

[Translation]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised to treat our veterans with respect. However, today we learned that only high-ranking veterans will really be able to take advantage of the benefit increases promised in the budget for veterans who are unable to work because of injuries. It makes no sense. The government's plan even goes so far as to demote veterans.

Oral Questions

Does the government realize that one of the worst possible insults in the military community is to be demoted? When will the minister fix this?

[English]

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in budget 2016 we fulfilled our mandate commitment to increase earnings loss benefit to 90% of a veteran's pre-release salary, up from 75%. We committed \$5.6 billion in financial security to veterans in budget 2016. No veteran will receive less as a result of these changes, and I am looking forward to many, many more veterans having more money in their pocket to build their lives.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when Liberals promised an increase in benefits for permanently injured veterans, they failed to mention that their plan would benefit higher ranking officials the most—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, may I start again?

• (1440)

The Speaker: I am not sure what the problem was. There seems to be some reaction to something.

The hon. member for London—Fanshawe has the floor. I ask her to put her question.

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals promised an increase in benefits for permanently injured veterans, they failed to mention that their plan would benefit higher ranking officials the most, while rank-and-file veterans would see minimal increases. New Democrats believe that veterans, all veterans regardless of rank, deserve to be treated with dignity. The government is humiliating veterans. Why are the Liberals leaving behind those with the least? Why are they treating our nation's most vulnerable veterans so disgracefully?

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we committed to treating veterans with care, compassion, respect, and delivering on financial services. We did that in budget 2016. I would ask the member to go back to my mandate letter, which said that we would raise veterans earnings loss benefit to 90% of their pre-release salary. That is exactly what we did, delivering \$5.6 billion in financial security to veterans and their families.

* * *

MINISTERIAL EXPENSES

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals had a March madness to remember: \$27 towel bars, TVs for everyone, and a \$2,500 desk for the defence minister. But the leader of the spending pack is the infrastructure minister. He racked up a whopping \$835,000 for his shiny new office, including an amazing \$243,000 on furniture alone. At a time when Albertans are struggling to find work, why does this Edmonton minister think it is appropriate to spend almost \$1 million on sky palace 2.0?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, prior to this government taking charge, we did not have a solely dedicated ministry for infrastructure. We did not have a solely dedicated deputy minister for infrastructure. We did

not have any staff to support the minister and the deputy minister. The expenditures that the hon. member is talking about are to provide support staff, office space, minister's office space, and the DM's office space. We have followed the guidelines from the Treasury Board, and we are here to create efficiencies—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we had a great minister of infrastructure. Now we know what a poor minister of infrastructure looks like.

We know Liberals like to help themselves to taxpayers' money and the facts are clear. The minister, obviously entitled to his entitlements, decided to spend nearly a million dollars on his shiny new digs, but \$250,000 on couches and TVs?

Why is the only infrastructure money spent in Canada so far spent on posh offices for Liberal ministers?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the expenditures the member is referring to are to provide office space for the minister, for the DM, as well as for the staff members to support the minister and the DM.

We are focused on delivering on the commitments that we made to Canadians. That is why we are consolidating on one floor the entire ministry: to create efficiencies and live up to the expectations of Canadians in order to deliver on our commitments for infrastructure.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities has a mandate. That mandate is supposed to involve investment in public transit, green infrastructure, and social infrastructure like affordable housing. His objective should be to encourage economic growth.

Could the minister explain how spending \$250,000 on furniture for himself achieves that mandate? Does the minister truly believe that this is a good use of taxpayers' dollars?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud that we have committed to invest \$120 billion to support public transit, to support investment in affordable housing, to support investment in cultural and recreational facilities, to make our infrastructure more resilient to climate change.

Unlike the previous government, we are delivering on those commitments right away, instead of waiting for two years and missing two construction seasons and leaving Canadian communities behind.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us go back to the real issue. The minister can try to explain his lavish spending all he wants, but the point is he spent 250,000 taxpayers' dollars on couches and coffee machines.

This side of the House knows that his spending does nothing for Canadians. When will the minister admit that the only infrastructure plan he has is to beautify his own office?

• (1445)

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I answered the question on expenditures, and I do not know which part of my answer the hon. member does not understand.

This is a stand-alone ministry that did not exist before. We did not have a dedicated DM. We did not have a dedicated minister to deliver the commitments that we made to Canadians.

In the past, the previous government wasted two construction seasons not making a single investment in communities. We want to do things differently. That is why we are delivering on the commitments we made to Canadians.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after all three parties agreed during the campaign, small business owners were counting on legislated tax cuts to help grow their businesses and create jobs in our communities.

The Liberals broke their word, and their omnibus bill gets rid of this important help for small businesses. Just yesterday, Liberals voted down NDP amendments to fix the bill.

Why did the Liberals vote against their own election promise, and why did they vote down relief for Canada's best job creators?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the backbone of the economy. They are our job creators. For small business owners to succeed, they need a robust economy. They want increased revenue.

Our middle-class tax cuts put money in the pockets of Canadians who need it most. Middle-class Canadians are also our customers. They buy the products and services that our small businesses provide.

Money in the pockets of Canadians is good for the economy. It is good for growing the economy, and we will grow this economy as we promised Canadians.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for months Liberals have been asking for ideas about how best to change our democracy, yet every time I, my friend from

Oral Questions

Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, and New Democrats have offered solutions, the Liberals have rejected them.

Canadians are growing concerned and expect that when Parliament passes any new voting system, it must have the support of other parties in this place.

Today, will the minister take a first and important step and agree to change the Liberal-dominated committee to one that is fair to all members of Parliament and the millions of Canadians we represent?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his work on this file and for proposing the motion for us to talk about tomorrow.

I welcome all members of this House to engage in this conversation. I know there is a lot of passion in this House. I know there are a lot of good ideas in this House. I look forward to receiving all of them beginning tomorrow.

* * *

[Translation]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Milk Day, so it is important to point out that supply management helps sustain the dairy industry in Canada. That industry comprises 12,000 farms and families, employs over 200,000 Canadians, and contributes some \$20 billion to our economy. Given that some people, including certain candidates to the leadership of the Conservative Party, want to eliminate supply management, can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food inform the House of our government's position?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a former dairy farmer myself, I would like to wish all farmers a happy World Milk Day. Unlike the opposition members, our government supports supply management and our dairy industry. We think it is appalling that the members opposite want to eliminate supply management, which is a model of stability that supports our farmers, their families, and rural communities. Our party fought to set up supply management and we will continue to defend it against anyone who wants—

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis to exercise restraint.

The hon. member for Lakeland has the floor.

* * *

[English]

MINISTERIAL EXPENSES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while Albertans are reeling from job losses and devastating forest fires, the finance minister is charging taxpayers \$4,000 per flight for his staff to see New York. Economy flights to New York are \$600. Even business class is \$1,200.

Oral Questions

Canadians control their spending. The government should control its spending, too. How did the finance minister manage to spend \$4,000 a person to go on a lavish trip to New York?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as finance ministers before me have done, I have taken the opportunity, after presenting my budget, not only to travel across Canada to tell Canadians about the measures we are putting in place for them, but to travel internationally to talk to investors, economists and others who will actually make investments into our country to help us grow the economy to make Canada better for this generation and for the next generation.

We are proud of what we are doing, and we look forward to continuing to do it in the years to come.

* * *

●(1450)

ETHICS

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he needs a new travel agent.

As each day passes, Canadians learn the Liberal family reunion in Washington cost more and more money. Initially, the Liberals claimed the whole trip was \$25,000. Now they are saying it is at least a quarter of a million.

This is about priorities. How can the Liberals justify this runaway bill to taxpayers when they brought along their director of advertising, but actually left the natural resources minister at home?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will explain exactly how we will justify that important visit. It is because of what was accomplished for Canadians. On that trip, a historic visit, significant progress was made on issues as important to Canadians as climate change, the environment, international security, defence co-operation, the global coalition against ISIL, trade, and transborder security. We are proud of that trip, we are proud of what was accomplished, and all of the costs, as the member well knows, were proactively disclosed by a government that is committed to openness and transparency.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we now know that the government was withholding information when it claimed that the price tag for the state visit to Washington was \$25,000, because we have learned that it was 10 times greater, \$257,000. Even worse, the Prime Minister was accompanied by 21 of his office staff. Twenty-one. Even his director of advertising was there.

How can this government claim that it is a good manager of taxpayers' money when it spends money hand over fist on a trip abroad?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I realize that my colleague opposite may not be used to an appropriate Canadian delegation for a state visit to the United States. Our Prime Minister's visit marked the first time that the United States had bestowed this

honour on Canada since 1997. As I have repeatedly stated, all appropriate expenses were proactively disclosed as promised by our government.

What matters just as much to us is the progress made on files and issues that are important to Canadians. We are proud of this visit.

* * *

MINISTERIAL EXPENSES

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Finance was quite evasive about the \$12,000 in travel expenses claimed by three of his employees to go to New York. Considering that it is possible to get a commercial flight for a few hundred dollars, those numbers seem off.

The minister needs to be up front and tell us how his employees got to New York. Did they travel in economy class or business? Did they travel in a government plane?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the finance ministers before me, I know that it is very important to communicate about Canada with Canadians and investors around the world.

Our budget is very important for Canadians, and it is also important for international investors. That is why I travelled extensively to promote our level of growth to new investors in Canada.

* * *

[English]

PENSIONS

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, millions of Canadians do not have enough savings to retire in dignity. This is a national crisis requiring national leadership. However, after making big promises to boost the CPP, Liberals are now playing down expectations. They are refusing even to say what they are proposing to the provinces.

New Democrats believe all Canadians deserve to retire in dignity and security. Do Liberals believe in the goal of doubling CPP benefits, and what exactly is the minister planning to propose to the provinces?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question and say that we join him in wanting to ensure that Canadians have a fair and real shot at retiring in dignity. We want to help them to save so that they can have the appropriate opportunity that generations before have had.

We are working in a collaborative fashion with provinces across the country, as we know is necessary, in order to get to a conclusion that will actually make a better situation for Canadians through an enhanced Canada pension plan. That is our goal and we look forward, hopefully, to being able to announce more on that in the coming months.

• (1455)

[Translation]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is World Milk Day, an opportunity to recognize that the dairy industry contributes nearly \$19 billion to our economy.

The Liberal government, which claims to be protecting supply management, is abandoning our dairy producers by refusing to address the diafiltered milk issue as promised.

Producers have had enough of the Liberals' failure to take action. They are marching to Ottawa to demonstrate in front of Parliament tomorrow.

Will the Liberals finally wake up and do something for our producers and our regions by keeping their promise to deal with the diafiltered milk problem?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the industry's concerns about the use of diafiltered milk in cheese production. We have spent the past few weeks listening to the industry. We have had a number of very productive discussions that will help us develop a sustainable long-term strategy for the whole sector.

Our government fully supports supply management.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at last week's G7 meeting in Japan, the Prime Minister showed real indifference to Prime Minister Abe's push to seek early ratification of the TPP. The Prime Minister, however, seems much more inclined to push for an early deal with China. While that is a very important market for us, the Prime Minister has also said, "It's important that people know that when they sign a deal with Canada, a change of government isn't going to lead to the contract being ripped up".

Why will the Prime Minister not prioritize ratifying the TPP before holding trade talks with China?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government clearly supports free trade as a way to create growth and create good jobs for the middle class. Witness our success with getting the CETA back on track after it had fallen completely off the rails.

When it comes to the TPP, none of the other 12 countries have ratified the TPP, and that includes Japan. We have promised to consult Canadians from coast to coast to coast, and that is precisely what we are doing.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is making plenty of time today to meet with China's minister of foreign affairs, Mr. Wang Yi, but can he tell

Oral Questions

us, did he stand up for our interests and condemn China's aggressive activities in the South China Sea, activities that are seriously upsetting stability in the region?

Will the Liberals stand by our allies and keep their word, or are they playing diplomatic games just to please the Chinese government?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe in engaging with China in a comprehensive way. It is the most effective way forward. Having regular high-level interactions with China on a range of issues will allow us to continue to have frank and honest conversations to find common ground on difficult issues, including of course human rights. We consistently raise human rights concerns with the Chinese government. The minister is busy doing that today.

* * *

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Kevin Garratt, a Canadian citizen who for years has assisted humanitarian programs into North Korea from his café in Dandong, China, has been imprisoned in China since 2014, indicted on phoney and unsubstantiated charges of spying.

While our previous Conservative government spoke out strongly on Mr. Garratt's behalf, protesting the lack of evidence, the Liberals have only expressed concern.

Why is an innocent Canadian being abandoned so the Prime Minister can pursue his fresh start with China?

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the Garratts have not been abandoned by this government. We continue to be engaged on this file. We have expressed our concern for the well-being of the Garratts, and we have repeatedly raised the issue with Chinese officials at the highest levels.

We will continue to persist in our call for their return home safely.

* * *

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the manufacturing sector is a cornerstone of Canada's economy, but countries are becoming increasingly competitive when it comes to attracting high-tech investment.

With nearly one in eight jobs here in Canada linked to foreign investment, could the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development update the House on the government's efforts to attract high-quality jobs within our country?

Oral Questions

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Niagara Centre for his question and for his efforts as a former mayor and now a member of Parliament, in promoting economic development.

From day one, our government has been focused on attracting job-creating investments to this country. Today, our commitment is paying off with GE Canada selecting Welland, Ontario, as the location for its new “brilliant factory”.

This facility will create 150 jobs in phase one and begin production in 2018.

We are working with Export Development Canada, and this initiative speaks to our commitment to growing the economy and creating jobs.

* * *

• (1500)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many residents in northern B.C. are still awaiting the Liberals' final decision on Pacific NorthWest LNG. In fact, a group of these residents, who have travelled all the way across Canada promoting LNG, are with us here today: MLA Pat Pimm, Alan Yu, Kristi Leer, Ramona McDonald, Chris Lafratta, Jason Dabrula, and Dion DaSilva.

We are looking for answers. When will the Liberals stop the delays and approve B.C. LNG so my residents can get back to work?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in a fair and thorough review process. I met the individuals in question today. We hear from all stakeholders.

There are significant concerns around the project, but we are working with the proponent. Once we have sufficient information, we will make a decision within 90 days.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, need I remind the government that construction season is already well under way in Quebec and does not last very long?

Despite the meagre sums that have been promised to pyrrhotite victims, they are still being made to wait. Homeowners are worried, and with good reason, because they could completely miss the 2016 season. What is more, the delay is unfairly penalizing these families, who are having difficulty making ends meet.

Will the federal government commit to transferring the \$10 million set out in the budget this week?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the people struggling with the pyrrhotite problem in the Mauricie region are victims of a human and economic tragedy. The Conservative government ignored them for 10 years.

I am proud to say that during the election campaign, the Prime Minister and those of us on this side of the House made a promise to help pyrrhotite victims. The budget provides for \$30 million to help them. We kept our promise.

The Prime Minister himself went to meet with the victims to express his support. We made a promise and we kept it. The money is there for victims.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, colourful, appealing packaging for tobacco products plays a key role in brand recognition and brand loyalty among customers.

Studies have highlighted the impact this packaging has on children and young people. Our government was elected in October with a mandate to introduce plain packaging for tobacco products.

Can the Minister of Health update the House on this initiative?

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

Every year, tobacco kills more than 37,000 Canadians, and 87,000 Canadians become daily smokers. We can and must do better, and we are launching public consultations to regulate the appearance, size, and shape of packaging for tobacco products and adopting plain packaging measures to make tobacco less attractive. The government is committed to Canadians' health.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, time is running out on a new softwood lumber deal, yet the Minister of Trade sees the 100-day deadline for a new deal as more of a checking-in period. No progress is being made, and the U.S. election is coming up. The government continues to tell Canadians to hang in there, which is unacceptable.

What do the Liberals have to say to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians employed in the forestry sector whose jobs are on the line, aside from to hang in there?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working very hard to get a good deal for all of Canada on the softwood lumber file. The government recognizes the importance of the industry across Canada.

Officials from the USTR met with the Canadian team here in Ottawa last week. There is a subsequent meeting planned. The minister is engaged. The ambassador is engaged. We are going to get a deal that ensures stable access to the American market.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saannich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, referendum is indeed a noun and like all nouns it has a definition. This one is found in the Referendum Act of 1992, which makes it clear that we can only hold a referendum in Canada—unless we go through the process of changing that act—on a constitutional matter. Changing our voting system is not a constitutional question.

I want to ask the Prime Minister if he agrees with me that it appears that our friends in the Conservative Party are not interested in a referendum or they would have looked at the act. They are interested in stopping Canadians from getting what we voted for as a majority, a fair voting system.

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that electoral reform is an issue that matters to a number of Canadians, but few more so than those of us in the House who will be affected by it. That is why we have committed to working with Canadians and with members of the House.

We are committed to fulfilling our commitment to Canadians to ensure that the next election, in 2019, will not be done under first past the post.

* * *

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the Ladies Gallery of the participants of the 13th Canadian Parliamentary Seminar, organized by the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I have another recognition.

Almost 150 years ago, journalists took their seats for the first time in the reporters' gallery of the original Centre Block, and the Parliamentary Press Gallery was born.

Today, press gallery members continue to have a place set aside in this chamber, and they perform an important democratic function.

[Translation]

I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of two former hon. members of the Canadian Parliamentary Press Gallery:

[English]

Helen Brimmell, nee Bannerman, was the third woman in history to become an official member of the gallery, in 1946. She was one of only two women reporting on the Hill at the time. She worked for *The Canadian Press*, *The Royal Gazette* in Bermuda, the *Oshawa Times-Gazette*, and the *Guelp Mercury*. Helen retired in 1990.

[Translation]

Bernard Dufresne joined the Parliamentary Press Gallery in 1954 as a young Canadian Press journalist. He worked here until 1960 and then returned from 1963 to 1965 as a correspondent for *The Globe and Mail*. He then became a minister's assistant in the government of the day before joining the public service until he retired in 1989.

S. O. 52

Some hon members: Hear, hear!

[English]

Mr. Phil McColeman: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I apologize for my outburst during question period. However, as the father of an intellectually disabled adult son, I find it reprehensible that the Minister of Democratic Institutions would use the disabled, insinuating—

The Speaker: The member is engaging in debate, as he knows. I appreciate the apology. The member cannot engage in debate as a point of order. This is debate.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

UIGHUR MUSLIMS IN CHINA

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as per my letter to you, pursuant to Standing Order 52, I request leave to make a motion to discuss actions the government can take to address the human rights situation facing Uighur Muslims in China, specifically in light of threats to religious liberty that this community may face during Ramadan, starting June 6.

The Uighur Muslim community living in the People's Republic of China faces significant human rights abuses. During Ramadan these abuses have included forcible prevention of people from engaging in this deeply important Muslim fast.

