



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, September 29, 2016**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

## **CONTENTS**

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, September 29, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)

[*Translation*]

### SECURITY INTELLIGENCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

**Mr. Michel Picard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the 2015-16 annual report of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, as required under section 53 of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Hon. Robert Nault (Kenora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports from the Canadian section of ParlAmericas. The first is respecting its participation at the annual gathering of the Open Parliament Network of ParlAmericas, held in Asuncion, Paraguay, from May 25 to May 28, 2016, and the second is respecting the eighth annual gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians and the 40th board of directors meeting held in Quito, Ecuador, from June 1 to June 4, 2016.

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### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION PRIVATIZATION ACT

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-308, An Act to provide for the incorporation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill is very simple. It takes the CBC and moves it from being a state broadcaster to actually making it a public broadcaster such that Canadians can actually participate and own it. It is good for the taxpayers, and it brings CBC into the modern era. I do hope the House will support it.

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

## GENDER EQUALITY WEEK ACT

**Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-309, An Act to establish Gender Equality Week.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to introduce my private member's bill, an act to establish gender equality week. The bill aims to establish the first week of October every year as gender equality week.

After consulting with stakeholders, constituents of my riding of Mississauga—Lakeshore, and groups across the country, my team and I developed an additional opportunity to address the challenges Canadian women and individuals of minority gender identity and expression continue to face, and significantly, to underscore the role men need to play to establish a gender-equal society in Canada.

I look forward to elaborating on these points in later debate with my colleagues in the House.

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

**Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-310, An Act to amend the Financial Administration Act (debt recovery).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise in the House today to introduce a bill to amend the Financial Administration Act with respect to debt recovery.

This legislative amendment would authorize the Receiver General for Canada to provide a debt recovery service for all departments, thereby improving the crown's debt recovery rate. This new service will enable the Government of Canada to recover significant sums owing that it was unable to recover before they were written off. This service will contribute to the sound management of public funds and will help the Government of Canada balance the budget.

*Business of Supply*

I strongly believe that the people who work for the Receiver General's office in my riding have the banking and treasury expertise to do an excellent job of providing this service. This initiative will also help stabilize employment with the Receiver General for Canada while cultivating and establishing national debt-recovery expertise in my region.

I thank my colleagues in advance for supporting this bill.

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

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP)** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you were to seek it, I think you would find that there is unanimous consent to adopt the following motion.

[English]

That, at the conclusion of today's debate on the opposition motion in the name of the Member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to Tuesday, October 4, 2016, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[Translation]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to table this petition, which aims to bring to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food the changes needed to modernize the health of animals regulations. I wish to present petition e-355, certified since September 21, 2016.

[English]

This petition was initiated by volunteers of the Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals and has some 7,407 signatures, from each and every province and territory. The petition shows that there is strong support for modifying our animal transportation regulations to ensure that animals are treated humanely in transit.

[Translation]

The current regulations far exceed other standards around the world, particularly in the European Union. Thank you.

[English]

## PALLIATIVE CARE

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand to present a petition on behalf of approximately 150 residents from Cape Breton—Canso, Southwest Margaree, Belle Cote, East Lake Ainslie, and Scottsville, areas that I know the Speaker has been to and has enjoyed many times and that the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound has travelled to as well.

These good people are calling on the Government of Canada to specifically identify hospice palliative care as a defined medical service covered under the Canada Health Act so as to provide accessible and available hospice care for all residents of Canada in their respective provinces and territories. I present this petition on their behalf.

●(1010)

FALUN GONG

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1999, the Chinese Communist Party launched a nationwide persecution campaign to eradicate the Falun Gong. Millions of Falun Gong practitioners have been arrested and put in custody, and many have been sentenced to long prison terms of up to 20 years, where torture and abuse are routine. Tens of thousands are feared dead as a result. The petitioners are asking that, in a public way, we call for an end to the persecution of the Falun Gong in China.

\* \* \*

**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 would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—CREATION OF A STANDING COMMITTEE ON ARMS EXPORTS REVIEW

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP)** moved:

*Business of Supply*

That: (a) the House recognize that (i) Canadian arms exports have nearly doubled over the past decade, and that Canada is now the second-largest exporter of arms to the Middle East, (ii) Canadians expect a high standard from their government when it comes to protecting human rights abroad, (iii) Canadians are concerned by arms sales to countries with a record of human rights abuses, including Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Sudan, (iv) there is a need for Canadians, through Parliament, to oversee current and future arms sales; (b) Standing Order 104(2) be amended by adding after clause (b) the following: “(c) Arms Exports Review”; (c) Standing Order 108(3) be amended by adding the following: “(i) Arms Exports Review shall include, among other matters, the review of and report on (i) Canada’s arms export permits regime, (ii) proposed international arms sales, (iii) annual government reports regarding arms sales, (iv) the use of these weapons abroad, (v) all matters and broader trends regarding Canada’s current and future arms exports.”; (d) the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs prepare and report to the House within five sitting days of the adoption of this Order a list of Members to compose the new standing committee created by this Order; and (e) that the Clerk be authorized to make any required editorial and consequential amendments to the Standing Orders.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to rise here this morning and move this motion to create an all-party committee to review arms exports.