In 2015, the Chinese government banned civil servants, students, and teachers in the Xinjiang region, where most Uighurs live, from fasting during Ramadan. It also ordered restaurants to stay open. On January 1, new "Enforcement of Religious Affairs Regulations" came into effect in the region, with the professed goal of limiting the role of religion in "marriage, funerals, culture, the arts, and sports".

Again this year, counties have posted notices forbidding students and Communist Party members from participating in the Ramadan fast.

The Chinese government is paying attention to what we in Canada say and do not say on these issues. We in this House, the government, and you, Mr. Speaker, can make a difference for these suffering people by using this opportunity to discuss the role we can play in response to this situation.

* * *

• (1510)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his intervention, during which he set out reasons why he believes the matter is serious and deserves immediate attention.

Routine Proceedings

However, in the present circumstances I do not think it meets the exigencies of the Standing Orders regarding emergency debates. The hon. member may wish to explore other options that may be available to him, either through upcoming opposition days or by other means.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand there was a little noise in the chamber toward the end of question period, and you may not have heard the question by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I think if you do check the blues on it, you may find that it does not fall under the administration of government. The position of the Conservative Party is not something the Prime Minister has to answer for.

We are about to enter into tabling of documents, and during question period, the Prime Minister said that our party “*a éliminé...le droit de vote*”. I wonder if the government can table any evidence of anyone in Canada being disenfranchised.

The Speaker: First of all, as the hon. member very well knows, the rules of relevance are not all that strict here. In fact, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands's question was about the voting electoral system, which is within the responsibilities of the government.

[*Translation*]

Now we will hear from the hon. member for Montcalm on a point of order.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to statements we just heard during question period.

I am sure that if we ask—

The Speaker: Would the member please start over because his microphone was not on when he started.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, in light of the statements made during question period, I am sure that if you were to ask all parties in the House about membership of the electoral reform committee, people would give the Green Party and the Bloc Québécois the right to participate and vote.

I would like to move the following motion; “That the participation of the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party be governed by the same provisions governing all other members and include the right to vote”.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is no consent.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS[*English*]**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the Joint Meeting of the Defence and Security, Economics and Security, and Political committees and Officers of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security and the Science and Technology Committee held in Brussels, Belgium, February 13 to 15, 2016; and at the Defence and Security Committee meeting held in Washington, DC, and Miami, Florida, United States of America, from January 26 to 29, 2016.

* * *

● (1515)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: the ninth report entitled “Report 4, Information Technology Shared Services, of the Fall 2015 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada”; and the 10th report entitled “Report 5, Canadian Armed Forces Housing, of the Fall 2015 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to these two reports.

FINANCE

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to Bill C-15, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016 and other measures.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendment.

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-280, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (golfing expenses).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce my bill which would make green fees deductible as a business expense. We all know the old adage that says, “more business gets done on the golf course than in the boardroom”. There is more to that than meets the eye.

As most members of the House already know, the golf industry in Canada is driven by small business owners. The people who own and run the local courses and employ thousands of Canadians contribute a tremendous amount to our economy.

It is acceptable for a business to deduct a portion of the costs of a Leafs game or a steak dinner as an expense when entertaining clients. It is only fair that a round of golf should be in the same category. The U.S. and the United Kingdom tax codes allow for this deduction. It is high time we allowed it in Canada as well.

I hope other hon. members will look favourably upon the bill.

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

* * *

NATIONAL LOCAL FOOD DAY ACT

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-281, An Act to establish a National Local Food Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to introduce my first private member's bill, Bill C-281, which would establish a national local food day. This legislation would designate the Friday before Thanksgiving of each year as national local food day.

I want to thank my colleague from Victoria for seconding the bill. I also want to recognize the work of former MP Malcolm Allen, who introduced the bill in the previous Parliament, and my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé for her dedication and hard work on behalf of Canada's agricultural producers.

Strengthening the connection between consumers and producers of Canadian food contributes to our nation's social, environmental, and economic well-being. Ensuring that Canadians have access to healthy, affordable food and a sustainable food system must be national priorities. Supporting our local agricultural markets is essential to achieving these goals.

I call on all members of the House to honour the hard work of local food producers from coast to coast to coast and to make national local food day a reality.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from the people of Wellington—Halton Hills.

● (1520)

[*English*]

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to include agriculture as a part of its plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Routine Proceedings

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition from my constituents in Milton with respect to the proposed CN intermodal terminal to be built in my constituency of Milton.

RAIL, which stands for Residents Affected by Intermodal Lines, says no. The petitioners have expressed their opinion that they would like to have more information and a more rigorous review. They are opposed to the CN intermodal rail.

I gladly lay this petition on the table on their behalf.

JUSTICE

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions on two subjects.

The first is a petition to recognize preborn children as separate victims when harmed or killed during attacks against their mother.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to pass legislation that would recognize preborn children as separate victims.

IRAQI CHRISTIANS

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions that call on the government to give serious consideration to Iraqi Christians who have lost their hope of getting back home, to initiate a special program to immediately target and evacuate a reasonable number of these people from neighbouring countries and to find a safe haven for them with international protection.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to present a petition on behalf of the people from Revelstoke and Golden in my riding concerning impaired driving.

The petitioners encourage that the laws be strengthened. They also ask that the Criminal Code of Canada be changed to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death as vehicular manslaughter.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many residents of Winnipeg.

The petitioners ask the government to specifically identify hospice palliative care as a defined medical service covered under the Canada Health Act so provincial and territorial governments would be entitled to the funds under the Canada health transfer system to be used to provide accessible and available hospice palliative care for all residents of Canada in their respective provinces and territories.

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATH

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present two petitions.

Government Orders

The first petition highlights that coercion, intimidation, or other forms of pressure intended to force physicians and health care institutions to become parties to assisted suicide and euthanasia is a violation of fundamental freedom of conscience. The petition highlights that the Canadian Medical Association confirms that conscience protection would not affect access for Canadians, and that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the freedom of conscience.

The petitioners call on Parliament to enshrine in the Criminal Code protection of conscience for physicians against coercion and intimidation to refer persons to suicide.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition comes from Families For Justice, as a group of Canadians, who have lost loved ones to an impaired driver. They believe that Canada's impaired driving laws are much too lenient, and they want the crime to be called vehicular homicide.

The petitioner call on Parliament to support Bill C-226, driving impaired act; and Bill C-247, Kassandra's law.

IRAN

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a petition that calls on the government to hold the Iranian government accountable for its support of terrorism, its nuclear program, its systematic violation of basic human liberties, and for the terror it sponsors and provokes across the Middle East.

JUSTICE

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of petitions from residents of Cariboo—Prince George and indeed right across Canada. The petition is to recognize preborn children as separate victims when harmed or killed during attacks against their mothers.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have criminal laws that protect animals from being abused, and animals are not humans. We have laws against indecency toward a dead body, which is in that case no longer a living human being.

I have a number of petitions that call on the government to put forward a law to protect pregnant women for their choice to carry their children to birth in their womb. Even though they are not human beings yet, they should have protection under our criminal law.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also have three petitions that call on our Parliament to hold a referendum on any proposed changes to the Canadian electoral system.

JUSTICE

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have one more petition signed by the good residents of Cariboo—Prince George, as well as across Canada. The petitioners ask to have preborn children recognized as separate victims when harmed or killed during attacks against their mothers.

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.

● (1525)

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

AIR CANADA PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACT

The House resumed from May 17, 2016, consideration of the motion that Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act and to provide for certain other measures, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak, perhaps for the last time, to Bill C-10, an act to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act and to provide for certain other measures. There are very few other measures, as this is a small bill.

I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London. I am sure that her speech will be very good and that she will have a lot to say about Bill C-10.

We have had many opportunities to speak to Bill C-10 over the past few weeks. We had the opportunity to hear the government say all sorts of things about the importance of Bill C-10 and the need to act swiftly. However, when we asked for the real reasons behind the urgency, which led the government to adopt a time allocation motion for Bill C-10, we got no response. The government says one thing and does another or, in many cases, does nothing.

From the beginning our only question has remained unanswered. We really wanted a justification for the time allocation motion. Why the need to pass Bill C-10 now, when at the beginning of this Parliament there was no urgency?

Government Orders

We asked the question in the House during question period and also in committee. We never received a single sensible answer explaining why Bill C-10 had to be passed so quickly.

I searched books, history, and everywhere in order to understand how the government could justify adopting a time allocation motion for a bill like C-10. I finally found the answer. It is in the Liberal Party of Canada's DNA that I found the reason for the urgent need to take action on Bill C-10.

The government says that it is open and transparent. That can be found in the Speech from the Throne, which states:

...the Government is committed to open and transparent government. ...[the Government] will promote more open debate...it will not resort to devices like prorogation and omnibus bills to avoid scrutiny.

A time allocation motion is a device. We have had the opportunity to look at the budget bill, which is also an omnibus bill. The government says one thing and does another, or does nothing at all. That is what I discovered when I analyzed the process for Bill C-10, which has brought us here today.

The government has adopted a number of time allocation motions. I am thinking of Bill C-10, Bill C-14, Motion No. 6, and the electoral reform that the government wants to unilaterally impose using its majority. So much for openness and transparency.

With regard to Bill C-10, in just a few months, we have seen the government, for no real reason at all, decide to lose some of its credibility with the provinces. How? The government announced on a number of occasions that it wanted to usher in a new era of improved relations with the provinces.

In the throne speech, the government also said the following three times regarding three files:

To give Canadians a more secure retirement, the Government will work with the provinces and territories.... To create more opportunities for young Canadians...the Government will work with the provinces and territories.... And to support the health and well-being of all Canadians, the Government will begin work with the provinces and territories...

Those three excerpts from the throne speech show the government's willingness to work with the provinces and territories and its interest in doing so. However, the government says one thing and does another, or does nothing at all. We are seeing it again. We saw it yesterday. The government has said a number of times that it is listening to the provinces and wants to work with them.

Yesterday, the Quebec minister of health and social services spoke about another bill, Bill C-14. What did Mr. Barrette have to say about Bill C-14? He said that it was unenforceable and that, given the current context, he would be very careful about going forward with Bill C-14. He added that, personally, for professional and governmental reasons, he does not think it is a good idea to go forward with Bill C-14. Mr. Barrette is a minister in a province with which the government wants to build good relations. However, the government moved a time allocation motion on Bill C-14. The government is not letting members of Parliament speak about it.

• (1530)

I have other examples, but I do not have the time to share them all in four minutes. When Bill C-10 was first debated in committee,

Minister Garneau talked about good relationships with the provinces in his speech:

In light of this development [Air Canada's commitment to creating centres of excellence], the Government of Quebec and Air Canada announced an agreement to discontinue the litigation...

Given all these positive developments, we believe this is the perfect time to modernize the Air Canada Public Participation Act...

Minister Garneau said that this was what the provinces wanted, but that is not true. I do not want to say that it is not true, but it is misleading. This may appear to be the case, but that is my interpretation.

The Speaker: Order. I remind the member that he must not use members' names.

M. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I tried to fix my error, but it was not indeed an error. Thank you for letting me try again.

What the minister told us was not true. The deputy premier of Manitoba said:

There are significant implications to moving forward with Bill C-10. It is not appropriate to rush through without substantial dialogue and consideration.

The deputy premier of Manitoba came here to tell us not to rush through Bill C-10.

That is not all. The Government of Quebec sent a brief to the committee. It said:

Pending the conclusion of final agreements, the Government of Quebec has agreed to drop its lawsuit in relation to Air Canada's obligations to have an overhaul and maintenance centre.

Yes, it says, "pending the conclusion of final agreements". It goes on to say:

...in order to provide for all the aspects of the agreements reached, the Government of Quebec is asking that, once Bill C-10 receives royal assent, the legislation come into force after the final agreements described above have been concluded.

What happened to those good old days of federal-provincial relations? I just read three requests from governments for the federal government not to intervene hastily for no reason with a bill. Nevertheless, the government is pressing on, and we are now at third reading of Bill C-10. This bill is completely unjustified because there is no need to act so hastily.

The government says that this is what the provinces asked it to do, but that is not true at all. In committee, the two provinces that are directly involved in this matter clearly told the government not to act too hastily. This is unbelievable.

We get it, though, because this is in the Liberal Party's DNA. I remember what the Prime Minister said right here on Parliament Hill when there was a decision to appeal and they marched with the Aveos workers here. The Prime Minister gave a mighty fine speech.

He said that our greatest resource is not somewhere in the ground, that it is our people, skilled workers like them who build our country every day with their hands, their arms, their brains, and their creativity. The Prime Minister gave that mighty fine speech about how he supported the workers, but today, he is abandoning them. That is why 3,000 jobs are in danger.

Government Orders

It is incredible to watch the Liberals say one thing and then turn around and do the opposite, as they have done from the beginning. I implore the government to agree to the requests made by Quebec and Manitoba and delay the passing of Bill C-10.

This is important, because they still need to conclude some agreements. Their case is currently before the Supreme Court as a means of applying pressure to ensure that the jobs that are supposed to be preserved will in fact be preserved. Why is the government interfering and jeopardizing the provinces' agreements with Air Canada?

That is what people need to remember. There was absolutely no reason to rush Bill C-10 through. No one, apart from the Minister of Transport, wanted this bill to go through quickly. I certainly hope that this message will finally be heard and that Bill C-10 will not pass.

● (1535)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member has lost some focus on the importance of the aerospace industry in Canada, in all regions. I found it interesting when he referenced the province of Manitoba. He needs to recognize, or at least put an asterisk on it, that there was a change in government in the province of Manitoba. I am very proud of the fact that my daughter was part of it. She was elected.

Having said that, we need to recognize that the former government worked with the current Government of Canada. It was part of the negotiations that took place and it was felt that it was in Manitoba's and Winnipeg's best interest to move ahead with Bill C-10. The current government has taken a slightly different position on it, but there is still an obligation, would he not acknowledge, that there was an agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba prior to that provincial election and is that not something we should be looking at and respecting?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, no offence to my hon. colleague, but now I understand their position on electoral reform and Bill C-10 a little better.

What we just heard is a federal minister who does not respect the results of a provincial election. It is the new provincial government's prerogative to make whatever decisions it likes, and it is asking the federal government to delay the passing of Bill C-10, because this bill does not guarantee any jobs in Manitoba. That is what the deputy premier herself told us in committee.

Who are we, in this House, to question the word of the new deputy premier of the Province of Manitoba? That is not my intent.

[English]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have risen a number of times on this bill. The government seems to want to conflate the issue, saying that the opposition to this bill is an attack on the entire Canadian aerospace industry, when, in fact, this bill deals with one single organization. However, indeed, it deals with 2,500 jobs in Canada that we could lose in that area.

Can the member really believe the rhetoric that we are hearing from across the way?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, in my speech I had many opportunities to explain why I cannot believe the rhetoric from across the way because they said one thing and did another. It has been like that since the beginning of the session. It is hard to believe this rhetoric. They get caught up in this rhetoric all the time. They use words, slogans, messages drafted by communications firms to convey a message, but when it comes time to take action, there is none.

The entire aerospace industry is waiting for the government to do something tangible, and it will keep waiting. The government could have done so much more with Bill C-10, but it decided to do nothing but end the lawsuits between the provinces and Air Canada and jeopardize thousands of jobs.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Madam Speaker, I must admit that I agree with some of what my colleague said in his speech. I thank him for his comments and for calling out the government on a few things.

However, Aveos went bankrupt when his party was in power. There is some confusion there because when the Conservatives formed the government, they did nothing.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about their interpretation of heavy vehicle maintenance versus light maintenance in Canada.

● (1540)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. I found the first part of the question more interesting than the second.

The important thing today is just to tell the government to delay passing Bill C-10. Regardless of the measures or the past, passage of Bill C-10 must be delayed to ensure that the jobs at risk are guaranteed.

Until the provinces have the assurance that Bill C-10 will help them, I believe we should not pass the bill, as it will interfere in negotiations between the provinces and Air Canada.

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here today for report stage of Bill C-10, an act to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act and to provide for certain other measures.

Governments, and especially new governments, have to set priorities and decide what they want to achieve during the length of their mandate.

Each party campaigns on a platform that is expected to serve as a road map for its early days as a government. Over the course of the campaign, parties make dozens of commitments. Upon taking office, a government must decide which commitments it wants to prioritize. A government must make decisions on what it wants to do right away, what it will do in six months, in two years, and what it will never do. On occasion, the Supreme Court will force the government to introduce legislation, as has been the case with Bill C-7 and Bill C-14.

Government Orders

Other pieces of legislation, like the budget, are presented each year. Because new governments like to check items off of the list of fulfilled campaign commitments during the first year, we often see legislation that reflects their campaign commitments. However, Liberal campaign commitments, like restoring mail delivery, have been pushed back on the priority list with the promise of consultations. Additional funding for the CBC has been pushed down the list of priorities because of a lengthy consultation process. A response to VIA Rail's proposal to build a dedicated track between Toronto and Montreal will take three years due to consultations.

It took the Liberals seven months to create a committee to enact consultations on electoral reform that is effectively identical to every House of Commons committee, and whose recommendations will be both non-binding and, like the preferred option of the Prime Minister, a ranked ballot.

The Minister of Transport has decided to spend an entire year consulting on the recommendations of the Emerson report, which was itself the product of 18 months of consultations with the entire transportation industry.

On so many issues, the Liberal government has pushed back making a decision to a later date.

However, with Bill C-10, we have none of that. What we have is a bill that came out of nowhere and was not the product of any consultations. Why is the government being so inconsistent?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport confirmed, during its second reading debate, that she was rushing this bill through so that the stakeholders could provide input during the committee stage. She was outsourcing her government's consultative responsibilities to committee. A parliamentary committee studying a bill is not a consultative body. Its purpose is to probe the bill for weaknesses and address these weaknesses through amendments if the majority of the members agree.

Witnesses at committee, including the Government of Quebec and the Government of Manitoba, highlighted a number of obvious weaknesses in the legislation. The opposition proposed amendments to address some of these problems. In the case of Bill C-10, the Liberal majority did not accept any of these amendments to the legislation.

If the purpose of sending the bill to committee so quickly was so that the stakeholders could provide input on the legislation, then why did the Liberal members ignore the recommendations? This illustrates more inconsistency on behalf of the government.

While all of us support a regulatory environment that allows for a viable legacy carrier in Canada and affordable air travel, I do not think a single Liberal candidate campaigned on reducing Air Canada's maintenance obligations as they are described in the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

Considering the government appears to be in no rush to do anything else, its incredible haste to get this legislation that came out of nowhere passed before the summer has opened up a Pandora's box of questions. By now most members are aware that in 2013 the Government of Quebec, with the Government of Manitoba as an intervenor, brought Air Canada to court to challenge the carrier's

assertion that it was fulfilling its maintenance obligations under the Air Canada Public Participation Act. The Quebec Superior Court, presided over by Justice Castonguay, ruled on the side of the Attorney General of Quebec. Consequently, Air Canada appealed this decision to the Court of Appeal of Quebec, and that court upheld the lower court's ruling in November 2015. On January 5, 2016, Air Canada announced that it would challenge that ruling in front of the Supreme Court. Less than two months later, Air Canada began negotiating with Quebec and Manitoba to end litigation, starting with the signing of a letter of intent to purchase 45 C Series aircraft. Whether Air Canada decided it would lose its appeal in front of the Supreme Court or the Government of Canada prodded it to make a purchase of the at the time troubled C Series aircraft, the carrier started to propose real commitments to keep some of its overhaul maintenance work in Quebec and Manitoba.

• (1545)

As the Government of Quebec has recently placed over \$1 billion U.S. into the C Series program, it was obviously pleased to see Air Canada make the first major purchase of the aircraft.

This point cannot be made clear enough. Air Canada was forced to negotiate a settlement with Quebec and Manitoba because the carrier lost in court.

What Air Canada has proposed to settle its lawsuit in the case of Quebec is the purchase of the C Series and a commitment to undertaking maintenance of these aircraft for 20 years in the province. Air Canada also proposed to create a centre of excellence in aircraft maintenance in Quebec. In the case of Manitoba, Air Canada announced a willingness to transfer about 150 jobs from other parts of the country to Winnipeg. It is worth noting that these are not new jobs, merely work that is being shuffled from one part of Canada to another.

These Air Canada commitments to do maintenance work on narrow body aircraft in Canada are good, but these are not listed in the act we are debating today. Air Canada is making these commitments because it lost in court on the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

The Provinces of Quebec and Manitoba understand that if the law is repealed, as is being proposed by the Liberals, then their negotiating position with Air Canada will be swept out from under them. That is why both provinces explicitly asked the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities during the study of the bill to only allow this legislation to pass upon conclusion of their litigation against Air Canada. These calls came on deaf ears.

None of the Liberal members at the committee questioned the statements by Manitoba's deputy premier or Quebec's minister of the economy asking for more time, or attempted to justify the prompt passage of this legislation. The Minister of Transport's own officials also confirmed at committee that there was no legal or technical reason why speedy passage of the legislation was necessary.

Government Orders

Therefore, here we are. We have a bill in front of us that two provincial governments have asked for its coming into force to be delayed, and there are huge questions concerning why it is being rushed through Parliament so quickly ahead of the rest of the Liberal agenda.

We also have the problem that the Liberals are missing an important opportunity to make Air Canada and the entire aerospace sector annually more competitive. The Emerson report, which I mentioned earlier in my remarks, made a number of good suggestions that would stimulate the aerospace sector while maintaining jobs in Canada. For example, the government could tie all airport improvement fees to specific projects, explicit sunset provisions, which would ensure that these fees are to fund a specific project and not the airport's overall operations. They could look at overhauling the airport security model to mirror those used at major international airports, like London's Heathrow or Amsterdam's Schiphol, which have clear customer service standards and much lower delivery costs.

However, the bill does not do any of that, and we have not heard any indications from the Minister of Transport that measures to improve the competitiveness of the entire airline industry are forthcoming.

I look forward to questions from the government and opposition members.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the previous speakers and heard a great deal of criticism coming from the Conservative Party in regard to Bill C-10. I need to remind members that when Air Canada was in violation of the act, that was over five years ago. The then Conservative government chose to do absolutely nothing. It was actually the Provinces of Manitoba and Quebec that pushed the issue and brought it to court.

The Government of Canada has worked with the many different stakeholders, including the provinces. There was the potential to have this whole issue put in front of us to hopefully see jobs being guaranteed in certain areas, including my home province of Manitoba.

The provincial government of the NDP thought it was a positive thing. Why does the member believe that the Conservative Party has all of a sudden taken this active interest, as when it was in government and actions were being taken, members sat on their hands and did nothing?

• (1550)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I am going to remind the parliamentary secretary that the courts enforce the act and the government changes the laws. That is what our job is, and I will remind him of that as he states what we did six years ago.

The bottom line is that we are talking about these jobs and about things being moved around the country. We need to see that we are going to continue having these jobs in Canada. That is what our position is. We want to make sure that the jobs are secure in Canada, and we do not see this in the legislation.

I thank the member for pointing out that they did speak to the other provincial governments. I am going to remind him that they spoke to the governments, but they did not listen to the governments because the two provincial governments are requesting it to be delayed. It is great to have a one-way conversation, but the Liberals did not get any results from it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member more or less answered my question, but I will nevertheless ask it again.

Does she feel, as I do, that there are no guarantees in Bill C-10 concerning the percentage or the volume of maintenance activities to be kept in Canada?

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I thank the member very much for that, because when I was reviewing the legislation that was put forward, I, too, looked at some of the words, and they are very open-ended. It is so grand and general, but it does not say that these jobs are going to be secure. It indicates the activities, which can mean one thing, but jobs and employment are a totally different thing.

Therefore, I agree with the member on the language. It is very ambiguous. It does not indicate jobs, but it indicates activities, which are two very separate issues.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague and I are both new members. However, my colleague for Winnipeg North is not new, so he should know even better than us the record of significant investments by our previous government in the aerospace sector. In fact, I will mention the close to \$1 billion spent on the strategic aerospace defence initiative, which was a major initiative specifically supporting innovation investment in the aerospace sector. Also, of course, there are other measures that supported economic growth more generally, with things like opening up trading opportunities and lowering business taxes.

I wonder if the member can correct the record in terms of what was said incorrectly across the way, and talk about how much our previous government did for the aerospace sector, as well as the economy more generally.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, there are many different opportunities that we have for that.

I looked at some of the different things that our government did work with, and even something as simple as lowering the GST. It may not be as much to aerospace, but it was to all businesses, to all Canadians, that reduction from 7% to 6% to 5%. It is one of the small things that we have done. As I said, it was more general and not specific to aerospace.

However, we have done many things. Working with our provincial levels of government and making sure that we support our workers here in Canada was the most important thing.

Government Orders

Anything to do with business is what the Conservative government did in the 10 years prior to 2015. We made great efforts to make sure that the red tape was cut and that we cut taxes for corporations so they had a better opportunity to create more jobs and be successful.

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise to debate Bill C-10, proposing amendments to the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

I would like to take a few minutes to explain why the Government of Canada believes this is an appropriate moment to modify the almost 30-year-old act.

Let us first recall that the Air Canada Public Participation Act's primary purpose was to convert a crown corporation into a thriving and competitive private corporation in an industry that is characterized by aggressive competition, strong cyclical business patterns, and sensitivity to external shock.

The Air Canada Public Participation Act was brought into force in 1989 to provide the federal government with the legal framework to privatize Air Canada. It also required the airline to have provisions regarding where it carried out its maintenance, the use of official languages, and where its headquarters would be located. Other airlines, Air Canada's competitors from Canada and abroad, are not subject to such conditions. The market conditions in which Air Canada operates are now greatly different from those of 1989.

The 1980s was characterized by deregulation. Since that time, the world has seen a proliferation of new air carriers as well as new airline business models. In June 1980, the then president of the International Air Transport Association reported that its membership was composed of 100 airlines from 85 nations. Today, its membership is composed of 260 airlines.

In short, the air carrier marketplace is now much more competitive. This is a good thing. It benefits travellers and it pushes the airlines to be as efficient as possible. However, we must ensure that our carriers are able to compete themselves, or we risk limiting Canadians connectivity and we threaten the economic viability of these carriers in Canada.

The Canadian marketplace has also evolved. By the end of the 1990s, Canadian Airlines International ceased operations, reducing the extent of competition. Other carriers, like Canada 3000, also came and went. However, since then there has been a flourishing of growth among Canadian companies. WestJet, Porter, Transat, Sunwing, and others provide important travel options for Canadians. I should also note the important role played by foreign carriers in offering other travel options to and from Canada. Choice is good for the consumers.

Air Canada continues to provide vital connectivity, both within our vast country and also to the outside world. It is also an important source of employment and opportunity. Our air sector has weathered some difficult times, including the tragic events of 9/11, global pandemic, and the recent economic crisis, yet it continues to robustly offer service options to Canadians. In short, we have come a long way since the 1980s when the government of the day created this law.

The Air Canada Public Participation Act has clearly achieved its primary objective of successfully privatizing Air Canada. Furthermore, many other aspects of the act remain relevant. However, given that times have changed and the air transport sector has evolved, it is also important to ensure that this statute remains up to date.

In particular, the provisions of the act that deal with aircraft maintenance risk hampering Air Canada's competitiveness by limiting its ability to organize its activities in a way that responds to the evolution in the air sector. Furthermore, given Air Canada's role in providing Canadians with connectivity, this could also impact on the overall competitiveness and cost of air transport throughout the country.

This leads me to my second point, which is about economic opportunity for Canada's aerospace sector. Air Canada and Quebec have indicated their intentions to end their litigation regarding the carrier's compliance with the Air Canada Public Participation Act. This announcement came on the heels of Air Canada's declared intention to purchase up to 75 Bombardier C Series aircraft, to ensure that these planes will be maintained in Canada for at least 20 years, as well as to collaborate in the establishment of a world-class centre of excellence in Montreal.

Furthermore, Air Canada will also be facilitating the creation of a centre of excellence on aircraft maintenance in Manitoba, and we understand that this has led the government of that province to agree to discontinue litigation.

The Air Canada-Quebec agreement will allow the carrier to benefit from cutting-edge aircraft technology produced here in Canada. It will also result in significant benefits for the aerospace industry, including aircraft maintenance right across the country. This is the sort of investment that the aerospace sector needs.

•(1555)

Quebec and Manitoba have accepted that these conditions create a context in which they no longer feel the need to pursue litigation against Air Canada. These developments provide us with an ideal opportunity to rethink our approach and look for opportunities for improvement.

Federal officials have identified specific concerns around the maintenance provisions of the Air Canada Public Participation Act because they create challenges for Air Canada's ability to be competitive. Specifically, they prevent Air Canada from doing what other carriers do, which is to organize its supply chain to optimize efficiency.

The intention of Air Canada, Quebec, and Manitoba to discontinue the litigation creates an appropriate context to modernize the act and indicates that the parties are working together toward a similar objective: the growth of Canadian prosperity. However, let me be clear, we continue to believe that Air Canada should commit to undertaking aircraft maintenance in Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, and we intend for this to be stipulated in the law. However, we need to provide Air Canada with the flexibility to meet the requirements to compete in an evolving global marketplace.

Government Orders

We cannot predict how the airline industry will evolve in the future. Whatever happens, our carriers will need to adjust to meet the challenges and remain competitive. Air Canada needs the flexibility to enable it to adapt to changing market conditions. Bill C-10 allows us to target the right balance between such flexibility and the continued expectation that the carrier will undertake aircraft maintenance in Canada.

The time is now to modernize the Air Canada Public Participation Act and to achieve this balance. With Bill C-10, the government is taking a necessary step to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act to ensure it will continue to be relevant as the sector evolves in the future.

I would now like to take a minute to review how the air carrier sector has evolved since Air Canada was privatized in 1989.

There have been some fundamental shifts in the last 30 years. For example, there has been an important rise in the market share of new global carriers, like those of the Gulf States, that are now playing a major role in global competition.

In the United States, there has been significant rationalization of air carriers, where most major airlines have been through chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, resulting in a major reduction of their costs.

Europe has also seen a series of major air carrier alliances. The low-cost model has come to be a predominant paradigm for certain types of travel within some markets, like Europe, Southeast Asia, and the U.S.

All of these points speak to a highly competitive environment that creates a need for air carriers to seek constant cost reductions to meet travellers' and shippers' expectations.

Canada is no exception where major shifts in the air sector are concerned. Our air transport sector is now fundamentally different from how it looked in 1989. Following years of financial difficulties, Canadian Airlines International ceased to operate in the 1990s and was ultimately acquired by and merged with Air Canada. WestJet has since become a major player, resulting in robust and sustainable competition between two Canadian carriers. Other newer carriers have also been added to the Canadian market, such as Porter Airlines and Sunwing. Canada's charter market is particularly active with many carriers, such as Air Transat, offering services to Canadians. Air Canada itself underwent a major restructuring in 2003-04, under the provisions of the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, the CCAA, which allowed the carrier to emerge as a healthy and viable global competitor.

Where aircraft maintenance is concerned, Air Canada's restructuring under the CCAA included making some previously in-house operations independent, including its maintenance operations, repair and overall service provider, which ultimately became Aveos. Air Canada's decision at the time was in keeping with the practices of many global carriers.

The 2012 aerospace review noted the increasing importance of low-cost maintenance, repair and overhaul service provided in developing countries, many of which are closer to the growing markets in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. While Air

Canada is not outsourcing its aircraft maintenance to suppliers in developing countries, many of its competitors are.

• (1600)

From these examples, it is clear that for a carrier to be viable in today's industry, it must be able to adapt the elements of its supply chain to manage its costs and remain competitive. For carriers, this covers all aspects of its business, including being able to determine how and where it conducts its aircraft maintenance activities.

Currently, Air Canada is limited in being able to deal with market forces the way other carriers can. I am referring, of course, to the provisions of the Air Canada Public Participation Act, specifically the obligation in paragraph 6(1)(d) that requires Air Canada to include in its articles of continuance provisions requiring the corporation to maintain operational and overhaul centres in the city of Winnipeg, the Montreal urban community, and the city of Mississauga.

What we need to remember is that the original intent of the Air Canada Public Participation Act was to function as a framework for the privatization of Air Canada almost 30 years ago. It also contained a number of provisions, including the requirement for aircraft maintenance, which we are talking about today. The intent was to turn a crown corporation into a viable and competitive private company while also ensuring that it was committed to undertaking aircraft maintenance activities in those three communities. We believe that the proposed amendments maintain the spirit of this intent by requiring Air Canada to undertake aircraft maintenance in Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, while allowing it to choose the nature of this work in each location to remain competitive.

As we know, these provisions have been the subject of ongoing litigation between Air Canada and the Province of Quebec, with intervening support from the Province of Manitoba. However, on February 17 of this year, the Province of Quebec and Air Canada mutually agreed to pursue an end to this litigation. The decision of the Province of Quebec and Air Canada to reach an agreement has opened up an opportunity for our government to finally modernize the act and relieve Air Canada of prescriptive obligations where its operational and overhaul centres are concerned, while maintaining the spirit of the intent behind them.

We are not proposing to repeal paragraph 6(1)(d). Rather, we are proposing amendments that would allow Air Canada to undertake aircraft maintenance in Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, and choose the nature of this work in each location to help it remain competitive. These amendments, which I am urging hon. members to support today, are consistent with the government's approach to the air sector as an industry that is deregulated and responsive to market forces. It is these guiding principles that we believe induce companies to continue to innovate their business and seek out better ways to work and be cost competitive in the face of a changing and ultra-competitive market.

Government Orders

The amendments the government has put forward would allow Air Canada the same flexibility that other carriers have to seek out the best aircraft maintenance services it can find and the ability to actively manage its costs. Modernization of the act is the right decision. We know that the Province of Quebec, the Province of Manitoba, and Air Canada have agreed among themselves to collaborate on the establishment of two centres of excellence for aircraft maintenance, one in Montreal and the other in Winnipeg.

In Winnipeg alone, this new western centre of excellence is expected to bring 150 jobs to the area by 2017. In Quebec, Air Canada has committed to maintaining all of its newly acquired CS300 aircraft in the province for at least 20 years and to the establishment of a centre of excellence for aircraft maintenance which will boost Montreal's role as a world-class aeronautical hub.

These developments are a clear indication that there is a willingness among the parties to foster an ongoing relationship, one that I hope will bring economic benefits to Canada and job opportunities for Canadians long into the future.

I urge hon. members to support this bill.

• (1605)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on one thing the member said in particular. He talked about Porter and argued benefits to Porter were associated with this legislation. I want to ask, though, what he thinks about the minister's decision to block the Toronto island airport expansion and the impact that has on Porter. After all, would that not be a more effective way of providing the kind of stimulus to the aerospace sector that we would like, a way that would not negatively affect jobs in a different part of the sector?

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his intervention today. I was expecting to hear from him. He enjoys intervening in this place and I enjoy addressing his questions.

His question is a valid one, of course. I support wholeheartedly the position of the minister on that, but this has nothing to do with Bill C-10. I was speaking to the competitive nature of the airline industry and Porter remains a competitive player in that marketplace. In fact, I often fly to Ottawa on Porter from the island airport, because it is a little easier to get to from my house than it is to get all the way out to Pearson.

As I mentioned in my speech, what these amendments to the act would do is help maintain a competitive airline marketplace in Canada, which I think everyone in the House agrees is a service to Canadians that is needed in this marketplace, and I am happy to support anything that supports competition in the Canadian marketplace.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

The government often says that it supports families, the middle class, and workers. Expediting the bill and retroactively changing the law will result in the loss of 2,600 jobs.

Could my colleague comment on that?

[*English*]

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Madam Speaker, I just want to straighten out the premise of the question.

There is no retroactivity in this bill. There will be no retroactive effect. Anything in this bill will start whenever the bill becomes law, so we do not have to worry about that.

I am not necessarily convinced that 2,600 jobs will be lost either. What I am concerned about is that if we do not get these amendments done, if we do not get this act changed, there will be considerably more losses. Air Canada will have to compete effectively with one arm tied behind its back in the competitive global marketplace. That is what I am afraid of. I am convinced it will cost way more than 2,600 jobs, if we do not let Air Canada compete with both hands, and ready to go.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I rise in support of the minister and the bill.

I would like to use the flexibility in relevance to make a statement first, that I would be very upset personally if any government employee from a federal department, a federal agency, or a federal crown corporation were to travel to the northern third of the country, the three territories, and did not fly on one of the three airlines owned by those territories: Air North, First Air, and Canadian North.

I was at a presentation recently about various sectors of the economy which showed that the airline sector is one of the most tenuous business sectors in the world. It is very competitive with very small margins to succeed and stay viable.

I wonder if the member could comment on that.

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Madam Speaker, the hon. member took the opportunity to plug three great airlines from his part of the country. It is another indication of the viability and competitive nature of airlines in Canada. It is great that there are three successful companies in the north.

The margins are tight. I am no expert on the airline industry, but just by the nature of the change in the industry, we see companies going bankrupt. In Canada we see mergers and acquisitions, and companies in the United States going through chapter 11. There are clearly tight margins. There is a lot of unpredictability in the industry. Things happen outside in the world that impact on the airline industry.

Anything we can do to help our airlines compete, such as giving them the tools they need to be flexible when it comes to competing in this global marketplace, is something we should all strive for as members of this House.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, having lived, eaten, and breathed aviation for 20 years, I know full well the industry inside and out from the airport side, from the air service development side, the business development side, and the airline side of it.