Why is a new committee needed? First of all, because arms exports are a very complex issue involving trade, defence, foreign affairs, human rights, and industry, and yet this very complex issue does not fall under the purview of any existing committee. None of our parliamentary committees is mandated to examine this matter or carefully review it.

We recommend that this be a permanent committee and that it conduct more than just one study that collects dust on a shelf somewhere and is forgotten. There are definitely more than enough topics for just one study.

For instance, this committee could examine why the Liberal government approved a major sale of arms to Saudi Arabia, completely ignoring our current regulations. Canada claims to be a champion of human rights and presents itself as such, and yet it is selling arms to Saudi Arabia without following its own procedures.

Let us not forget that Canada has rules and a policy banning the sale of arms to a country that abuses human rights unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that they can be used against the civilian population.

The assessment that was made before the current Minister of Foreign Affairs allowed these exports showed that the issue had not been properly addressed. The committee could also do a review of STREIT Group, which sells arms to Sudan and Libya, often in violation of sanctions and embargoes. There seems to be no mechanism in place at this time to deal with that type of situation. Worse yet, it seems that Foreign Affairs gave that same company untendered contracts for armoured trucks, among other things.

I would also like to know whether the minister did indeed issue permits for the export of arms to Thailand, which is under the yoke of a military regime.

The latest annual report on Canada’s arms sales indicate that our current standards are being watered down. They were likely not high enough in the first place, and this lowers them even more, weakening the human rights assessments for arms sales.

There are already a number of issues, but there is more. As mentioned in the motion, Canadian arms exports have more than doubled over the past decade, and we are now the second-largest exporter of arms to the Middle East, where some countries have very worrisome human rights records.

Furthermore, arms sales to China, which is not really a democracy, are on the rise. The Prime Minister admires the Chinese government, but we cannot really say that it is a democracy. Algeria and other countries are also problematic.

We have some major questions. Are there loopholes in our regulations and practices? How are our regulations enforced? Other countries are asking different questions. For example, what are arms? In a totalitarian regime, are surveillance devices considered arms?

Here is another important element. Arms sales have increased significantly and they are not going to stop tomorrow. We should institute continuous monitoring to determine, for example, who Canada is selling arms to; what it is selling; and why, how, and under what conditions it is doing so.

● (1015)

According to surveys, Canadians are very concerned about these issues. Canadians want answers. They are entitled to the transparency and openness that the Liberal government promised them. For that reason, creating a committee would be a step in the right direction.

[English]

Yes indeed, Canadians are preoccupied, and Canadians want to know where and to whom Canada sells arms. Of course, there is the famous Saudi arms deal, given the green light by the Liberals, and we know that Saudi Arabia is really not a model in terms of human rights. We have reason to believe that arms sold by Canada to Saudi Arabia have been used in Yemen, where Saudi Arabia is being accused of war crimes in the UN report.

Further, in that specific case, the process was obviously not followed. According to current regulations and procedures, arms cannot be sold to a country that abuses human rights unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that they can be used against the civilian population. I do not think that the government did its homework on that; and it needs to do its homework.

There is so much more. There is the Streit Group that is selling arms to Libya and Sudan despite embargoes. There is the fact that Canada has become the second most important exporter of arms in the Middle East. There is the toning down of having to take the human rights situation into account when issuing export permits, which we have seen in the latest annual report. There are so many issues relating to the sale and export of arms.

*Business of Supply*

Canadians want to know. Canadians are worried not only about this but about the overall issue of arms sales. This is why we need a permanent committee that would be able to look at past and future deals and also at larger trends, options, rules and regulations, and how they are applied.

A multi-party House committee could examine any number of questions related to arms exports, just as the UK committee is doing right now, and it could look at where, to whom, how much, and what kind of arms we are exporting. It could identify loopholes in our existing legislation and also loopholes in our regulations and our practices, because what we have seen recently is that, even when we have regulations, they are not always properly followed.

There is no existing committee that can deal with these issues on an ongoing basis. This issue involves defence, trade, foreign affairs, development, human rights, and industry. We need a specific committee that would be able to look at the whole issue. No existing committee has the depth and the mandate to study this whole issue, and none have the space to be monitoring arms sales on an ongoing basis. I said before that in the last 10 years our arms exports have nearly doubled. If this keeps on, we will need to look at it constantly, not as a one-off study, which is certainly not sufficient. It needs to be comprehensive and bring everybody to the table.

The Liberal government has promised to be open and transparent. This is an opportunity to be open and transparent on an issue about which Canadians care.

• (1020)

[Translation]

Canada is poised to return to the international stage and, by working together, we can show that we can act responsibly and with transparency in arms sales, global security, and the protection of human rights.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the name of openness and transparency, I listened very carefully to what the member was talking about, and it is important to recognize that it was not that long ago that her leader made it very clear to all Canadians that they supported the multi-year, multi-billion dollar sale and the contracts that were committed to. On the one hand, the New Democrats say yes, let us move forward on this, but now a little time has passed and I am wondering if maybe they are not as transparent as Canadians would want them to be. Was it because of an election? We are talking about a lot of good, solid union jobs.

We all want Canada to do the right thing. We as government will do the right thing, but I would ask the New Democrats to be a little more transparent in terms of what their position really is. Do they still support the leader of the NDP's position at the time when he said he supported the multi-billion contracts to Saudi Arabia that were signed off? Do they still support that today?