There are some flaws in the member's presentation. A couple of comments caught me off guard.

Government Orders

The member mentioned the threat from the Gulf States' airlines, yet the government cannot approve a pipeline that would stop the oil that is coming from the exact same Gulf States, and our reliance on that.

The member made some comments about doing anything that supports making our airline industry and our Canadian companies more competitive. The Air Canada Public Participation Act states that 75% of the carrier's voting shares be held by Canadians.

Would the member support increasing the voting ownership limit to 49% for foreign ownership? Does my hon. colleague support increasing foreign ownership in our Canadian carriers?

• (1615)

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Madam Speaker, obviously, the member has way more experience in this sector than I do. He has had a long career in the aviation sector.

To be frank, I have not thought about supporting more foreign ownership in Air Canada. If that case were presented, I would, of course, as a member of this strong Liberal government, review all the evidence before me at that time, do my analysis, and come to a conclusion. I would decide what was in the best interests of Canadians, and I would side on that side.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia, Air Canada used to charge about \$800 to fly from Cranbrook to Vancouver until Pacific Coastal Airlines came along, which is a B.C.-owned private airline. When I met with the company representatives in the past, their biggest complaint was that the government over the years had bailed out Air Canada significantly.

The purpose of this bill, which I disagree with as I think those jobs should be kept in Canada, would be to potentially improve competition for Air Canada, as the hon. member said. Along with this, is there a guarantee that the Liberal government will never provide bailout money to Air Canada, moving ahead into the future, thereby allowing the private airlines to compete?

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Madam Speaker, my understanding is that the jobs are going to remain in Canada. They may be in different urban centres, but they are going to remain in the three provinces, Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba, with the amendments in the bill, so I do not see jobs leaving Canada as a result of this bill.

In response to the member's specific question about whether I will give a guarantee, I do not think I am in a position to give a guarantee. I cannot predict the future. Even if I were to give a guarantee, I do not think it would bind the government, so it would not really be worth much, so there is no point in my giving that guarantee. However, I appreciate the member's interest in this bill and his question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I found the former question somewhat interesting. The NDP seemed to be advocating through this particular member that we should not ever bail out Air Canada, which is a bit surprising given the debate we are having today.

My question for the member is more related to his making reference to the negotiations that had taken place with the

stakeholders. Manitoba and Winnipeg would in fact derive a significant benefit. Being a Winnipeg MP, I think it is important to highlight that we would be getting the centre of excellence; there are job guarantees; and at the end of the day it is nice to see that the Government of Canada was able to work with the stakeholders to achieve something that would in fact deliver jobs and at the same time provide better opportunities for Air Canada.

Could the member add further comment to that?

Mr. Kyle Peterson: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question and the ability to comment. The member from Manitoba is right. This would create more certainty of a better competitive playing field for Air Canada and it would create and keep jobs in Canada, which are two things that everyone in this House agrees we need to pursue. I am going to continue to support this bill and any other legislation that comes up that would create jobs in Canada and keep jobs in Canada.

On another note, the best thing that happened was that the Province of Quebec and Air Canada decided to stop the litigation. I spent years as a commercial litigator. Litigation is not a good way to keep one's business partners happy and it is expensive, so this is good that they are stopping litigation. We need this bill now to prevent future litigation, and that is another reason why we are doing this today.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will start by informing you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Windsor West.

I want to thank the member for Newmarket—Aurora for demonstrating the kind of fundamental incoherence of the Liberal argument when it comes to the bill.

We just heard a speech about how Bill C-10 is really about the competitiveness of the aerospace industry and the airline industry, and how it is unfair that competitors of Air Canada are able to move their maintenance work outside of the country. Then on the other hand, the member got up and said that Bill C-10 is really about jobs in Canada.

Well, if Bill C-10 were really about keeping jobs in Canada, and the argument the Liberals are making is that Air Canada cannot be competitive by keeping its jobs in Canada, it is an argument that we in the NDP do not agree with. However, this is the argument when the Liberals talk about competitiveness.

To get up and say that somehow Bill C-10 is not really about Air Canada moving those jobs out of the country is incoherent. They want the freedom to move those jobs out of the country so that they can move them out of the country, which is the essence of the Liberals' argument when they talk about how Air Canada is apparently getting beaten, although there is no news that I have heard that says Air Canada is on the verge of bankruptcy. Therefore, I thank the member for that.

I hope Canadians are listening, because if they were, they would see just how at loggerheads the two sides of the Liberal argument really are. They do not go together. They do not dovetail. Actually, they are in contradiction. This has been the story of the bill before us.

Government Orders

Another contradiction that has to do with the bill is on the timeline of it. We hear insistence from the minister that there is no deal, that Bill C-10 is not connected in any way to a purchase of jets from Bombardier by Air Canada. Yet, it has been a priority of the government to rush the bill through the House. If there is no deal, how can it be that there is a timeline for getting the bill through? There is no demonstrated need that Air Canada needs this to happen right away. The only way it could need it to happen right away is if it already had plans to move the jobs out of the country; the ones they have not already moved out of the country.

Incidentally, the member for Newmarket—Aurora was wrong to say that Air Canada had not moved any of its maintenance jobs out of the country. In fact, it did in 2012. The member for Winnipeg North understood that well when he was in opposition. The Prime Minister understood that well when he was in opposition. The people who are taking Air Canada to court to get those jobs back understood it well.

What is wrong with the bill is that it would eliminate any legal basis for challenging Air Canada now and into the future. It may well be that the Quebec government dropped its suit, but there are others who are prepared to take Air Canada to court in order to win those jobs back to Canada. However, after Bill C-10 passes, they will not be able to do that. They will not be able to do the very thing that the member for Winnipeg North and the Prime Minister were calling on the last government to do, which was enforce the act.

Now that the Liberals are in government, not only are they not enforcing the act, but they are changing the act. It is reprehensible, because it means that citizens in Canada who want to take Air Canada to court to enforce that very same act would not be able to, because the act would be changed, which is the shame of Bill C-10.

What we have learned from this whole process are a few things about the character of the government. There are a number of reasons why I think Bill C-10 is so telling in terms of the character of the government. It is kind of unique in that it was the first bill that the government brought that was not a routine motion or a direct consequence of an election commitment. Bill C-10 was really a preview of the current Liberal government's mind and what the Liberals do when they are not handcuffed by election commitments.

The first thing the Liberals did was something that goes totally against what they were campaigning for in opposition, which was enforcement of the act. They decided to change the act to take out the provisions that they said needed to be enforced. I do not see how anyone can think that is consistent from one moment to another. I think there is a bit of hypocrisy, frankly, which is interesting to note about the government.

It is interesting to note that western Canada in all of this was an afterthought, because, despite the protestations of the minister, it is hard not to believe that part of this was really about finding a deal for Bombardier. Instead of saying that we need to do that in a responsible way, in a way that does not play the maintenance sector off the production sector, instead of doing that in a way that does not play regions of the country off against each other, we would just go and cut a deal with our big corporate friends and sort the rest out later.

● (1620)

If it just so happens that we cannot get back a major part of the Winnipeg aerospace industry because the law has changed, so be it, because Winnipeg is not really on our mind and western Canada is not really on our mind. I found that very interesting.

From that I think we learned that it is not just about regions, or a lack of strategy when it comes to the aerospace industry, or the government's willingness to engage in hypocrisy, but it is also about big corporate friends getting one set of rules and everyone else getting another set of rules. Therefore, if individuals used to work for Air Canada and they were counting on that lawsuit to go through and looking forward to someone else taking up the charge after the Quebec government let that lawsuit go, then it is too bad for them. The Liberals are actually getting rid of those rules. The rules that protect those individuals, they are getting rid of and they are bringing in a new set of rules, a set of rules that are going to be good for Air Canada executives and shareholders. If that means Liberals are selling out Canadian workers, now that they are in government, that is just too bad. They cared about them in opposition because they wanted their votes, but now that they are in government they have better friends. That is the message of Bill C-10. Shame on them for that. Canadians ought to remember that at the next election, far away though it may be.

I think we learned a lot about the government in this whole process, and it is important to articulate those lessons.

Incidentally, just in terms of getting a bit of insight or a premonition, there is now an established pattern of not having a lot of respect for Parliament when it comes to the Liberal government. We first saw it with Bill C-10. The first time allocation was moved on Bill C-10. At the time, I could not figure it out because I was listening to the Liberal government saying that it had a lot of respect for Parliament, that Parliament is a great place, and that they wanted to hear from parliamentarians. We still hear some rhetoric to that effect, although it is harder to believe because, as the Liberals say, we too are interested in evidence and evidence-based decision-making. If we are going to make a decision about what to believe about the Liberals, and we look at the evidence in terms of what they have done, it is very hard indeed to believe their claims about respect for Parliament. That started with Bill C-10. It was a mystery then, because I wanted to take them at their word. I really did. Also, there was no deal. There was no deal for the purchase of Bombardier jets, no deal at all with respect to this legislation. There was really no need to push it forward, so it was genuinely mystifying.

As time has gone on and we have seen this lack of respect the government has for Parliament, we have heard from witnesses on Bill C-10 who also skated around the issue of whether or not there was a deal among perhaps the government, Air Canada, and Bombardier. We are not quite sure because no one from the government will enlighten us. It is hard to believe there is no deal at all. Moving time allocation on C-10 at every stage begins to make a bit more sense.

Government Orders

In question period today, and other days, we heard the Minister of Democratic Institutions say that one of the great things about the Liberals' process for a new voting system is that every member would have a say, every member would have a vote. We are all going to get up, and after the Liberal majority committee makes a recommendation to the Liberal cabinet, which comes back with legislation that is being dealt with by a Liberal majority, everyone would have their say on a new voting system, as if the Liberals' majority did not make a difference or as if they were comfortable with the idea that, if their majority did not make a difference, that would be okay.

Again, Bill C-10 is instructive, because it was only the last Monday we sat before the break that Bill C-10 came to a vote at report stage. Because the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley changed his vote, we had a tie vote. He had voted against it at second reading and then voted for it at report stage and that came down to a tie. Because of that tie vote on Bill C-10, we got to see what the government is really like with respect to every member having his or her say. Not all of its members showed up because perhaps they did not think it was important. I will not presume to say why they were not there. However, the result of the tie was clear. The government did not say that was great, Parliament had spoken, and had it had one vote less, that would be fine. Instead, it lost its temper. It brought forward a motion that was completely draconian, that would have handcuffed Parliament, and created a climate where people were prone to losing their temper. Therefore, I think we saw another insight into the real mind of the Liberal government through Bill C-10.

• (1625)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I find that most interesting coming from the member for Elmwood—Transcona. His father served under former premier Greg Selinger, who clearly indicated that this would be a good thing for the province of Manitoba. Based on what the member is saying, am I to believe that former premier Selinger was wrong in his assessment? As the former NDP premier of Manitoba, he was sad that good-paying jobs were lost but he felt the future was going to be good for the province. Was the former premier wrong in his assessment?

Looking at the long term, would the member not agree that we should be putting our emphasis on protecting Manitoba's long-term interest in the aerospace industry?

• (1630)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, the member's question allows me to set something straight. It is true that the previous Manitoba government said that it was pleased with that arrangement in the new circumstances. The member failed to mention that when the federal government changed and insinuated that it was prepared to change the Air Canada act, and there were rumours to that effect going around for a long time before Bill C-10 was tabled, that fundamentally changed the negotiating position of the provinces with respect to Air Canada. Knowing that they no longer had a federal government that would continue the act in its current form, and that there would be no legal basis for a challenge, fundamentally changes the negotiating position of the provincial government.

In the new circumstances with a federal Liberal government that was selling out aerospace workers, the NDP got the best deal it could for Manitobans.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member for his opinion.

If Air Canada goes forward with this and it is doing maintenance work with one employee in Winnipeg, one employee in Mississauga, and one employee in Montreal, do you think this would actually fulfill what this new legislation is proposing? Could that possibly be the case?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member that it is not me but she can ask the question through me. I am not going to tell you what I think but I am sure that the member for Elmwood—Transcona will say what he thinks.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, had the question been put to me here is how I would have answered.

That is the problem with the bill. We hear that the work is going to stay in Canada. We hear that it is going to stay in Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec but the government has failed to mention that it is giving complete discretion to Air Canada to define the level of employment, the type of work, and the volume of work. Whether that work is going to stay here in Canada is an open question. If we believe the arguments by the Liberals about the competitiveness of the industry, it sure sounds to me like they are going to be moving those jobs out of the country.

Canadians can do that work competitively. Canadians who actually do that work have told us that they will do that work competitively. They have asked for more time to work with both the government and Air Canada to create a business plan to keep that work in Canada according to the existing terms of the Air Canada Public Participation Act. Liberals at transport committee would not put that motion through. Bill C-10 does not provide any kind of guarantee for that kind of work in Canada. It is simply not the case.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Elmwood—Transcona for his passion for working people in this country.

I am a worker. We are here to fight for workers. What we saw in the campaign that my colleague highlighted well were the Liberals standing shoulder to shoulder with working-class people saying they would fight for jobs. Now we see that they are not doing that. The impact on these communities will be devastating.

Could you please speak to the impact on the communities and working-class people across Canada in seeing these jobs outsourced?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I am not going to speak about it but I am sure that the member for Elmwood—Transcona is going to briefly give an answer.

I want to remind people to address their questions to the Chair and not to individual members.

Government Orders

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I would ask Canadians listening at home and members in the chamber to imagine what would happen to their communities if a large number of working people lost the good-paying jobs that support their families. It does not take a vivid imagination to realize what that would mean for those communities. It would be bad for families. It would be bad for the country. It would be bad for the economy.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am glad to rise on this issue, talking about employment and the value-added chain of jobs that are important for this nation. I am just sad it is being done in such haste and such waste by the Liberal government.

It is unfortunate, as we struggle to protect value-added jobs in our economy, that we have, quite frankly, a significant opportunity lost, and we are rewarding bad behaviour. We hear this lingo coming from only a few people from the Liberal Party on this, whether it be question period or debate in the House of Commons, because others do not seem to want to participate. In fact, it is going back to the future. We are going back and pulling that to the future right now, because this legislation is retroactively going back on a deal that Canadians had actually gained through bargaining.

This would be like individuals winning the lottery. They would get their ticket. They would win the lottery and cash it in, and then they realize 10 years later that they did not really need that money so they give it all back to the lottery commission.

This is what is happening. It is a negotiated deal. It is like individuals saying to their auto insurer or their house insurer that they really do not need protection for house damage, car damage, or whatever. The individual knows these insurers are struggling for whatever reason, and tells them they are off the hook now for that deal.

The interesting thing about this is that we are talking about a private corporation that was founded by the taxpayers of this nation. It is rewarded by numerous grants and legislative processes. It is to bring competition into the market for fairness for Canadians, eventually privatized, cashed out, bailed out, received numerous injections of public support, including to this day most recently corporate tax reductions. The corporation got all that investment and all it was asked to do was keep some Canadian jobs. To keep some Canadian jobs is what it was asked in this brokered, open deal that the public can see, Parliament can see. Its CEOs, new, current, and in the future, as part of their due diligence were to run a company, to run a business and to put the Canadian flag on their product. The loss of that is the constant outsourcing that has taken place.

What is really interesting about the bill is the other subsidization that is taking place in this country, and investment by our working class in terms of education we are now throwing out the window with all those value-added jobs. Young people were promised that if they went to school, got a trade, and contributed, they would be rewarded. This is part of that demise, only hurried by the Liberals.

What the Liberals want to do to the public is just like a cropper, running across and dumping its stuff. It is to put the shroud in front of Canadians and say we negotiated a deal, but because we finally won one, we are used to actually losing lots of deals, but we won one, we would like to give it back.

This deal was about public investment. We should think about men and women and the youth of this country who are getting trained right now. They are spending their hard-earned money, taking loans way above the loan rate for many other types of borrowing, which is absurd to begin with. They will have to pay it back, become consumers in our society, start a family, and plan for the future. They are losing good pensioned jobs, going to work in a safe environment, as best as can be legislated, getting a return so they could actually raise a family and continue that contribution into the economic field for all Canadians.

● (1635)

Now we have given up on that dream, despite that investment by those students and those going through our educational system, despite the fact that they are going to pay for it not only while they are in school, but getting out of school for a number of years. It will delay decisions that they make about having children, buying homes, being able to participate in the economy and buying a car, hopefully built in Windsor. Nonetheless, all those things are going to be delayed because people are under a greater cloud of debt.

On top of that, which is also a horrible situation, think about how much taxpayers' money we are investing under Canada student loans and the provinces are doing so to actually put that forth to get people and meanwhile, what we are doing is a classic move in football. When a running back is in trouble, he does a stiff arm, because it protects himself and pushes away using the head of a player coming in. This is equivalent to the Liberal policy right now.

After all that investment, after all that technological development, and I would be remiss to not talk about how the aerospace industry in particular has benefited from tax SR and ED investments. These are corporate subsidized initiatives to help manufacturing and development of products in the aerospace industry. It has been one of the largest organizations to receive these types of tax breaks. Tax breaks that come from individuals who live on Parent Street, on Ottawa Street, on First Street, on Main Street, on a number of different streets all across our country. We have invested collectively to have a value-added job at the end of the day to continue the chain of progress for workers. That is where we are lost in this debate. The chain of progress for workers is broken and we now will reap the so-called rewards of, well, we will see what happens.

That is no way to negotiate. That is no way to play poker. That is no way to do anything in life in the sense that if we win or gain something through giving something, it is called negotiation. It is fair negotiations that brought Air Canada to the point it is today. The reality is that these workers have missed opportunities and missed jobs that affect communities.

Government Orders

We are fortunate in Windsor to have new auto hiring, despite the fact that there was no government support whatsoever because of broken policies of the past that never worked. We have over 1,000 workers back in the auto chain despite us not having a national auto strategy and basically they were fed up and moved ahead with Fiat, Chrysler, and Unifor. That injection moved the unemployment rate that led the nation for 10 years to now down to 6% or 7%. We are happy about that. We are happy that worked, but it came almost at the end of the line.

There was investment in the past for that by the public. The government actually made money back in the day for that, but we now have a surge in value-added jobs in Windsor at the moment thanks to those organizations and those workers. Losing these types of jobs can make the difference between a rebound for a community and the distance of where we go.

I want to conclude by saying we have to be very clear about the precedents that we set here. The precedent is that we can reach back in time and grasp defeat out of the jaws of victory for Canadian taxpayers. That is truly unfortunate for the youth of our nation.

• (1640)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 Saanich—Gulf Islands, The Environment; the hon. member for Flamborough—Glanbrook, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Essex, International Trade.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine.