• (1025)

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Lavergère:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to clarify something because my hon. colleague seems to think that we

want to create a committee on the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia. That is not the case. We are talking about something much bigger than that.

With regard to those sales in particular, over the past year and especially in recent months, since January, some very serious concerns have arisen. Allegedly there have been serious charges against Saudi Arabia for committing war crimes in Yemen using Canadian weapons. It is also possible that Canadian weapons are being used to repress people within Saudi Arabia itself. These factors should have been taken into account by the current government.

That being said, once again, this debate goes well beyond the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia. I am sure I will have the opportunity to ask my colleagues whether we are also selling weapons to Thailand. What we are proposing here is constant monitoring of this issue.

[English]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing forward this motion. This is obviously an important discussion to have, and I appreciate her work on this issue.

I know that Saudi Arabia has been a bit of a catalyst for the discussion, so I want to ask the member to reflect on our relationship with Saudi Arabia. On the one hand, we know of grievous human rights abuses by the Saudi regime, and on the other hand, there is some potential importance of strategic co-operation with Saudi Arabia, especially in countering Iran's influence in the region as a state sponsor of terror, and also the need for some degree of stability. We certainly would not want to see happen in Saudi Arabia what we see happening in Syria.

In light of some of that context, I wonder if the member could reflect on the kind of relationship we should have with Saudi Arabia, recognizing major human rights problems but also some of these other issues.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Lavergère:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very relevant question.

Canada's relationship with Saudi Arabia is indeed complex and there are many factors at play. That said, when we talk about stability, I am among those who believe that the best way to ensure stability is to uphold international law and our own regulations and, above all, to stop putting more weapons in volatile regions and potential conflict zones. Ensuring stability also means defending human rights.

I am not alone in saying this. We know that Great Britain has a committee like the one we are proposing today, and it is currently examining this whole issue. The committee that we are proposing could also study this issue.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that, during the election campaign, the Bloc Québécois was the only party strongly opposed to the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia.

*Business of Supply*

That being said, my colleague used the word “democracy” a lot in her speech. I would like to know what she thinks about the Bloc Québécois’s proposed amendment giving it a seat on the standing committee on the sale of arms, which the NDP rejected. Her party hid behind the House rule that says non-recognized parties are not entitled to representation on standing committees. They missed a great opportunity to accept the Bloc’s amendment and make real democracy happen.

• (1030)

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Mr. Speaker, it is true that our parliamentary system restricts standing committee membership to recognized parties. We are proposing the creation of a standing committee, and we are following the usual procedure.

[*English*]

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to proudly support our party’s opposition day motion to create a House committee to provide parliamentary oversight of arms exports. This is a long-pressing issue that has become increasingly urgent, given the utter lack of transparency of our government’s current system, as well as the increasing number of disturbing allegations that Canadian weapons are being used to commit human rights violations in countries where we have no business selling weapons, like Saudi Arabia, Yemen, China, and South Sudan.

Part of my duties as an NDP MP is my engagement in and monitoring of the international human rights file. Therefore, I would like to speak to our motion from the perspective of human rights, which is, I believe, the most important perspective. I know this perspective is something that many members would not argue with, and I know I am not alone in believing that human rights take ultimate priority, as demonstrated by the throngs of people here in Ottawa today participating in the One Young World summit. That is extremely affirming for someone like me, who wants to go forward and not be cynical about how we embrace and advance transparency and accountability on something that directly impacts human rights.

The main reason we are debating a motion like this in the House is the outcry about Canada’s decision to green-light the sale of \$15 billion’s worth of weaponized vehicles to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a country that, as many know, is one of the most brutal and despotic regimes on the planet, on par with North Korea.

Distressingly, Canada is now the second-largest arms dealer in the Middle East, after the United States, as my hon. colleague noted and *Jane’s*, the defence industry publication, reinforces. Moreover, reports have emerged this year that Canadian-made tactical equipment was used by Saudi forces in raids against dissidents. Military gear, stamped “Made in Canada” was found “at the scene of a deadly raid against Shia civilians in the Qatif region of Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province”, according to Cesar Jaramillo, the executive director of Project Ploughshares.

Unfortunately, the situation is not just limited to the Saudis. Canada’s government will not even confirm whether the Minister of Foreign Affairs issued an export permit for military sales to Thailand earlier this year, a country ruled by a military dictatorship. Just yesterday, Amnesty International had to cancel the public launch of a report on torture in Thailand after police in Bangkok warned the

rights group that its representatives might be arrested and prosecuted for visa violations. Let us just think about that.

Activists are alleging that the Saudis sent Canadian-made vehicles into Bahrain in 2011 to help quell a democratic uprising. Canadian-made weapons have also made their way into South Sudan during a period in which grave human rights abuses have been committed. High-level reports from the United Nations and Human Rights Watch are sounding the alarm, including to our own Subcommittee on International Human Rights.

According to Global Affairs Canada statistics, Canadian arms sales to China, a country with a notorious human rights record, soared to the tune of \$48 million in 2015. As is often pointed out in House, including as recently as this morning by the member for Winnipeg North, we have a troubling situation in China. In China, there is no freedom of speech or freedom of conscience. Human rights defenders and pro-democracy activists are routinely arrested, subject to arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, politicized prosecution, and torture by authorities in response to their work. This is according to Human Rights Watch. Yet, for all this, China takes a back seat to Saudi Arabia in terms of human rights violations.

• (1035)

I would like to give a brief rundown on the appalling human rights record in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I use the word “brief”, as I could easily spend the remainder of my day cataloguing the endless horrors that constitute this regime’s human rights record.

In January of this year, Saudi Arabia carried out a mass execution of 47 imprisoned civilians convicted of terrorism in 12 different provinces in the country. Forty-three were beheaded, and four were executed by firing squads. Under Saudi Arabia’s reading of Islamic law, such attacks are interpreted as banditry and carry automatic sentences of death followed by public displays of the bodies.

Freedom of speech does not exist in Saudi Arabia, nor is there freedom of press. Authorities will arrest, prosecute, and imprison government critics, including bloggers and other online commentators; political activists; members of the Shia minority; human rights activists and defenders, including women’s rights defenders. This is something that has been noted by the respected Amnesty International.

Reports of people being tortured while imprisoned are common. Routine punishments include public lashings, with prisoners being sentenced to upwards of 1,000 lashes. Prominent blogger, Raif Badawi, for instance, was sentenced to 1,000 lashes last year, with of 50 these being administered this last January.

*Business of Supply*

Blogger and human rights activist, Mikhlif al-Shammari, was sentenced by a special criminal court to two years in prison, as well as 200 lashes. He has been arrested several times in recent years for his work on democratic reform and human rights within the kingdom. One of the crimes he was charged with was tweeting his intention to pray in a Shia mosque.

Worse still, Saudi Arabia is one of the most notoriously misogynist countries in the world. Women are not allowed to drive. They cannot open a bank account or get a passport, among other things, without written consent from a male family member. They are not allowed to walk down the street in broad daylight without being accompanied by a male relative or guardian, not to mention the fact that domestic violence is on the rise. While there are laws prohibiting spousal abuse, they are not enforced.

I mentioned earlier the prominent Saudi blogger, Raif Badawi, a uniquely courageous man by any standard, who received a public flogging of 50 lashes in Jeddah this past January. This flogging was the first instalment of his sentence of 1,000 lashes. Members might ask what his crime was. It was criticizing prominent religious leaders on his blog.

Earlier this year, Mr. Badawi's sister, Samar, was also arrested and interrogated before being released. I have met Mr. Badawi's wife, the formidable Ensaf Haidar, and their children, who have been granted asylum in Canada. It distresses me to think of how Ms. Haidar must feel about the Canadian government's support for the \$15-billion deal to sell weaponized vehicles to that country. What a distressing, ironic, and discouraging situation it is for her, and a thousand other people just like her who know from firsthand experience what it is like. After all, the Prime Minister has stated publicly that he will not intervene on behalf of her husband with his counterparts in Saudi Arabia, while at the same time, he has personally intervened and expended a good deal of political capital in making sure that the \$15-billion deal goes through.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's crimes extend beyond its border. The country is without doubt guilty of war crimes in Yemen, where it has been spearheading a coalition of nine Arab states attempting to affect the outcome of the country's civil war, according to the American journal, *Foreign Affairs*.

The UN Human Rights Council is set this week to discuss a Dutch resolution calling for an impartial monitoring body to travel to Yemen to collect evidence of human rights abuses there. Since peace talks were suspended in August, the UN has reported a sharp increase in civilian deaths.

● (1040)

I cannot believe I am asking this, but honestly, is this the sort of situation in which Canada should be involved, either directly or indirectly? I will answer my own question. No, emphatically, it is not. Let us have the confidence to assert our sovereign identity.

Human rights are not optional. Governments, like individuals, are defined not by their words or intentions, but by their actions. I therefore hope that in the matter of Canadian arms sales abroad, and indeed across our country's approach to international relations more broadly, that our reality soon becomes more closely attuned to the rhetoric—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I suggest to hon. members that from time to time in the course of their remarks they should direct their attention to the chair for signals on how much time is remaining to help hon. members stay within the timelines.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the reports and concerns raised on human rights, concerns we all share, and noted that some of the dates of the reports were as far back as 2011. In other words, these abuses were well known long before the previous election.

During the last election, the NDP member for London—Fanshawe, where the factory that produces these vehicles is located, said a number of very definitive things in the campaign and made very definitive promises in the campaign, things such as, “It’s a signed deal. We recognize the impact this will have for General Dynamics”. She said that she had spoken to her leader and he was not wishy-washy on this, and that the NDP would honour the contract. She went on to say that it was a signed contract and she made a solemn promise to her constituents that the NDP would sign the contract.

In light of the fact that the human rights abuses that the NDP just detailed existed long before the election and these promises were made during the election, what has changed since the election that now says New Democrats can break the promise they made to the constituents of London—Fanshawe? Why are they being, in fact, so wishy-washy?

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Mr. Speaker, that is a wonderful demonstration of some of the rhetoric I was talking about, because those words are very clear distinctions about our priorities in human rights.

I stated at the very beginning of my statement that we have pressing issues that are growing. There is a lot we know. Why is it that open transparency about asserting our democratic and human rights responsibilities cannot be had by a standing committee that would discuss all that?