• (1645)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member across the aisle for the entertaining analogies this afternoon. I too like Michael J. Fox movies, but I feel there is a lot more stretching in here than there was in yoga today.

The member opposite talked a bit about the auto industry and how modernizing it worked out very well. How does he feel this will not work well for the aeronautics industry?

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, unfortunately I cannot speak to the member's experience in yoga, but the reality here is with regard to the seriousness related to our youth, employment and setting a pattern for redevelopment, and also having innovation take its place in the footprint of manufacturing.

In response to her question, the seriousness we are tackling right now is moving innovation to manufacturing in Canada. With the loss of that going to the United States, Germany, and other jurisdictions, even committees, like the industry committee, are now studying how we turn that around for Canada. Aerospace and other industries have transferrable technology and other types of innovation that can propel us to local development of manufacturing for our future. Without that connection of jobs at the end of the day for workers, we miss the next leap of that.

I am tired of Canadian ideas going abroad to other countries to be developed into products that are then bought back into Canada. It is time to stop that, and have them built in Canada by Canadians, for our future.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, when we talk about losing 2,600 jobs, and these are 2,600 good jobs, we must not forget that real people work in those jobs.

In other words, 2,600 men and women will lose their jobs in maintenance. The government says that it is no big deal, because other jobs will be created in construction. However, that work is not done by the same men and women.

This means that the Liberals are sacrificing 2,600 people's jobs in order to perhaps create jobs for other people in the manufacturing of other planes. What we are really talking about is definite job losses for jobs that might be created elsewhere. The Liberals are forgetting the human factor here.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, that question is a really critical one. The issue is the jobs they have themselves, but then we add on the multiplier effect, and it is quite significant.

In the auto sector and the aerospace sector, multiple jobs have been created after that one job. When we have a multiplier effect of seven, we are talking about almost 20,000 jobs. Those are value-added jobs that create other jobs.

That is why we are getting it in Windsor and that is why I give credit to the developers in terms of the company, and Unifor and the workers. We have a fight-back on manufacturing right now, and we want to win that. Not only does it create that one job, it is the multiplier effect from that, which is thousands of jobs.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, could the member shed some light on something? We have heard the government try to suggest that the previous NDP government of Manitoba had somehow endorsed this legislation. My understanding was to the contrary, that it had not, and in fact that both of the major parties in Manitoba were concerned about the job losses associated with the departure of Aveos.

Seeing as the member is from the NDP, could he clarify the fact that frankly it is provincial governments and a wide variety of different civil society groups that are opposed to this legislation?

• (1650)

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, this is nothing less than an attempted smoke screen from the government. It shows the desperation in this matter of debate.

Maybe I could get unanimous consent to talk about all the provincial hypocrisy of the Liberals in the past. We could be here all night, but my voice will not hold out.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today for the second time in debate on Bill C-10. I will share with members my thoughts on the bill, which stem more from my concern about the government's reckless handling of the airline and aerospace industry in Canada, in particular its handling and circumstances that gave rise to Bill C-10.

Government Orders

In an era of openness, transparency, and sunny ways, Bill C-10 has arrived in Parliament under the most cloudy, or perhaps murky ways. The government, and in particular the Minister of Transport, who is an honourable member of the House and a great Canadian, need to be more forthright on the bill. Some of the concerns we have heard from my friends in the New Democratic Party stem as much from this uncertainty on how Bill C-10 came to the House.

I say concern about process because the House should have process that is transparent, and we should know how bills have come to the House. I agree in some ways with the substance of Bill C-10 on a specific level, and I will explain why. However, I would prefer the government to be open and transparent with the House and manage this industry, our airlines and transportation in a way that reflects the modern realities of this global sector where Canada is currently extremely competitive, and in fact a world leader. However, due to the inaction and poor vision we have seen in six months already, the industry could indeed suffer.

Bill C-10 is really the completion of something that started in the 1980s under the Mulroney government, when Air Canada was privatized. It was a crown corporation. My first few flights on Air Canada would have been when it was a crown company and a crown carrier. Like many countries in the world, in the early days of aviation, to keep their business and society competitive and modern, a lot of governments owned their national airlines. However, starting in the 1960s through to the 1980s, most of the developed world devolved ownership.

We are not elected, and we do not have a government in Ottawa to run businesses on behalf of Canadians, but often in a sector, particularly like aerospace, the trail-blazing front edge of an industry, like passenger and cargo transport, can be assisted by government.

By the time the Mulroney government came in, Canada was joining most modern nations and allowing the private sector and marketplace to run and operate airlines, with the appropriate degree of regulation. It is a very heavily regulated industry on a federal level. All airlines do their best to maintain high standards alongside those regulations.

At the time of the Mulroney government, when Air Canada was privatized, there was concern about some of the major servicing sectors in many of the job centres that were part of the crown corporation, part of the government's operation in important markets. They were in Winnipeg, Montreal, and Mississauga. It is quite easy to understand why those markets were so important at the time in those cities. The servicing and claims element was in Manitoba. There was the hub of Pearson airport in Mississauga. The head office of Air Canada was in Montreal. Montreal also has the world renowned international headquarters for ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization, which governs air travel and recognizes its global footprint. Therefore, Montreal was very much an appropriate home for Air Canada, and continues to be today.

Therefore, there were specific job provisions put in at the time because of concern about the change. This was almost 30 years ago. I have not heard any of my friends in the NDP look for these statistics, but I would bet 90% of Canadians would agree that governments should not own an airline in this modern age. However, they probably understood why 40 or 50 years ago they started out by

helping Canadians gain access to air travel. We would not suggest turning the page and going back to Canada running an airline serving Canadians.

● (1655)

The jobs related to those jurisdictions were a critical part of the transition. Prime Minister Mulroney and his government at the time wanted to assure the House and, of course, all Canadians that there would not be radical disruption of the important hubs in Winnipeg, Mississauga, and Montreal by the change, so they had the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

What is the government doing here? It is not destroying this concept, but it is allowing it to evolve, as it should. Rather than specifically naming a geographic coordinate, the changes to section 6(1)(d) of the act allow for a more geographic balancing to Manitoba, to southern Ontario, and to the greater Montreal area, recognizing there still will remain hubs, but giving the company some ability to modernize and to have competitive servicing and operational support for their operations.

As a free market person and somebody from the private sector, I do not think we should be shackling a business to an operational approach that was in practice 30 years ago. The last shackle, in many ways, of the privatization of Air Canada is the modernization of the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

As can be seen from my remarks, in principle, this makes sense. In many ways, it also recognizes what provincial governments have already understood. Litigation launched in Manitoba and in Quebec by provincial governments alongside the labour movement in those jurisdictions was settled in two of the provinces as a result of agreements. There were agreements for job security and some contracting to world-class service providers in Manitoba, and similar commercial agreements were made with Quebec, and litigation pulled away.

What has really happened here, and the minister has not informed the House fully on the circumstances, is Bill C-10 has appeared out of the blue. Was this an effort by the federal government to try to resolve all litigation related to this act? Probably. Was Bill C-10 the result of discussions between the federal government, Bombardier, and Air Canada? Probably. However, we have not heard the minister speak to that. We do know that senior executives from Air Canada met with the minister a few days before Bill C-10 was tabled in Parliament.

Coincidentally, Air Canada committed to buying C Series, Bombardier aircraft. Now it should buy that aircraft because it is among the best in the world, and we are very proud of Bombardier. I will speak about that company in a moment.

Government Orders

However, when we look at this chain of reality, the litigation between the provinces, the difficulties Bombardier has faced, the restrictions in regulations and the restrictions imposed on Air Canada from legislation dating back in 1988, all of this leads up to Bill C-10. The urgency of it and the urgency of the financial assistance the province of Quebec has already given to Bombardier, all of this leads to Bill C-10.

I would prefer if the minister would just say that to the House. I think my NDP colleagues would prefer that as well. Any industry analyst knows why Bill C-10 is before this place.

In my remarks, members can see that, in principle, the full privatization and the unshackling of some of the rules from 1988 should take place. My concern with Bill C-10 is the secret deals, and the very fact that we are asking, in the House, whether the federal government is going to provide assistance to Bombardier, like the province of Quebec has. Have there been any assurances with respect to dual class shares with that company?

• (1700)

Have there been any assurances in terms of whether it will be a loan, whether we will use EDC to backstop other countries buying the C Series aircraft? Indeed, did they work with Air Canada to remedy some of these labour challenges alongside a purchase? I do not think that one needs to be an investigator to see that there is more to Bill C-10 than a few words on the pages of the bill.

The government came to Ottawa saying openness, transparency, that it enjoys consulting in a lot of ways on things. This is one area that we have not received a full background on, and we have not really heard from the minister on what led to Bill C-10 and the backroom deals. That is why I have serious concerns and why I am speaking again on this bill.

I urge the minister, who is an hon. member of the House, and someone who is respected across our aerospace industry as our first astronaut, to level with us. That is what we are supposed to have when we are modernizing this industry. The concerns from organized labour and some of my friends in the NDP would be addressed by more transparency and more direct discussion on amendments to the Air Canada Public Participation Act. There is still time for the minister to be forthright on this.

I have a deep affinity for the Bombardier company. I think all members of the House, particularly the strong Quebec caucus on the Conservative side, have strong passions for Bombardier. I received my wings in the Royal Canadian Air Force after training on the CT-142 aircraft, a militarized version of the Dash-8, for air navigation training that was run out of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

I am very familiar with the aerospace jobs in Winnipeg because they are proximate to where the air base is located on the far side of the international airport. The Royal Canadian Air Force, which I was a proud member of, has its headquarters in Winnipeg. Winnipeg, being at the geographic centre of North America and Canada, will remain an important hub for the aerospace industry, and I think we can be very proud of those jobs.

In many ways, the Conservatives and the Conservative family were in the wilderness for many years because of an ill-timed decision by the Mulroney government to push forward on a

servicing contract for CF-18s that impacted Bristol Aerospace in Manitoba. Therefore, no one knows about the aerospace industry probably as much as Conservatives, because it gave rise in many ways to the Reform Party and the split between the PCs for many years. That is not lost on me in this debate.

Conservatives want Bombardier to succeed. We want a modernized corporate structure, an effective governance, and effective leadership within that organization. We want the C Series, which is a best-in-class aircraft. It really will be transformative in terms of fuel efficiency and reducing aircraft noise. It will be transformative for the sector and for that company. It should have orders from across the globe, and they are coming in. However, if orders are related to bills before the House, related to the assistance that governments might offer that company and the flagship carrier of Canada, we should know about that and this should be part of the debate.

I have to raise the fact that why I am concerned is that the murkiness with respect to Bill C-10 also relates to decisions around Billy Bishop airport. I just heard a guffaw from my friend from Spadina—Fort York. That is another case where we did not get the full briefing and discussion by the minister on decisions related to the long-term operations of that important hub. In fact, we were quite disappointed when he tweeted the cancellation of the project, looking into an expansion of that airport. That is an airport that has now become critical to the transportation needs, not just of a few hundred people living on the lakeshore, but of the five million people in the most populous part of our country.

I know the member for Spadina—Fort York does not like the fact that many of his colleagues come to Ottawa each week using Porter, but he has to admit that its location near the financial centre of our country makes it a critical asset that should at least have proper regulatory review and not more insider deals.

• (1705)

Here we have deals being cooked inside the office of the Minister of Transport when he meets with corporate officials. We also have deals being cooked inside the Liberal caucus and in the PMO that actually impact far more than just one riding. It impacts southern Ontario, and the flow of goods and services and people. Whether or not there should be an expansion, those decisions, in a fulsome discussion, should be open and transparent, particularly in the era of sunny ways.

Why is that germane to this debate? It is because Porter was planning to purchase up to 30 C Series aircraft. I know my friend who is enjoying my remarks across the way will likely be out of town when his government announces financial assistance for Bombardier, which it will, and we will look at it very carefully in the opposition. However, the interesting thing is that the Liberals' insider deals prevented a private sector sale of these very aircraft that would help Bombardier thrive.

Government Orders

On the Hill this week, and I was speaking to its representatives, we also have a new ultra-low-cost carrier in Canada looking to start, which is Jetlines airline. It also plans to purchase between 20 and 40 C Series aircraft from Bombardier, provided the government starts setting an open and even playing field within Canada for our airline and aerospace industry.

My friend from Prince George, with his remarkable experience in aviation and the airline and airport industry, knows that a lot of our secondary markets are underserved because we have a restrictive set of rules around airline ownership and the capitalization of our aerospace industry.

Why is that important? In the last government, we were looking at changing that. We had the Emerson report that said because of our small capital markets here in Canada, because the airline industry is indeed global, we should be allowing up to 49% ownership, or capital to come from outside of Canada. It is the same challenge that we face constantly in the resource industry. We have tremendous opportunity, but not necessarily the size of our capital markets to service it. Therefore, we need to draw capital in from around the world.

We also have to recognize that this industry is a global industry. A lot of veterans and friends who I served with in the RCAF fly for Air Canada. I have a friend, Kevin McNaughton, a former CF-18 pilot, who flies for WestJet at the moment. There are also Canadians flying for Cathay Pacific and Qantas. This is a global industry. In fact, my friend from British Columbia consulted around the world: Canadian expertise in terms of aerospace, airlines, and Nav Canada, which is a world leader. This is a global marketplace, and for our airlines to succeed, we need to have an even playing field.

Therefore, I was proud that the last government started evening that playing field somewhat. We allowed more standardized crew days and manning levels for air crews, and for service personnel on the aircraft, such as flight attendants, so that there was the same level of requirement in Canada as for airlines flying into Canada.

We need to also do that in terms of access to capital. We need to allow these small upstart airlines, like Jetlines and others, to have access to foreign capital so that they can acquire aircraft built in Canada. Therefore, I urge the minister to look at the Emerson report; look at unshackling this industry so that Canadians can compete.

There are 76,000 jobs in Canada, and almost \$30 billion in GDP from the aerospace industry alone. The aircraft built by Viking Air now that are classic de Havilland, like the Beaver and Twin Otter, are world-renowned aircraft. The C Series will be joining that sort of world-renowned Canadian expertise that has always kept us as the third or fourth most important aerospace country in the world.

Let us have less backroom deals, more transparency, and let us not have another bill that comes to the House like Bill C-10, under the murkiness and indecision that we have seen from the government.

• (1710)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member opposite for allowing me to once again try to provide facts and information for the analysis of the party opposite when it discusses the proposal that was never going to go anywhere

at Billy Bishop airport. It was never 30 planes. It was never 30 jets. It was 12 jets and 18 Q400s. The Q400 order can still go forward and likely will still go forward, because we have not closed the airport. The airport is still allowed to operate in its current configuration.

The 12 jets that the Conservatives tried to shoehorn into an airport is the proposal they keep presenting to us as a viable operation. They wanted to build the Ottawa International Airport on a piece of property that is one-seventh the land mass. It was going to cost close to \$1.4 billion to shoehorn in this airport. Is this really the depth of analysis that the Conservatives have brought to this issue? They do not know the number of planes, the infrastructure costs, the length of the runway, and they do not know what the hell they are talking about.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. I want to remind the member for Spadina—Fort York that we want to ensure we use language that is acceptable to all here. I would appreciate that he chooses his words correctly.

The hon. member for Durham.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I accept the apology from my friend from Spadina—Fort York. In light of recent events, I am just glad he did not run across the way and grab me, as his leader has provided by example.

What I would say to this House, and in response to the member's question when he asked about the depth of analysis, is that the Liberals cut off that analysis. We needed a process where we could look at the viability of that in the long term, the environmental concerns, how it would fit into the transportation of any of the other issues, noise, all that sort of stuff. What the cancellation does is put pressure on Pearson, Hamilton, and the closure of Buttonville. The Billy Bishop Toronto Island Airport is not isolated from a network that serves over five million people. Therefore, the depth of analysis is more than a 140-character tweet from his minister. The government should be allowing this process to run its course, particularly when there was going to be a private sector sale. Whether it was 12 aircraft or 30 down the road, it was going to be a private sector sale, not the government's money.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Durham and I share a common first name, but unfortunately we do not share a common understanding of Bill C-10. He suggested that it was no big deal to loosen the geographic requirements from Winnipeg to all of Manitoba, or from Mississauga to southern Ontario. Of course, the real concern with respect to Bill C-10 is the clause that gives Air Canada complete free rein to define the nature of those maintenance and employment requirements. At the extreme, Air Canada could comply with this legislation by maintaining one job in each of Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec.

Government Orders

I think it is also very important to recognize the origin of these maintenance and employment requirements. When a former Conservative government was privatizing Air Canada, it made a trade-off. It decided to place this restriction, giving up maybe some of the proceeds that could have been obtained by selling the government's equity in the airline, in exchange for a guarantee of jobs. Given that the trade-off has been made, even if the member for Durham does not think it is the right trade-off, what is the point in giving up the employment requirements now? Is that not just a windfall to existing shareholders of Air Canada?

• (1715)

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, while I admire the member's namesake, I feel he is stuck in history and frozen in time. In fact, I would invite him, as was the case 30 years ago, to fly back to Saskatchewan on Wardair or on Canadian Airlines. He cannot do that because the industry has changed in 30 years. Therefore, it is perverse to suggest that Air Canada should be stuck with all of the same suppliers, all the same relationships, that they were 30 years ago. That is still the government controlling a private sector player. Porter Airlines has its servicing done in Sudbury. Why should companies in Sudbury or Atlantic Canada not have the same ability to bid on some of those jobs? The unionized members of those companies should have the opportunity of those jobs. It is time to recognize that it is not 1988, back when he was probably six.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to order made Tuesday, May 17, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

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

• (1755)

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

(*Division No. 77*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chan
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Dion
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey
Hehr	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCallum
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann

Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

Tan
Trudeau
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid — 170

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Ambrose
Arnold
Aubin
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Berthold
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Brown
Caron
Chong
Christopherson
Clement
Cullen
Deltell
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Eyolfson
Fast
Gallant
Généreux
Gill
Gourde
Harder
Jeneroux
Julian
Kenney
Kitchen
Kwan
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengary)
Leitch
Lobb
MacGregor
Maguire
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Mulcair
Nicholson
O'Toole
Plamondon
Quach
Ramsey
Rayes
Richards
Sansoucy
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stetski
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
Trudel
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga

Albas
Allison
Anderson
Ashton
Barlow
Beaulieu
Bernier
Blaikie
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher
Boulerice
Brassard
Calkins
Carrie
Choquette
Clarke
Cooper
Davies
Diotte
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseault
Eglinski
Falk
Fortin
Garrison
Genius
Gladu
Hardcastle
Hughes
Johns
Kelly
Kent
Kmieciak
Lake
Laverdière
Liepert
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Marcil
Mathysen
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Moore
Nantel
Nuttall
Pauzé
Poilievre
Raitt
Rankin
Rempel
Ritz
Saroya
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Stewart
Stubbs
Thériault
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Watts
Webber
Wong
Zimmer — 136

PAIRED

Nil

Private Members' Business

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

NATIONAL ANTHEM ACT

The House resumed from May 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-210, An Act to amend the National Anthem Act (gender), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-210, an act to amend the National Anthem Act (gender) under private members' business.

Since this is the first recorded division on private members' business in this Parliament, I wish to remind all hon. members that the division will be taken row by row, starting with the sponsor, if he or she is present, and then proceeding with those in favour of the motion, beginning with the back row on the side of the House on which the sponsor sits. After proceeding through the rows on that first side, the members sitting on the other side of the House will vote, again beginning with the back row. Those opposed to the motion will be called in the same order.

● (1805)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 78)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Allestev
Anandasangaree
Arya
Aubin
Badawey
Bains
Beech
Benson
Bittle
Blair
Boissonnault
Boucher
Boutin-Sweet
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chan
Chong
Christopherson
Cormier
Cuzner
Damoff
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Dion
Drouin
Dubourg
Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Ashton
Ayoub
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Bossio
Boulerice
Bratina
Brisson
Caron
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Chen
Choquette
Clarke
Cullen
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Donnelly
Dubé
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi

Private Members' Business

El-Khoury
 Erskine-Smith
 Eyolfson
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Fragiskatos
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fuhr
 Garrison
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gould
 Grewal
 Hardcastle
 Harvey
 Holland
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Johns
 Jordan
 Julian
 Kent
 Khera
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 Laverdière
 Leboutillier
 Lemieux
 Levitt
 Lockhart
 Longfield
 MacGregor
 Maloney
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 Mathysen
 May (Cambridge)
 McCallum
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Moore
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Obhrai
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Paradis
 Peterson
 Picard
 Quach
 Ramsey
 Ratansi
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Rota
 Ruimy
 Sahota
 Samson
 Sansoucy
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sorbara
 Stanton
 Stewart
 Tan
 Trudeau
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Wagantall
 Weir
 Wilkinson
 Wrzesnewskyj
 Zahid— 219

Ellis
 Eyking
 Fergus
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fraser (West Nova)
 Fry
 Gameau
 Gerretsen
 Goodale
 Graham
 Hajdu
 Hardie
 Hehr
 Housefather
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Joly
 Jowhari
 Kang
 Khalid
 Kwan
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Leslie
 Lightbound
 Long
 Ludwig
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Masse (Windsor West)
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinity
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Medicino
 Monsef
 Morrissey
 Murray
 Nassif
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Ouellette
 Peschisolido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Poissant
 Qualtrough
 Rankin
 Rempel
 Robillard
 Romanado
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Saini
 Sangha
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sohi
 Spengemann
 Stetski
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Trudel
 Vandenbeld
 Virani
 Webber
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
 Young

Albrecht
 Ambrose
 Arnold
 Bernier
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
 Brassard
 Calkins
 Clement
 Deltell
 Doherty
 Egflinski
 Fast
 Généreux
 Gladu
 Harder
 Kelly
 Kitchen
 Lake
 Leitch
 Lobb
 MacKenzie
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Nicholson
 O'Toole
 Raitt
 Reid
 Ritz
 Scheer
 Shields
 Sopuck
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Trost
 Van Loan
 Viersen
 Watts
 Wong
 Zimmer— 79

Allison
 Anderson
 Barlow
 Berthold
 Block
 Brown
 Carrie
 Cooper
 Diotte
 Dreeschen
 Falk
 Gallant
 Genuis
 Gourde
 Jeneroux
 Kenney
 Kmiec
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Lupert
 Lukiwski
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
 Nuttall
 Poilievre
 Rayes
 Richards
 Saroya
 Schmale
 Shipley
 Sorenson
 Stubbs
 Tilson
 Van Kesteren
 Vecchio
 Warawa
 Waugh
 Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

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

[English]

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

[Members sang the national anthem]

● (1810)

The Speaker: Harmony in here is so rare, although the pages sounded better earlier.

It being 6:10 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

SPRING FESTIVAL

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should, on an annual basis, proclaim the first day of the Lunar Year as the beginning of the 15-day "Spring Festival", in acknowledgement of the many celebrations and gatherings that take place in communities across the country, as well as in recognition of the tremendous contributions of people of Asian heritage to Canadian society.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak today on Motion No. 38.

In the springtime, many families in Canada and around the world pay special attention to the first day of the lunar new year, which marks the beginning of the 15-day spring festival.

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif

Albas

Private Members' Business

Spring festival, sometimes called the Chinese new year, has existed for over 4,000 years. It is the most important and festive holiday in Asia. Millions of Asians around the world celebrate spring festival, including those in China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, just to name a few.

Many customs accompany the spring festival. People do a major spring cleaning of their houses, their clothes, and their utensils. A number of goods are purchased for the new year, including edible oil, rice, flour, chicken, duck, fish, meat, fruit, candies, and nuts. Children receive new clothes, shoes, and red packets with good luck money, and they exchange gifts with seniors, friends, and relatives.

There are fireworks, a dragon dance, kitchen gods, the beating of drums and cymbals, and many celebrations. Chinese eat noodles and dumplings called jiaozi to signify a long life and the end and the beginning of time.

Traditionally, the festival was a time to honour ancestors. It was the one time of the year when people could rest. Family members from near and far would travel to be with loved ones in time to usher out the old year and welcome in the new.

Today, all over China, passenger trains, buses, planes, and river boats are packed with millions of holiday travellers. Shops do a lot of business, kitchens are busy preparing elaborate feasts, and the streets are filled with the sounds of firecrackers. It is the time for entire families to reunite for an average of 15 days. Most employees will get vacations, while students take a one-month absence from school.

Martin Palmer, a British expert on China, once said that spring festival is an exact Chinese cultural symbol when all its elements are assembled, namely kitchen gods, lion and dragon dances, red packets offered to family, and symbols of good luck.

The two key reasons for the festival are to celebrate a year of hard work, have a good rest, and reunite with family; and to wish for a lucky and prosperous coming year.

Asian communities in Canada are well organized. The Chinese community, for instance, has many community centres and media outlets serving the population. It has a long history dating back to the 19th century. Starting in the 1890s, cities and larger towns developed their own Chinatown districts in Canada.

The Chinese Canadian community is currently the largest ethnic group of Asian Canadians, centred mainly in the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia. In a 2011 survey, Chinese Canadians, including mixed Chinese and other ethnic groups, made up 4.5% of the Canadian population, or about 1.5 million. As the Chinese Canadian population in Canada continues to grow, Chinese culture has become an integral part of the Canadian cultural landscape.

Chinese Canadians were essential to the building of Canada's Pacific railway and joined the Canadian Armed Forces in World War II.

Unfortunately, beginning in the 1880s, hundreds of Chinese railway workers died in Canada due to accidents, winter cold, illness, and hunger. It is said that at least four Chinese workers died for every mile of track laid.

● (1815)

Canada's first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, said that British Columbia could either have Chinese workers on the railway or no Chinese workers and no railway. Since British Columbia's entry into Confederation was contingent on construction of a national railway, without the Canadian Pacific Railway there would be no Canada.

It is our responsibility to remember the exceptional contributions made to the Canadian mosaic and culture by people of Asian background. My motion is an opportunity to commemorate not only what the Asian community contributed to Canada but the Canadian government's recent support for the Asian community to tell their story.

Canada is a multicultural society, whose ethnocultural makeup has been shaped over time by immigrants and their descendants. Each new wave of immigration has added to the nation's ethnic and cultural composition. Canada's population includes six million people, about 20% of the population, who were born outside of Canada. Recent immigrants to this country are more likely to have come from Asia and the Middle East than from other countries. It is, therefore, not surprising that Asian traditions, such as the spring festival, are celebrated by an increasing number of people in Canada every year.

In 2014, over 153,000 Chinese students were studying in Canada, representing the largest group of foreign students in our country. International students enrich our classrooms and their knowledge and skills are welcome in our schools.

Multiculturalism makes life better for all Canadians and helps to build strong, diverse communities. Many Canadians are interested in learning about Asia, but do not have the opportunity to travel outside of Canada. The spring festival is a fun way to learn more about Asian customs and family traditions from within Canada. Here we can bring this tradition into focus and have the community serving together, enjoying the day and the time with the greater community. This fits with the spirit of multiculturalism.

Many Canadian cities join their Chinese neighbours in the celebration of these festivities. For instance, the Canada-China Business Association stages a multicultural spring festival event in Richmond, B.C. Although the spring festival is not a nationwide public holiday in Canada, it is a festive occasion for many people.

Private Members' Business

Prime ministers of Canada have celebrated the lunar new year and spring festival and issued official statements honouring the spring festival. Canadian organizations participate in Chinese new year. For example, since 2011, Canada Post creates a new stamp annually to commemorate the Chinese new year with an animal. In the past, the Royal Canadian Mint marked the event with a series of new coins. It is my hope that this annual announcement will contribute to the enrichment of Chinese Canadian history knowledge for both Chinese Canadians and mainstream Canadian society.

It is important to remember that the Chinese community in Canada put down historical roots, not just in China but on both sides of the Pacific. Motion No. 38 would encourage Canadians of Asian descent to carry on the rich traditions of their heritage, reminding us again that Canada's strength comes from the richness of our cultures and the diversity of our people to recognize the important contributions Asian Canadians have made to Canada and to honour their values of hard work, enterprise, and community. The spring festival is a non-partisan and non-religious event.

Motion No. 38 encourages participation in the cultural life of Canada. The motion builds on the fact that the festival has already become part of Canadian culture. Many of the Asian organizations in America and around the world hold large celebrations and parades to share its spring festivity. Cities like Sydney, London, New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco have held many successful lunar new year parades that attract thousands of crowds every year.

● (1820)

Motion No. 38 would enable Canadians to maximize opportunities for future generations and to embrace the natural linkages between this country and the Asia Pacific region. This motion would bring together friends from Asia and Canada, and makes Asian culture accessible to the local mainstream and minority communities. The celebration of the Chinese new year has served as a platform for bringing the community together and reminding that diversity and inclusion are sources of strength.

We are stronger, as Canadians, because of our diversity. We have become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic, different people, different beliefs, different festivals, different dreams but one country. Our differences make us stronger. We should celebrate our diversity and learn to work together. The Government of Canada believes in a united Canada that looks forward with a shared purpose; a country that is strong, not in spite of our individual differences but because of them.

Earlier this week, I explained in writing to all my colleagues in the House exactly why Motion No. 38 was good for Canada and for all Canadians. I would ask for the support of MPs from all parties in the hope that we can expedite this motion and officially recognize this significant event, spring festival, across Canada.

I am pleased to note that I have received widespread support, bordering on high praise and heartfelt encouragement from virtually all my colleagues across party lines for Motion No. 38, for example, from the hon. members for Richmond Centre, Vancouver East, Vancouver Kingsway, and the Scarborough ridings. I wish to thank everyone and every party for their full support and hearty encouragement.

I ask members to please support Motion No. 38 and join Asian Canadians at the spring festival 2017. Remember to have plenty of food and drink, and do not forget the dancing. *Xìxìe*.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for bringing this motion in front of the House. Indeed, he can count on our support for this motion. It is a great motion for spring festival. It is a great way to celebrate the Asian heritage. During my speech, I will allude to the bigger festival that automatically comes from Asia.

Just as a little context, as I was saying to my friend from Lloydminster, in Canada we come out of winter. When we come out in spring, we go into farming. We go seeding and everything, and start working. In our case, we come out after the harvest is done. Indeed, I will be supporting the motion with my colleague from Richmond.

● (1825)

Mr. Geng Tan: Mr. Speaker, indeed, spring festivals and other ethnic group celebrations have been in Canada for many years. More Canadians know this celebration. As I mentioned, the prime ministers of Canada and other government officials, and virtually everybody knows of a spring festival celebration. During that time of year, we can see it everywhere. We can see it in shops, in gas stations, in department stores, and in restaurants. All have signs of the celebration for the spring festival.

As I said in my speech, this is good for Canada because diversity is our strength, not our weakness. Again, as mentioned by the hon. member, the winter in Canada is very long so we need more celebrations.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize the celebration of lunar new year or spring festival for the Asian community, so I welcome the member's motion.

In order to further the celebration and the recognition of the contributions of the Asian community, what other suggestions might the member have to advance for the government to undertake that would give concrete results in recognition of the Asian community's contribution to building Canada?

Mr. Geng Tan: Mr. Speaker, the most important thing right now is to promote awareness of this event to every Canadian, just like other large-scale events, for example Black History Month and Asian Heritage Month.

I suggest that some day the spring festival will become a big celebration in Canada.

Mr. Arnold Chan (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleagues from Calgary Forest Lawn and Vancouver East in congratulating my colleague and fellow neighbour to the west of my riding, my colleague from Don Valley North, for his introduction of Motion No. 38 before the House today.

Private Members' Business

I, along with my other colleagues on all sides of the aisle, join in congratulating my friend in introducing the motion and recognizing that lunar new year and the lunar festival is a significant event celebrated by Asian communities around the globe, including in Canada. I and my friend from Don Valley North, along with many others, have engaged in many activities during this festival.

I want to follow-up also on the suggestion by my friend from Vancouver East particularly as it relates to 2017. Does he have any additional suggestions that could perhaps highlight the importance of not only the contributions of Asian Canadians, but to celebrate the tremendous diversity that Asian communities have contributed to Canada's diversity and pluralism?

Mr. Geng Tan: Mr. Speaker, I fully agree with the comments made by my hon. colleague. It is something big for us. The spring festival is not just one celebration. We are remembering the contributions made by Chinese Canadians over 100 years.

I would suggest that other big communities probably have similar things to share with Canadians. Canada is a beautiful country. We welcome people from all over the world to join our country. At the same time, we welcome people to bring the best of their culture and traditions to our country and make our country more colourful.

• (1830)

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to rise up during spring and talk about the spring festival.

As Canadians, we all love festivals. Most of our festivals, due to the weather, are in summer. We should not forget the traditions that have come from other parts of the world to Canada today, which is home to millions of Asians who live in this country.

I want to commend my colleague for highlighting the contributions of Asian-Canadians to the society of Canada. I am delighted. I want to thank my hon. colleague from Richmond for giving me this spot to speak and highlight more about the spring festival.

In Asia, there are spring festivals. The spring festival comes from the countries of Southeast Asia. I have a very large community of Vietnamese-Canadians living in my riding who celebrate spring festival. It is a joyous occasion that we always look forward to. We look forward to it not only because of celebrating with them, but we look forward to understanding the great achievements they have made.

When we go down to the spring festivals and cultural shows, it is just outstanding. It is absolutely outstanding. Do not forget about the great food and the 10-course dinners that we get, which my hon. colleague just enjoyed in Vancouver. He greatly enjoys the cultural heritage of the Chinese community. It does not matter whether it is from Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, or wherever, it is an honour to be there.

I must give credit, as the cultural events that are performed by these great groups are outstanding and a great heritage to Canada. While we can say that this is a Vietnamese show or a Chinese show or an Indian show, or whatever, ultimately it boils down to the fact that they are Canadian shows. They are done by young Canadians.

It is great, and we are honoured that in this great land of ours, without going to distant countries, we can see the diversity and the cultural heritage. Spring festival is part of that. I would be remiss if I did not say that I think it is a great thing to organize, and to recognize our fellow Asians on this occasion.

Similar to spring festival, another great festival that comes from Asia is the Vaisakhi celebration. It is celebrated in China and other countries. The Vaisakhi is a celebration when the harvest is done and people want to go out and celebrate. It is a great spring celebration that we can see across this country, with great parades taking place.

On the other hand, in India they celebrate Holi, which is throwing colours onto each other. I have been a victim of that colour throwing. Again, it is part and parcel of the festival, and part and parcel of Asian heritage. Indeed, it goes without saying that it is a great thing that we in Canada celebrate the diversity of our history.

The hon. member talked about the Chinese head tax and the recent apology made by the Prime Minister about the Komagata Maru, all of those things. In putting all of this behind us as we look forward and move forward, these festivals bring the richness of the culture and push the past away.

It is quite a great pleasure and honour to be supporting this motion and recognizing the contributions made by Asians in this country. I will just say in closing, let us celebrate the celebrations for everyone. Let us celebrate our land and move on.

To everyone I say, enjoy the spring celebrations.

• (1835)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let me first acknowledge and congratulate the member for Don Valley North for bringing this motion forward. Indeed, this is a motion that I will certainly support.

As well, I want to begin this debate by acknowledging the first peoples of this land for allowing us to build our lives here. All of us who are not indigenous came from other places to make Canada our home. Over the years, Canada has become a wonderful multicultural country that was built by the faces of this world. To that end, I want to acknowledge the first peoples, and then pay tribute to the multicultural community for the fantastic contributions they have made over these many years to building Canada.

This motion acknowledges specifically the spring festival that is celebrated by the Asian community. When I talk about the Asian community, it is much broader than just the Chinese community. It is celebrated by people from China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam. People from all of the different places in the Asian community celebrate the spring festival.

Private Members' Business

The Spring festival has a very interesting origin, which is traced back thousands of years, from a series of traditions and legends. One of the most famous that I remember as a little girl growing up is that of the Nian. As we were told, this famous Nian is believed to be a monstrous beast that would come and attack us and we would all run scared, and so on. History has it that we would do different things to ward off the Nian. We would use the red couplets that are seen from time to time in celebration of the Asian community. They are two red pieces of paper with a little Chinese poem written on it in Chinese black or gold ink. Sometimes we would light firecrackers to ward off this monster. That is the legend that we were brought up to believe.

Of course, in celebrating it, I remember as a little girl that the thing I loved about it the most is this. In preparation for it my mother would clean the house 10 days before the lunar new year, we would clean the house from corner to corner. We were given new slippers, new pyjamas, new clothes, and fantastic food. Of course come lunar new year's day we would get the red pockets. The most exciting thing for us about the red pockets is that there was money in them. For a little girl to get a dollar or whatever amount of money is very exciting. Then relatives and friends come to visit, and we would visit them, collect more red pockets with money, and fill our pockets full of candies. It was an enormous celebration. This is what I remember when I was a little girl in Hong Kong.

Then we immigrated to Canada, there was very little known about the lunar new year festival. We came in 1976, when I was a little girl, and we sort of celebrated among ourselves, with a few friends, but other than that there really was not much going on. I will say this. Over the years I have been so happy to see the celebration and acknowledgement of the lunar new year. Right now in Vancouver is the 43rd anniversary of the lunar new year parade. I remember when it first started. There was maybe a parade of 10 or 20 people. It was not very big. However, over the years we are now up to over 100,000 people who come to the parade, rain or shine. It is absolutely a tremendous celebration. It is not just people in the Asian community who come out to celebrate it. These are people from all walks of life. I dare say that we have had elected officials from all levels of government, and people from this very House, who have come and celebrated the lunar new year parade with us in Vancouver, including prime ministers. I would say that politicians would fight to get to the front of the line to be seen in this parade. Now it is absolutely a celebration that is recognized by all walks of life.