I will not get into more about asserting our sovereignty, but we have ample opportunity to redeploy the use of those vehicles right here in Canada. I can talk about the mismanagement of a lot of issues in that file, but we have a lot of opportunities here. We need a committee that meaningfully discusses all of that stuff and does not just try to hide behind promises made during the campaign, saying, therefore, we do not have to uphold human rights issues.

If we look at the text of this opposition day motion, it is a situation where everyone can assert human rights and open transparency about our role and responsibility as a government, and not hide behind campaign words, twisting words and promises around because they may not be convenient—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Questions and comments, the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.



*Business of Supply*

•(1045)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her excellent speech and the important work she is doing on human rights issues.

Speaking of human rights, according to the Government of Canada's latest annual report on the sale of arms, the human rights assessment is no longer quite as important a factor in the decision to issue a permit. The commercial aspect is suddenly more important, and the human rights aspect less so.

Is my colleague worried about that?

[*English*]

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's work in advancing the conversation and advancing awareness around human rights and the government's role and responsibility, and what regulation looks like for things such as weapons sales, has been so important and inspiring to me.

This is an example of something where it seems a lot of times that statistics and datasets are what are most important to government bureaucracies. We have an opportunity here with a standing committee to be able to address these issues effectively, to advance human rights, and to really look at the impact of our decisions for all of these industries. Whether they are Canadian industries that are located here or abroad, this is something that is very important for a standing committee to address.

The motion achieves that, and in a timely fashion as these issues escalate.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to rise today to discuss this very important topic. We are pleased to see that members of the House are determined to work on maintaining high standards when it comes to peace, security, and human rights.

[*English*]

While we welcome the member's concerns for human rights, transparent processes, and strong arms controls, we are disappointed by the disregard for tens of thousands of Canadians' livelihoods. Our defence industry directly employs 70,000 Canadians. Their jobs are well paying, and many of them are union jobs that support families across our nation. Workers in the defence industry work hard to create products that help families and protect Canadians and our allies.

The disregard that the NDP holds for fellow Canadians is clear in the opening of its motion, which states, "Canadian arms exports have nearly doubled over the past decade". Is keeping our forces safe, providing our allies with equipment they need to operate effectively, and serving as a source of innovation and support for aviation, communications, and transportation not important to the member opposite? Is the defence industry really something we wish to cut back on?

For many years, the New Democrats have consistently attacked the Canadian defence industry. The only time they broke from their attacks was during the last election, in an effort to hold onto a seat in

London. In October 2015, when asked if he would cancel the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia, the leader of the NDP declared, "You don't cancel a commercial accord retroactively, it's just not done". He was not alone. Even the hon. member for London—Fanshawe stated that it was a signed contract and they would honour the contract. Now that the election is over, the NDP has once more chosen to abandon the defence industry and to abandon the hard-working families it supports.

We recognize that the export of arms requires rigorous oversight and regulation, and we are aiming high. The nature of the products requires that sales be strictly controlled, but this does not mean that the industry should be shut down.

As I have said in the House on previous occasions, Canada's export controls are among the best in the world. Canada controls the export of not only military goods but also dual-use goods and technology, nuclear goods and technology, goods and technology pertaining to missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles, and any goods and technology that could be used to create chemical or biological weapons. All applications for permits to export controlled goods or technology are carefully reviewed against the full range of Canada's defence and foreign policy interests. The purpose of this review is to ensure that exports from Canada do not cause harm to Canada or our allies, do not undermine national or international security, do not contribute to regional conflicts or instability, do not contribute to the development of weapons of mass destruction or their means of delivery, are not used to commit violations of human rights, and are consistent with economic sanctions.

We are very encouraged that members of the House share our government's keen interest in maintaining high standards for peace, security, and human rights. I note that while the export control system has served Canada well, there is always room for improvement and the government's commitment to enhancing the rigour and transparency of the process is under way. We are pursuing many parallel paths to deliver on this commitment.

As promised during the election, Canada will become a state party to the United Nations' Arms Trade Treaty, ATT, in 2017. Canada is committed to joining the Arms Trade Treaty. The implementation of this multilateral treaty by Canada and other states parties would reduce the unregulated flow of weapons that contribute to terrorism, transnational organized crime, and violations of human rights. These goals are consistent with Canadian values and our policy objectives of reducing conflict and instability, promoting human rights, and countering terrorism.

The previous Harper government was wrong not to join the Arms Trade Treaty. By joining the treaty, Canada would come into line with our NATO and G7 partners. This would allow Canada to, among other things, participate fully in ATT meetings of states parties, enabling the government to be more effective in its push for more transparency and accountability in the global arms trade both in Canada and worldwide.

*Business of Supply*

It is important to note that Canada already meets the vast majority of ATT obligations. In fact, the ATT was designed to bring other countries up to the type of high standard that Canada already applies. For example, Canada already controls the export of all ATT-relevant goods, already has measures in place to prevent diversion of exported goods, and already assesses all proposed exports of all military goods, not just the goods that the ATT explicitly covers but for the types of risks identified in the ATT such as the potential for an export to be diverted to terrorist activities, used for purposes contrary to international peace and security, or to commit violations of human rights.

●(1050)

I would point out that Canada currently conducts these assessments for all proposed exports of all goods that are subject to export control, not solely the military goods required by the ATT. Indeed, Canada fully complies with all but two of the 28 articles in the treaty: article 7, regarding export assessment criteria, and article 10 on brokering.