To bring this celebration together takes a lot of hard work. It does not just happen by itself. There are a lot of people behind the scenes. There are tremendous volunteers who work at the celebration every year. As soon as it is over, they are once again planning for the next year's celebration.

● (1840)

To that end, I would like to acknowledge, particularly from my community in east Vancouver, the Chinatown spring festival parade organizers: the Chinese Benevolent Association, the Chinese Cultural Centre, the Chinatown Merchants Association, SUCCESS, the Chinese Freemasons, and the Shon Yee Benevolent Association. They toil day and night preparing for this giant parade. Not only that, after the parade, we accumulate over 1,000 people in the largest restaurant that we have in the Lower Mainland. We all gather there and have a feast to continue the celebration.

Of course, as per the tradition, the lunar new year does not just end on the first day, but continues on, weeks on end. So many of the clan associations carry on the festive atmosphere well into spring. In fact, just last week I attended a community event and we still were celebrating the lunar new year festival and bringing in the new year.

This year, the year of the monkey, the lunar new year was actually February 9, and we are now June 1. The good member here has brought this motion forward, and months later we are still talking about the lunar new year festival. To recognize it and declare it in this sense so it is shared among all the communities across the country is a wonderful gesture.

I should also acknowledge that the city of Vancouver, over the years, has also made its declaration in recognition of the lunar new year celebration. The province of British Columbia has done the same for many years now. In fact, a family day was established.

The family day history actually started with a conversation with a number of people in our community. They thought it would be great to have a family day in the month of February, when we did not have a statutory holiday, and to time it so it would fall during the time of the lunar new year festival. That is how family day came about. Now, it does not exactly fall on the lunar new year day, because every year that day changes. Therefore, it is kind of hard to pick the actual date, because it changes every year with the lunar new year calendar, but it is close enough. That is the origin of the family day celebration in British Columbia.

I am very delighted to support the motion. There is no question that the more we talk about different cultures, the more we engage and embrace each other, the more we celebrate who we are and what we are about, and share that information, we are only going to enhance the spirit of multiculturalism, the knowledge and education of each other and to appreciate the different cultures we bring to the table with that celebration. We have truly reached what we have all strived so hard to do in the spirit of multiculturalism, which is the recognition and full participation of every community in all walks of life in what we do together as one.

I want to thank the member for bringing this motion forward. I look forward to the support of all members of the House for this motion so we can all walk in unison, with harmony and in a good way to celebrate each and every one of us, no matter who we are or where we come from.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address Motion No. 38, which states:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should, on an annual basis, proclaim the first day of the Lunar Year as the beginning of the 15-day "Spring Festival", in acknowledgement of the many celebrations and gatherings that take place in communities across the country, as well as in recognition of the tremendous contributions of people of Asian heritage to Canadian society.

I support this motion, and I am honoured to be here to speak about an event of exceptional significance to a great number of Canadians, the lunar new year and spring festival.

Private Members' Business

[*Translation*]

As members know, this government is strongly committed to diversity and inclusion. As was noted in the Speech from the Throne, we strongly believe that Canada's strength is its diversity and our country is strong because of our differences, not in spite of them. Our shared experiences and diversity are a source of inspiration both in Canada and around the world.

For many Canadians, the lunar new year is one of the most significant events of the year. Individuals of various backgrounds, such as Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese, to name but a few, celebrate the occasion with friends and family. As many members know, the lunar new year and spring festival take place in January or February each year. This year, celebrations began on February 8, ushering in the year of the fire monkey, an animal that symbolizes cleverness, wittiness, intelligence, and curiosity.

• (1845)

[*English*]

I had the pleasure of attending in my riding of Edmonton Centre a number of events related to the festival surrounding this year of the monkey. The lunar festival has a tremendous impact on my riding, bringing sounds, smells, parades, line dances, and great fun for all Edmontonians.

[*Translation*]

The 15-day spring festival includes a wide range of exciting cultural activities, such as lion dancing, the preparation of delicious traditional foods, and beautiful displays of colourful decorations.

Recognizing the lunar new year in Parliament will encourage Canadians of all backgrounds to learn about, appreciate, and celebrate this date of great significance. The motion will complement existing commemoration initiatives, such as Asian Heritage Month, which takes place each year in May.

I am proud to support this motion, not only because it commemorates a date of great significance, but also because it provides another opportunity to reflect on the tremendous contributions of Canada's Asian communities to our society, both recently and historically.

[*English*]

Canada has benefited greatly from the diversity that has come with the arrival of many newcomers of Asian heritage. According to the 2011 national household survey, five million people reported an Asian ethnic origin in Canada. Within this group, 2.6 million individuals reported an East or Southeast Asian origin including 1.5 million Chinese, 220,000 Vietnamese, and approximately 170,000 Koreans.

Canada has been enriched by the presence of Asian Canadians for many years. From the moment Chinese artisans and traders arrived in the 18th century to today, Canadians of Asian heritage have played an important role in building our country.

It is worth recalling the role that people of Asian heritage have played in the development of our vast country through their hard work and resiliency building the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Similarly, we must acknowledge and never forget the many shameful and discriminatory restrictions imposed on immigrants from China including a \$50 head tax introduced in 1885, and a prohibition on Chinese immigration in 1923. These deplorable moments in our collective history serve to remind us of the value of an open society and a commitment to equality, inclusion, and multiculturalism.

It is in this spirit of multiculturalism and inclusion that I am here today to speak in support of Motion No. 38. I believe that Canada's commitment to multiculturalism and the fact that I stand before members today in support of a motion to celebrate lunar new year in Canada's Parliament are clear examples of how far we have come since the days of the head tax.

[*Translation*]

While it is important to remember the errors of the past, Canadians of Asian heritage have much to be proud of and to look forward to. There are countless examples of Asian-Canadian success stories that one could choose to highlight. This is a testament to the great achievements of Asian Canadians throughout history.

The long list of outstanding Canadians includes individuals such as the first immigrant appointed as governor general of Canada, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson. This list also includes a wide range of individuals noted for their achievements in the arts and sciences.

[*English*]

I know, for example, Dr. Tak Wah Mak, a Canadian scientist of great renown for his work in microbiology and immunology and the important repercussions of his work around the world.

[*Translation*]

In the realm of the arts, we find individuals such as award-winning author Kim Thúy, winner of the prestigious Governor General's Literary Award for French Fiction and the Grand Prix Littéraire Archambault in 2011. The list goes on.

By formally recognizing the lunar new year and spring festival, the government is also expressing its strong commitment to the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

[*English*]

The government is proud to support multiculturalism, which is a defining feature of Canadian identity and a source of pride for Canadians and for many people around the world. Our multicultural heritage is about more than just a commitment to welcoming diverse people from around the world. It is a commitment to principles of equality and freedom grounded in human rights and enshrined in the supreme law of Canada, our Constitution, and in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.

Formal recognition of the lunar new year would directly support Canada's multiculturalism policy. This policy, which plays a fundamental role in shaping our inclusive and welcoming society, seeks to welcome and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society.

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It acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance, and share their cultural heritage. Events like the lunar new year and spring festival resonate with many Canadians and contribute to the cultural dynamism and inclusivity that make Canadian communities vibrant and welcoming places to live. They improve our quality of life by fostering a sense of belonging in unity which ultimately contributes to Canada being a more peaceful and harmonious place to live.

I am proud to stand in support of the motion to recognize the first day of lunar year as the beginning of the 15-day spring festival in acknowledgement of the many celebrations and gatherings in communities across the country and in recognition of the tremendous contributions of people of Asian heritage to Canadian society.

● (1850)

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this motion. I would first like to congratulate the hon. member for Don Valley North on being the first member of Parliament of a Mandarin-speaking background from mainland China to be elected to the House.

Like my riding of Richmond Centre, Don Valley North is culturally diverse and has made history on more than one occasion by electing MPs who were the first of their ethnic community. My former caucus colleague Joe Daniel was the first ever member of Malayali descent. On my part, I was the first Canadian woman of Chinese descent to be appointed to serve in cabinet. I am honoured to share in this moment to celebrate that multiculturalism is alive and strong throughout Canadian society.

I remember as a young child that every year I would always look forward to the spring festival, just as our hon. member for Vancouver East did. Although the gifts and delicious food were always a point of excitement for the children, there is much more to this holiday. It is not only an opportunity to welcome the incoming year, but represents a time of celebration and reflection on the past year. It is also a time for thanksgiving and an opportunity for family members to return home and spend time together.

Although both the hon. member for Don Valley North and I are both of Chinese descent, the spring festival is of great significance to many other ethnic communities throughout Southeast Asia as well. Along with mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, the spring festival and related lunar new year celebrations are held in other countries in the region, such as Vietnam, Korea, and Malaysia. There are many Canadians who hail from countries where the spring festival is a valued tradition, and they still observe those traditional celebrations here.

To put this in numerical perspective, as the hon. member from Edmonton has done, there are more than 1.3 million Canadian residents of Chinese descent. Half a million of those individuals have roots in Hong Kong, and I am one of them, 220,000 are of Vietnamese origin, and more than 170,000 individuals are members of the Korean community in Canada. Along with many others, they make up a huge part of our nation's cultural mosaic, in which we Canadians take great pride.

I realize that, as a multicultural mosaic, sometimes our different colours, origins, and traditions may appear to clash. Even within my riding of Richmond Centre, there is now some tension between the

more established residents and the newer members of our immigrant community.

Some people may ask, if we pass this motion, where we would then draw the line. Are we to recognize every cultural tradition that is celebrated by some members of Canadian society? I would have to disagree with those individuals. There is a belief out there that somehow motions like this one may dilute our Canadian identity. To them I say that, rather than diluting what it means to be Canadian, we are keeping the finest traditions of the Canadian spirit instead.

Canada has always been a mosaic of different peoples, to which we have been continually adding new pieces, starting with our first nations and indigenous communities and moving to the arrival of European influences in the 15th century; and even now, today, people throughout the world come to Canada to find peace, acceptance, and freedom. We are a country that has always been weaving new threads into our national tapestry.

Over 85% of immigrants to Canada eventually become citizens, which is one of the highest rates in the developed world. Not only do they come to build a better life and a brighter future for themselves and their families, but they also fully join and, likewise, fully contribute to Canadian society. The motion and, more specifically, what it is celebrating are what being Canadian truly means.

● (1855)

Diversity is where we find much of Canada's strength. Throughout their long history in this country, Canadians of Asian heritage have contributed significantly toward making Canada what it is today. We are also pushing us forward to become the best nation we could possibly be.

The spring festival is no longer just an Asian holiday but one that is celebrated and enjoyed by Canadians of all backgrounds. I am privileged to witness this every year at the Vancouver Chinatown parade, one of the largest in North America, which brings together over 3,000 participants and 10,000 spectators annually. The groups that participate, much like Canadian society at large, are immensely diverse. Along with the traditional lion dancers and martial arts demonstrations, we also see some other groups represented, including Scottish pipe and drum bands, cadets, and members of the Royal Canadian Armed Forces. It is wonderful to see different groups taking part in the festivities and celebrating in the meaning of the spring festival.

I would like to also add the romantic part to this beautiful festival. In Chinese history, the last day of the spring festival, which is the 15th day of the first moon, is also Chinese Valentine's Day. It was during this day that young women and young men went out to the market carrying paper lanterns and solving riddles on the lanterns. The winners of those riddles did not only win prizes but they won the hearts of beautiful young ladies.

Over the past several years in my riding of Richmond Centre, there has been a countdown at the Aberdeen Centre to mark the beginning of the spring festival. It has become an important community event in Richmond. There have been prime ministers from different parties who have also taken part. I am sure that many of my colleagues in the House who have attended such events can attest to the fact that the spring festival celebrations are something to be enjoyed by all Canadians.

As the member of Parliament for Richmond Centre, I am truly delighted to have the opportunity this evening to speak to the motion and bring recognition to this important event. I am grateful that we as a House can celebrate our multiculturalism together and recognize the important role it plays in our Canadian society.

I, along with my colleagues, wholeheartedly support the motion put forward by the member for Don Valley North.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand on behalf of the constituents of Vancouver Kingsway and my colleagues in the New Democratic Party in support of this motion to commemorate lunar new year across this country and the spring festival that begins every year in cities across our great land. The spring festival is celebrated, of course, by Canadians of Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean origin in particular, but, indeed, now by Canadians of many other nationalities across this country.

I would like to focus my remarks tonight, however, on the tremendous contributions of the Chinese community to my riding, the city of Vancouver, the province of British Columbia, and our country.

The 43rd Chinatown Spring Festival Parade was held this year in Vancouver and, as in past years, was organized in excellent fashion by six major organizations in Vancouver: the Chinese Benevolent Association of Vancouver, the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver, the Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., the Chinese Freemasons Vancouver branch, and the Shon Yee Benevolent Association.

The spring festival new year parade celebrates the new year of the lunar calendar and is a festive event for everyone to enjoy. As one of the three largest non-commercial annual parades in Vancouver, this parade features the largest assembly of traditional lion dance teams in Canada, with dozens of colourful and energetic lions from various local fraternal and martial arts organizations. The parade features some 70 entries, bringing over 3,000 participants from various community and cultural groups.

It is not surprising that the parade draws over 100,000 spectators representing every single ethnic group in this country along the route each year, plus many more who see it through TV coverage. It gives me great opportunity to highlight for the House the incredible contributions of Chinese Canadians to Canada's social, economic, and cultural heritage.

I want to start with the Chinese Benevolent Association. This was founded in 1895 by six pioneers to provide mutual support and leadership within the Chinese Canadian community. The current CBA president is Mr. Hilbert Yiu, who I would like to congratulate for his recent victory. This group represents the major Chinese

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associations in Canada, including major clans, like the Shunyee, the Mah, the Jang, the Kwan, and many others. This group, the CBA, fosters cultural, social, and charitable events of all types and works diligently to promote equality and understanding of other cultures. It also helps to provide housing and disaster relief.

I would like to highlight the Chinese Cultural Centre, a world-class organization that promotes Asian arts and culture and facilitates exchanges of artists from around the world. It recently hosted the Greater Vancouver Chinese-Canadian Artists Invitational Exhibition, which featured world-class Chinese Canadian artists, such as Johnson Chow, Winifred Lee, James Tan, Joyce Tsai, and many others. This was an explosion not of multiculturalism but of interculturalism and, indeed, cultural fusion. The chair of the Chinese Cultural Centre is Fred Kwok, who is carrying on the fine tradition of previous chairs.

I also want to mention the International Arts Gallery, which is led by the talented team of Katherine and John Chan, who bring artists from all over the world and promote Canadian artists internationally. I must also mention Dr. Jan Walls, a Simon Fraser University professor, who is a leading translator, historian, and cultural icon, and an inspirational leader in multicultural understanding, tolerance, and respect.

I want to highlight the Chinese Canadian Military Museum. Just a few weeks ago, in May, it commenced an extraordinary exhibit entitled "Rumble in the Jungle", a special exhibition that explores a largely unknown part of Canadian history. This was organized under the leadership of President King Wan. It highlights the work of Force 136.

During the final years of World War II, an elite group of Chinese Canadians were secretly trained in guerrilla warfare and jungle survival tactics. Their mission was to get dropped behind Japanese lines and assist with sabotage and intelligence gathering. These soldiers included Neill Chan, Raymond Chan, Chong Joe, Charlie Lee, Ronald Lee, Gordon Quan, Gordon Wong, Tommy Wong, Victor Wong, and Hank Wong. They provided absolute vital service to this country in a very dangerous mission and theirs is a story of glory and courage.

● (1900)

This is also a story of racism and intolerance. These soldiers were not able to easily join Canadian regular forces. They were not recognized as Canadian citizens. They were subject to racist property laws. They could not vote in Canadian elections, and they were victims of the racist head tax. Indeed, disgracefully, these soldiers had to hitch a ride back to Canada on their own after risking their lives in some of the most dangerous work done in the war for their country. However, this exhibit cannot mask the heroism that these soldiers displayed in carrying out their top-secret mission in the most difficult and dangerous theatre imaginable. Their families are proud today.

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I want to mention the Chinese Freemasons, led by Chairman Chuck Chang. One of the first Freemason organizations in Canada, this was started on Vancouver Island, in Barkerville, in the 1800s. They provided then and provide today fraternal and social support to the Chinese community before the advent of social services by government. They also played an instrumental role in world history. They hosted and funded Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, who was in Vancouver at the beginning of the 20th century and who returned to China to help found the Republic of China, bringing an end to imperial rule.

I want to mention success. The CEO of success is Queenie Choo, who does an outstanding job for this organization. She follows in the history of talented CEOs and leaders: Tung Chan, who is a figure of national renown, and Maggie Ip, a former city councillor, incredible organizer and community leader. This is one of the most pre-eminent social NGOs in the country. They assist thousands of immigrants with their settlement needs, ESL, employment, housing, and integration into Canadian society.

I want to focus on the Chinese Seniors Society of Greater Vancouver under the great leadership of president Mingming Zhu. They just celebrated their 11th anniversary and bring seniors from all over greater Vancouver together for important social and cultural events.

In my own riding, I want to highlight what I consider the best Chinese seniors group in Canada, the Renfrew Chinese Seniors. Under the leadership of May Cheng and Eddie Tang, over 400 seniors meet quarterly at the Renfrew Park Community Centre and bring seniors together for recreation, dance, and community connection.

I want to mention the business leaders of renown in the Chinese community. We have Tong Louie, a towering figure in BC business who started the London Drugs chain; Jack Chow, who started and ran a very successful insurance business; the Wong family, tailors for over 100 years, who are still making great made-to-measure suits, the last major tailor shop in Vancouver's Chinatown; David Choi, who founded Royal Pacific Realty; Richard Wong, a powerhouse of energy involved in fostering international trade; and Faye Leung, a pioneer of courage, who has made a lifetime of breaking barriers. She emerged out of Chinatown and overcame discrimination on race and gender to become a leading realtor and historian.

I want to mention important civic leaders from the Chinese Canadian community. Raymond Louie, the acting mayor of Vancouver and the first Chinese Canadian chair of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is leading our city of Vancouver in the country today. He is joined on Vancouver City Council by Dr. Kerry Jang, who works at UBC school of psychiatry, and is also an excellent leader in my riding of Vancouver Kingsway. They followed in the footsteps of B.C. Lee, George Chow, and Tony Tang, past councillors, and the great member for Vancouver east, who I believe is the only person in Canada of Chinese descent who has been a city councillor, a provincial MLA, a provincial cabinet minister and also a member of this Parliament. I must mention the very popular Allan Wong, elected five straight times to the Vancouver School Board. He is an incredibly popular politician, who has fought for generations of Vancouver students.