Article 7 of the ATT requires states to take a number of factors into consideration when considering whether to authorize an export. In fact, we already take these factors into account as a matter of policy, but now, they are added into law.

Specifically, an amendment to the Export and Import Permits Act and its associated regulations would create a legal requirement for any minister of foreign affairs to take the ATT criteria into account in assessing all proposals to export military goods controlled by the treaty, such as tanks, small arms, and light weapons.

The ATT also requires that its members not authorize an export when there is an overriding risk of negative effects that cannot be mitigated and when that risk overrides any positive benefits that could come from the export. We will outline a clear policy with respect to how the Minister of Foreign Affairs will apply this overriding risk level.

Article 10 of the ATT requires each state to regulate brokering. Arms brokering is when a Canadian facilitates, or is a middle man, for an arms transfer between entities outside Canada and thus not captured by Canadian export controls. This would be a new regulatory area for the government, and is a good example of where we are enhancing the rigour of our current export controls.

We will introduce legislation later this fall to make these changes. Once the legislation and regulations are in place, we will submit an instrument of accession to the UN Secretary General. Our goal is to ensure that Canada becomes an ATT state party in 2017.

The previous government claimed that ratification of the ATT might affect domestic gun laws, and it is important to clarify that this is completely and categorically untrue. The treaty governs the import and export of conventional arms, not the trade in sporting firearms that are owned and used by law-abiding Canadian citizens. Joining the treaty will have no impact on how gun ownership is regulated in Canada.

In addition to ATT accession, and together with the Minister of International Trade, we have announced other measures to further enhance the transparency of Canada's export controls system. The annual reports on the administration of the Export and Import

Permits Act, and on military exports from Canada, will be more transparent, more user-friendly, and more informative, and they will be tabled on time, every year, by law.

Going forward, the public and other key stakeholders could rely on these reports being tabled no later than May 31 each and every year. As in the past, all reports will continue to be published online as soon as they are tabled in Parliament to ensure that Canadians are fully apprised of activities under the Export and Import Permits Act, and of the value, scope, type and destination of military goods exported from Canada.

This is just the beginning. As we move forward with our plan to join the ATT, NGOs, and industry are being consulted on how we can make these reports more informative, transparent, and easy to understand. We are confident we can find the right mix of additional information to enhance transparency without harming Canadian business or the livelihood of Canadians who are employed in this important commercial sector.

As the government works to deliver on these commitments, it is important that we do so in a manner that maintains the competitiveness of the defence and security industry in Canada.

In addition to serving as a crucial source of supply for the Canadian Armed Forces and directly contributing to the protection of Canada, the defence industry drives innovation. This helps to keep Canada at the leading edge of technology among the G7 nations, not just defence technology but in the information, aviation, automotive, and many other sectors.

The defence industry is interwoven throughout the Canadian and North American industrial sector, and contributed \$6.7 billion to Canada's GOP in 2014. It represents more than 70,000 jobs for Canadians. These are high-paying, highly skilled, middle-class jobs spread across more than 700 firms located in every province and territory of the country. These jobs pay salaries that are on average 60% above the average Canadian industrial wage. Many of these jobs are union jobs.

●(1055)

In short, these are good jobs that this government will work hard to protect, which is why it is so fundamentally disappointing to see the NDP working to undermine these jobs. It is particularly disappointing that the member for London—Fanshawe, who has 3,000 of these good jobs in her own riding, is failing to speak up in support of her constituents.

*Business of Supply*

Each region of Canada has seen substantial investment and development of specializations in various defence industrial activities. For example, there are strong aerospace clusters in Quebec and western Canada, an Ontario-based land vehicles cluster, and shipbuilding clusters on two coasts. Canadian defence and security products are sought after by Canada's allies and security partners abroad, and the defence industry contributes almost \$7 billion to Canada's GDP. Canadian companies are innovative and competitive. When they succeed, it is good news for our manufacturing sector and our economy.

Military and strategic goods are subject to strict controls, precisely because of the uses to which they are designed to be put. For these reasons, exporters looking to fill the overseas demand for Canadian products are required to comply with Canada's export control system. None of this changes the fact that Canada expects all Canadian companies operating abroad to respect Canadian and international law, as well as human rights.

Canada promotes improved performance in this regard through the UN guiding principles on business and human rights, the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises, and the voluntary principles on security and human rights showcased in Canada's updated corporate social responsibility strategy. Canada's missions abroad foster partnerships between companies, governments, and civil society to promote respect for human rights. The Minister of International Trade is working to improve corporate social responsibility requirements each and every day.

The opposition motion notes the important role of parliamentarians in holding governments accountable for Canadian engagement abroad. Indeed, department officials and their colleagues across the public service regularly appear before the committees studying these matters. Specifically, we look forward to working with the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development in the coming months as we bring forward implementing legislation for Canada's accession to the arms trade treaty.

We respect and appreciate the work of existing committees in both the House of Commons and the Senate that study these issues. These committees are empowered and independent, and they are well within their mandates to study what they want, including Canada's arms trade.

The creation of the committee suggested is unnecessary and would merely create additional excessive burdens on an already highly regulated and monitored industry. Perhaps that is what the NDP wants, to overburden industry, I am not sure, but the member for London—Fanshawe certainly has not expressed support for the families she represents.