I want to mention finally the media. We have in this country, and in my city of Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, a very vibrant and democratic Chinese media. Newspapers like *Sing Tao*, *Ming Pao*, *Global Chinese Press*, *Dawa*, the Fairchild TV and radio station, and the OMNI multicultural channel provide honest reporting, fair coverage and play a vital role in informing citizens, which is an integral part of our democratic process.

The mainstream media in this country could take a lesson from the Chinese media in this country, which lead the way in fair, balanced, diverse coverage. We owe a debt of gratitude to them all.

In conclusion, today is the day to commemorate the spring festival, but also the contributions of Chinese Canadians across this country. I am proud on behalf of the New Democratic Party to salute them here today in this House.

● (1905)

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

Accordingly, I invite the hon. member for Don Valley North to have his right of reply. The hon. member has up to five minutes.

Mr. Geng Tan: Mr. Speaker, I just need 10 seconds.

I would just take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues for their support. I will remember this.

● (1910)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise tonight in adjournment proceedings to pursue a question that I originally asked on March 24. It pertains to something that is fundamental to the concept that Canada has any framework of environmental law, any regimen of review in advance before large projects proceed.

In a strange quirk of history, I was actually in the office of the Minister of the Environment in the Mulroney administration when I shepherded through the Privy Council Office permission to legislate the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. It finally passed into law. It was passed under the Mulroney administration, received royal assent under the administration of the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, and it has evolved since then.

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It had as its cornerstone principles that the environmental assessment process must engage Canadians. Public participation and rights of public participation were fundamental to that act. So, too, was a broad understanding of what environment means, including the full environment, marine, terrestrial, all aspects of the environment, human health and the environment, even socio-economic impacts, and even local community values.

That environmental assessment process required that alternatives be reviewed. A project was not just approved; the question was actually asked as to whether there was a better way to do something which would cause less environmental damage.

All of that was destroyed. It was destroyed completely in omnibus budget Bill C-38 in spring 2012. Those of us in the opposition parties fought it as hard as we could. Liberals, New Democrats, Greens, and the Bloc, we tried to protect the cornerstone of our environmental law, and we lost because might makes right and the Conservative government at the time forced through the acceptance of something called the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012.

It is not an environmental assessment act at all. It fails even in comparison to environmental assessments conducted by developing countries. It is a joke of an environmental assessment act. To make it worse, it took away the fundamental principle of public participation. That was a fundamental principle of our cornerstone of our environmental assessment law, and it is gone. The new CEAA 2012 says that only those parties who are directly affected, such as if one lives next door to a large quarry, next door to a large LNG facility, have a right to participate.

It took away the heart and soul and rigour of environmental assessment law. Worse than that, in the case of energy projects, it made up a whole new regime. It said that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 does not apply through its normal agency operations if it is a pipeline, a nuclear facility, or an offshore oil and gas facility. In those cases, the National Energy Board for the first time in Canadian history was mandated to do environmental assessments. So, too, were the offshore petroleum boards for Newfoundland and Labrador, for Nova Scotia, as was the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. They were given the authority to do environmental assessments.

Now, we have lived through quite a few of these. I can say without a shadow of a doubt and without fear of contradiction from any person in the public interest or environmentalist who has gone through that process, they are a sham.

Here we are, it is June 1, 2016, and I ask the government opposite, why are we still operating under Bill C-38's destruction of our environmental law? I ask, as I did on March 24, when can we see the end of Bill C-38 and bring back real environmental assessment in Canada?

• (1915)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the question by the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands regarding the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

Our government campaigned on a promise to conduct a comprehensive review of environmental assessment processes, and to implement reforms that reflect an approach that is based on science, facts, and evidence. That is exactly what we intend to do.

We will work to ensure that this review and subsequent reforms are informed by consultation and partnerships with provinces, territories, and indigenous peoples. This has been our approach from the moment we took office and is central to restoring the legitimacy of the environmental assessment process that was lost under the previous government.

This government has already demonstrated the need to change the approach to environmental assessment implemented by the previous government. In January, we introduced five principles to guide our decision-making on all major resource projects under review. These principles ensure predictable, timely assessments based on science and data, that we account for the realities of climate change, and that we have meaningful engagement with communities and consultation with indigenous peoples. These principles, along with a review of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012, are part of the government's broad strategy to restore confidence in Canada's environmental assessment processes.

While we undertake the broader review of environmental assessment processes, this government is ensuring that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is adequately resourced to fulfill its responsibilities with respect to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 and the interim principles.

As the member opposite notes, budget 2016 provided funding to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency so that it does have the ability to deliver on its responsibilities. The funding announced in budget 2016 will provide the agency with the resources it needs to undertake consultations with the public and indigenous groups, and will support compliance and enforcement.

To the member opposite's question, I will say this. The fact that four years of funding has been guaranteed to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in no way implies that our government is not planning to undertake significant reform. As previously noted, this government intends to launch a broad review of environmental assessment processes later this year.

I know that the hon. member opposite cares deeply about this issue, as do I, and that she has many thoughtful things to say regarding these matters.

With that, I would like to thank the member opposite for the question and we look forward to working with her as we work to reform Canada's environmental assessment processes.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Northumberland—Peterborough South and it is my sad responsibility to tell her that what she has just read is not true. All major projects did not fall under the interim measures. Only pipeline projects do.

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I hold the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in the highest regard. The advice from her officials, if that is where she got the bad advice, was that it was sufficient to add a few conditions to pipeline projects. This misses out entirely that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 puts entirely in the hands of offshore petroleum boards in Atlantic Canada the right to give permits for offshore drilling and none of the interim measures apply to that because it only applies to projects under the National Energy Board.

The extent to which Bill C-38 has destroyed our environmental assessment process is not fully understood by a new government. I am hoping that new government will look at this and decide that Bill C-38 must be removed much more quickly than current plans allow.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, this government has made it clear that the economy and the environment go hand in hand, and that is the only way we will get our resources to market.

This budget sends a clear message that we are committed to restoring robust environmental assessments and ensuring that we do proper environmental assessment. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency was provided the funding to do just that.

This commitment will be further met by reviewing environmental assessment processes and making the necessary changes to restore the public trust.

● (1920)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the question I asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs on February 19 regarding the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement against Israel, also known by abbreviation as the BDS movement.

My question came the day after a motion put forward by my colleague the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka condemning the BDS movement and calling it what it is, an effort to demonize and de-legitimize the state of Israel and thereby single out the Jewish people.

The motion, which was passed by this chamber on February 22, is emblematic of the values that unite us as Canadians: tolerance, respect, peace, and friendship. It condemned any and all attempts by Canadian groups to promote the BDS agenda, which is, quite frankly, symptomatic of the new kind of anti-Semitism that we must not let fester here in Canada.

The motion made a powerful statement in its categorical rejection of hate. Hate on the basis of race, creed, colour, or religion is appalling to all Canadians, and its strong rejection unites us. Indeed, it united the vast majority of the members of the House.

That is why it was so disturbing that the very next day after the debate, when I asked the minister if he and the cabinet would be clear and unequivocal in condemning the BDS movement, the minister attempted to score cheap political points by questioning our motives and labelling the motion an attempt at division. He admitted that he had reservations.

With one cavalier comment, the minister took defence for the principles and values that unite all Canadians and made them a

partisan issue. This is offensive to me, and I suspect it is offensive to many of the 229 members of the House who voted in favour of the motion. It is also offensive to Canadians of Jewish descent who were reassured by the greater symbolism of the motion: a coming together of parliamentarians to confront a serious public societal and safety issue.

I know family members of Holocaust victims in my community who have attended rallies organized by the BDS movement on campuses, and they tell me that they have been concerned for their safety in these circumstances. I have heard the same from Jewish students at the local university in the riding I formerly represented, McMaster University.

Sadly and alarmingly, in my own city, swastikas have been painted on garage doors of Jewish homes, and synagogues have felt compelled to increase security measures in recent years.

If there is any doubt that a new kind of anti-Semitism exists on our shores, let there be none.

If there is any doubt that the ideology and views espoused by the BDS movement are a dangerous and slippery slope that should gravely concern all peoples who love freedom and tolerance, let there be none.

If there are reservations that Canada's Parliament speaking in a unifying voice against hate directed at Israel and Jews is somehow just partisanship, let there be none.

Here is my question for the minister. Will he recant his unfounded and disingenuous comment that the motion was divisive, or can he produce substantive evidence that would lend any legitimacy to his statement that a motion that stands up for the values that unite us as Canadians is somehow divisive?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, without reservation, the Government of Canada opposes the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement.

Canada and Israel are not only close allies but steadfast friends. We value the strong economic and diplomatic relations between our two countries, and this is a relationship that continues to grow. We are also connected through the deep ties between our people and communities.

We reject the BDS movement because we need more, not fewer, ties between our people. We need to continue to collaborate in areas such as trade, academia, science, technology, and innovation.

I would also like to stress that the boycott of Israel is at the expense of both Israelis and Palestinians. The BDS movement undermines the prospect of peace and does not lead to a constructive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Instead, by unfairly singling out one actor, it exacerbates tensions.

Our opposition to the BDS movement is not about taking sides in the conflict; it is about supporting dialogue over exclusion. Peace is achieved by building bridges between peoples, having more interactions, and collaborating.

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We reject the BDS movement because the imposition of restrictions and sanctions threatens peace and prosperity. The boycott of Israel hurts Canadian and Israeli businesses and does nothing to improve the quality of life for the Palestinian people.

The reality is that, if we want peace and stability in the region, we need to address the immediate needs and support the economic prospects of the Palestinian people. This is why we continue to work with our partner, the Palestinian Authority, to provide assistance to the Palestinians and help lay the groundwork for the viable, democratic, and secure Palestinian state that will one day exist alongside a democratic and secure Israel.

We reject the BDS movement because it is not leading to a constructive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A just and lasting peace requires direct negotiations between the parties. Efforts that target and punish one side exacerbate tensions and do nothing to advance this cause. It is simply not conducive to achieving peace in the Middle East.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that Canada values its steadfast friendship and growing bilateral relations with Israel and our constructive and long-term partnership with the Palestinian Authority. Canada remains committed to a two-state solution of a secure, democratic Israel alongside a secure, democratic Palestinian state, to be achieved through direct negotiations.

• (1925)

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for her reply. I take her words and sentiment as most sincere and genuine, and I believe that she and her colleagues share a steadfast belief in the values of freedom, tolerance, and respect.

I would remind members of the House of the difference between just words and action. With the motion on February 18, we took action by recognizing the actual threat and loudly condemning it, and I would ask members to do that at every opportunity in the future.

As a member of the panel of inquiry of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism in 2010 and 2011, along with other members of the House, I heard more than enough testimony from witnesses about anti-Semitic deeds taking place in Canada, and we are still very concerned today.

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary, in the absence of substantive evidence that the motion was divisive, to confirm for the House and all Canadians that the government will abide by the motion, will be clear and unequivocal in its condemnation of the BDS movement, and at every opportunity will educate Canadians on the error of the BDS movement. Will she do that tonight?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, as was made patently clear during our debate in February, the Government of Canada is concerned about any effort that singles out Israel. The boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement is clearly one such effort. It imperils necessary economic development. It hinders the lives of Israelis and Palestinians.

We need academic dialogue and economic exchange, not isolation. While we support democracy and freedom of expression, of course, BDS is counterproductive to the peace process. We must work toward achieving a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict that, through negotiation, will lead to the advent of two states living side by side in peace and security.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question at the beginning of March highlighted the concerns of Canadians about CETA and the TPP. Both deals contain an investor-state dispute settlement mechanism that would limit the federal government's ability to regulate in the public interest, affecting everything from environmental protection and labour rights to drug costs.

I asked the hon. minister when we would see an economic impact study on the TPP from the government and where was the consultation with Canadians. I find it incredibly frustrating that seven months after the election the government still cannot provide satisfactory answers to these basic questions.

A few weeks ago, the minister appeared before the Standing Committee on International Trade. I thought that finally Canadians would get some answers. Instead, there were more non-answers and evasiveness on consultations and the non-existent impact study. I have heard the government's talking points time after time. They provide zero clarity, zero new information, and zero progress on the government's commitments. It is time for results.

After listening to the minister at the trade committee, I brought forward a motion that put dates and deadlines to the promises of the Liberals. The motion requested that by the end of June the Minister of International Trade would submit to the trade committee the proposed economic impact study, a schedule for broad public consultations on the TPP, and a breakdown of the consultations that had been done to date. This is not an extraordinary request. In fact, the minister's parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, told our committee back in February that he would get us a list of consultations done to date. However, it has been three months and there still is no list.

When I brought my motion forward, my colleagues from the Liberal Party chose to shelve debate on the matter for another day. While they may be okay with conducting a full study and so-called consultation on the TPP without a proper impact study, I am not. We need the government to start delivering on its commitments.

I find it all a little ironic. My colleagues opposite talk about wanting to have meaningful TPP consultations, but when push comes to shove, the government is not doing a good job of informing and consulting with Canadians on the TPP.

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This session, the trade committee travelled across parts of Canada to hear testimony from stakeholder groups and individuals. Many of the committee members know that our efforts, though well-intentioned, fell short of the full, meaningful, public consultation that Canadians expected. Many people did not even know the committee was coming to their region. Our committee simply does not have the resources or means to deliver on the public consultations that Canadians deserve and the Liberals promised.

Our committee also did not have an economic impact study from the government to guide our work. We have a few other studies on which to rely. For example, the Tufts University study estimates that under the TPP, 58,000 Canadian jobs will be lost, inequality will increase, and the GOP will rise a meagre 0.28% after 10 years. There are many other reports and studies, some suggesting gains and some suggesting losses. However, none of these reports are replacements for an economic impact study done by the Canadian government.

My riding of Essex already has a higher than average unemployment rate, and people in Essex will face even more job uncertainty with this bad deal hanging over their heads.

Therefore, again I rise in this place and ask for some concrete answers from the government. When is the impact study coming? Is it this month? Is it next year? When will the government listen to the criticisms of its consultations and finally start opening up the process?

● (1930)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to once again talk about this important topic. I thank the hon. member for her question. I commend her for her work. I can sincerely say that the people of Essex are well served by the hon. member.

We promised Canadians during the election campaign that we would consult openly and transparently on the outcomes of this agreement. That is what we are doing. We have heard different perspectives from those who support the TPP and from those who have concerns and from those who are still undecided. This is an important issue, and we welcome an open and transparent discussion with Canadians.

The government is carrying out an economic assessment of the TPP. In its economic modelling, the government is considering two possible scenarios: a scenario where Canada is in the TPP, and a scenario where Canada is not. Once the study is complete, the government fully intends to share it with Canadians.

There are many other studies on the TPP, including the studies by Tufts University, the World Bank, the Peterson Institute, and the C. D. Howe Institute. Yesterday, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives also released its own study. These studies reached very different conclusions in regard to the impact of the TPP.

The Tufts University study found that the TPP would lead to unemployment and increases in inequality not only in TPP countries, but also in non-TPP countries. The Tufts study also found that the TPP would result in a net loss of 58,000 jobs in Canada.

Conversely, the World Bank found that the TPP would lead to an increase in GDP of 0.04% to 10%, depending on the TPP country, while the Peterson Institute for International Economics projected a 0.5% boost to Canada's GDP as a result of the TPP.

Finally, the C.D. Howe study found that the TPP would ultimately create 7,600 jobs in Canada, with 2,200 of those jobs being highly skilled. The report also projected that Canada's GDP would rise by 0.08% in 2035.

● (1935)

[*Translation*]

I want to make it clear that the government values the analyses produced by various organizations on the repercussions of trade agreements.

The government will continue to take the reports and contributions of leading think tanks and academics into consideration in deciding on its next steps.

The government has received over 20,000 letters and emails since the consultation process began in November. We have also held over 250 consultations involving over 400 different stakeholders. The Minister of International Trade and I have visited over a dozen Canadian cities each to consult Canadians about the TPP.

Consultations in the form of meetings, round tables, site visits, and town halls have taken place in Edmonton, Vancouver, Montreal, Halifax, Oakville, Windsor, Regina, Winnipeg, Quebec City, St. John's, Fredericton, Charlottetown, and Guelph.

A wide range of Canadians have participated in these consultations, including representatives from the provinces, women entrepreneurs, innovation companies, farmers, think tanks, representatives from the forestry and wood product sectors, representatives from the seafood products sector, environmental groups, small and medium-sized businesses, unions, auto workers, auto parts manufacturers, port authorities, civil society organizations, academics, students, business leaders, and citizens.

The government supports free trade, but this agreement must be right for Canada. That is why we launched a rigorous and serious process to hear how Canadians and parliamentarians think the TPP will benefit Canada before we decide whether to ratify it.

[*English*]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his commitment as well on this file, and the work that he has done in sharing with the committee. I thank him for his kind comments as well about my riding.

The parliamentary secretary identified that they have the responses. It is time to share those responses not just with the committee but with the Canadian public so people can know what the minister has been doing, whom the government has met with, and actually how they stand on that. The member has named many groups today and many of them have opposing views on the TPP. It is time to come forward with that. The intent of my motion was to bring that forward from the minister and from the member so that we can share that information. It is a valuable piece of the work that we do at the committee level.

Adjournment Proceedings

I want to also say that there are different conclusions. The member mentioned some of the different studies, but they all show negligible benefits for Canada. When we look at this on a whole, we have to look at tariff, non-tariff, and the pieces that are inside the trans-Pacific partnership that frankly have very little to do with trade. When we look at all of these pieces together, we will be able to finally form a full picture and opinion.

It concerns me that I hear that the government is in favour of the deal before taking all of this into account and on balance. This trade deal is not good for Canada. If we are going to suffer job losses under a trade deal, we have to sit down and seriously look at the implications to the communities that we all represent in this House.

I look forward to receiving the answers that the parliamentary secretary and the minister will provide to add to the conversation so that again at committee level we can have a full understanding of where Canadians sit on the TPP.

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member that I am doing my best to provide that information as time goes on.

We have not taken a position on this agreement. During the election campaign, we told Canadians that we would take the time to listen to them and consult widely on the deal. We are doing exactly what we promised we would do. The Minister of International Trade has consulted with a broad range of Canadians, as have I, as I have just pointed out. The government has taken a whole-of-government approach and, as previously mentioned, has included more than 250 interactions to date with over 400 stakeholders. Our plan is to continue these consultations to ensure that we hear from all Canadians who have an interest. There is no rush as no TPP country has ratified the agreement.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:39 p.m.)

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