Canadians demand that the government effectively monitor and control the exportation of Canadian arms. Canada already has a rigorous process and there is room for improvement. Our government is responsibly responding to this need. Work is under way to live up to our commitments to improve the system, to accede to the arms trade treaty. We look forward to moving this along in the coming weeks and months.

● (1100)

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague has mentioned that Canada's export controls are among the best, of which fewer and fewer observers are convinced and of which Canadians are not convinced. This is why we need a parliamentary committee to oversee the whole issue.

I agree that we should be ready to provide military goods to our allies. We even should provide military goods to our women and men in uniform, which they need. However, is it true that the Liberal government has approved arms exports to Thailand, which is run by a military dictator? If it is true, is it because the government considers a military dictator an ally?

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Put very simply, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has not approved any permits for arms sales to Thailand.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am a new MP like so many around this chamber and I recall that after the election, the Prime Minister said that there would be a new spirit in this chamber and that would include working across the floor with different parties to develop the best policies for Canada.

Today we are debating an important motion that calls for exactly that. All we ask is that a committee be formed of members of the House who can sit together and examine what is really important to Canadians, which is the protection and advancement of human rights.

Why is the government rejecting this important motion? To suggest that all the other measures are in place and that the motion is not needed is simply a false argument and it does not stand up to the notion of transparency and the spirit of the sunny ways of working together.

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that at least two occasions come to mind when we have reached across to the NDP. We were unanimous as a government on equal pay for equal work. We also extended our arms for full membership on the electoral reform committee. It is an honour to work with my NDP critic because of her passion and experience in this field.

Acceding to the arms trade treaty would be a significant step forward. The fact that the independent foreign affairs and international development committee is also looking into this should be a strong statement of the fact that we can do better and that we are absolutely listening to the wise counsel of the opposition.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this issue of arms control was first brought up by the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie in a motion at the foreign affairs committee, not at the time to create a separate standing committee but rather to create a subcommittee of foreign affairs to study the issue. We in the Conservative Party supported studying it in the context of foreign affairs, but that did not happen because the Liberals voted against it.

We do not support the idea of creating a separate standing committee of the House, in part because this is a job for the foreign affairs committee. However, why did the government not agree with the consensus of opposition parties at the time to have this issue studied in the context of a subcommittee of the foreign affairs committee.

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Mr. Speaker, I am really not sure where the member opposite stands. I think he said that he is in favour and against this at the same time.

Our stand is that we move as quickly as we can to accede to the arms trade treaty, something the previous government failed to do for no apparent reason, and also empower and celebrate the fact that the foreign affairs and international development committee is conducting its own studies at the same time.

• (1105)

**Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague made a powerful and informative statement this morning as to what the government was currently doing. She mentioned the burden that an additional committee would create. Could she expand a bit more on that topic?

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Mr. Speaker, as far as we are concerned, the government's business should be expedited. It should be rigorous, transparent, and accountable. The best way forward is by acceding to the arms trade treaty and by following the good work of the foreign affairs and international development committee. It would be a significant accomplishment for Canada to join our allies in the arms trade treaty by the end of 2017.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Mr. Speaker, the government talks a good talk about transparency, but let us take a minute and look at the Saudi deal for example. The government has yet to release the final delivery date or confirm exactly how many vehicles will be delivered. If that information were provided to Canadians, that would be basic transparency, but we do not have it.

I still do not understand why the government would oppose a motion that calls for members of the House to work together to ensure there is transparency and accountability, and to ensure Canadians can have peace of mind and trust in their government in moving forward with the objective of protecting and advancing human rights.

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Mr. Speaker, maybe I need to take a look at my speech again, but I think I said several times in the course of 15 minutes how much this entire endeavour is about transparency and accountability. I look forward to continuing rigour by members opposite in ensuring that Canadians understand that the fact of acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty brings us in line with our allies and allows us to support a vibrant, vital industry that supports hard-

working families in Canada and that allows us to do an even better job of standing up for human rights around the world.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, it is important to clarify my question, because I do not know if the parliamentary secretary understood it and maybe I was not sufficiently clear.

We do not support the creation of a separate standing committee, which will use additional parliamentary resources and will sort of hive this area off from foreign affairs, but we did support the creation of a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development that would study this issue, and I spoke in favour of this at the foreign affairs committee. The fact of the matter is that this issue is not currently being studied at the foreign affairs committee.

For the parliamentary secretary, why did her government not support having this issue studied through a subcommittee mechanism, something that at the time all the opposition agreed would have been an effective way of proceeding and ensuring that this area had appropriate scrutiny, while also not hiving it off and using the resources of a separate standing committee? What would have been wrong with that approach? Why did the Liberals vote against it at committee?

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Mr. Speaker, the whole point of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, the actual committee, is to study this. So why would we set up a subcommittee? Why do we need a separate standing committee when the actual committee is making this a central focus of its work in the next few weeks?

**Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very informative speech. The first part of the motion speaks about the doubling of Canada's exports over the past decade and our being the second-largest exporter of arms to the Middle East. Our colleague described how the industry is a vital and important part of Canadian GDP and of our capacity to help with human rights across the world. I am wondering if my hon. colleague could further elaborate on this point.

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Mr. Speaker, this is a \$7 billion industry. There are more than 700 companies in Canada, throughout the country. The industry is involved in arms, of course, but also in so many affiliated industries—aviation, transportation, telecommunications, and research. We are here to defend our economy, to defend hard-working middle-class families and good jobs that pay above average. We are very pleased to be adding an additional level of rigour so that Canadians know we are acting responsibly, transparently, and accountably.

• (1110)

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me say off the top that I will be sharing my time with the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Let me make clear at the outset that there are a number of statements in the preamble of this motion with which we, in the official opposition and as the previous government, fully agree. Conservatives agree with the NDP that Canadians expect a high standard from their government when it comes to protecting human rights abroad.

Conservatives have always supported efforts to establish and to maintain international standards for arms transfers, aimed at preventing illicit transfers of weapons and *matériel* that would be used to fuel conflict, to enable terrorism, or for the use of organized crime.

Under our previous Conservative government, Canada had some of the strongest export controls in the world, including laws and regulations such as the Export and Import Permits Act and the Automatic Firearms Country Control List.

In addition, when we were in government, the then department of foreign affairs rigorously assessed all exports of military goods and technologies on a case-by-case basis.

Now to address another point in the preamble to the motion by the NDP member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, we in the official opposition also recognize that Canadian arms exports have increased over the past decade. That is not, in itself, bad news. Arms exports were only approved by our Conservative government if and when contracts were consistent with Canada's foreign and defence policies. I will come back to those considerations in a moment.

Members today must remember, and Canadians must remember, that many thousands of Canadian jobs depend on exports—legitimate and closely regulated sales of the products of our Canadian defence and defence-related industries.

The much-discussed sale of armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia has created, and will sustain, more than 3,000 jobs in southwestern Ontario, which is a region of Canada that is the heartland of our manufacturing sector, as my colleagues in the House know. This single contract will also create thousands of indirect jobs across Canada through a 500-firm supply chain stretching literally from coast to coast to coast.

We in the official opposition were proud to deliver these economic benefits for southwestern Ontario when we were in government, benefits that extended to all of Canada. This single, job-creating contract is only one of many in Canada's steadily expanding defence industries—our aerospace, shipbuilding, and high-tech sectors, to name just a few.

That said, end-user contracts are an important element of defence systems export sales. In the case of the armoured vehicles sold to Saudi Arabia, I would remind colleagues, the sale itself was conditional. The purchaser committed, in effect, that the vehicles would not be used against the Saudi domestic population. No evidence of any such misuse was discovered or reported during our Conservative years in government.

However, we in the official opposition fully expect the Liberal government to continue today to ensure the conditions of that contract are respected. As we have said many times in recent months, if the government finds the terms of that contract have been

### *Business of Supply*

violated, then appropriate action must be taken by the Liberals, by the government. The Liberals simply cannot look the other way on highly conditional defence product export contracts.

I would like to return to my earlier points about any arms export contracts being consistent with Canada's foreign affairs and national defence policies.

● (1115)

Despite the concerns that have been raised about the armoured vehicle sale to Saudi Arabia, we need to remember that Saudi Arabia is an ally in probably the most violently contested region of the world today. Saudi Arabia is an important member of the allied coalition in the war against ISIL, the so-called Islamic state. Iran's support of terrorism is a continuing and growing threat to the stability of that region, specifically in Yemen, in Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere in the region.

In Syria, the Iranian regime has provided increasing military assistance to the Assad regime. We just learned today that another 3,000 Iranian fighters have been dispatched to prop up Assad forces in the long and tragic battle for the city of Aleppo.

It remains to be seen today whether Iran will comply with the P5 +1 nuclear agreement, even as the regime continues to ignore UN resolutions against the development of ballistic missiles. Iran continues to belligerently proclaim its goal—its aim of destroying the state of Israel. Domestically, of course, Iran is among the world's worst violators of human rights.

That said, at the same time, the recent execution of the Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr in Saudi Arabia has outrageously and unnecessarily further inflamed Sunni-Shia tensions right across the region. While we share Saudi concerns about Iran's efforts to export its violently destructive ideology across the region, we believe that alienating moderate Shias in these chaotic times is profoundly counter-productive.

We strongly encourage the Government of Canada to take every opportunity to make our views on human rights and religious freedom known to Saudi authorities and the international community at the same time. Canada must continue to work aggressively with our allies in the region to create a stable and, one day, prosperous Middle East, governed by freedom, tolerance, and pluralism, where human rights are fully respected, particularly the rights of the now persecuted minorities.

My hon. colleague raised the matter of the Arms Trade Treaty. I would like to make a couple of points there, although it is not directly reflected in the motion by the NDP today.

We in the official opposition believe that any arms trade treaty should recognize and acknowledge the legitimacy of lawful ownership of firearms by responsible citizens for their personal and recreational use, including sport shooting, hunting, and even collecting. We are disappointed that the Liberals have moved forward with an ATT that does not specifically respect the legitimate trade or use of hunting or sporting firearms.

*Business of Supply*

We are also concerned that little to no consultation with lawful gun owners was undertaken by the Liberals before they unilaterally decided to accede to this treaty. These are concerns from law-abiding Canadians about just how the treaty could affect responsible firearms owners. Conservatives will continue to give voice to these legitimate concerns.

That brings me to the central objective of the NDP motion, an outcome the party has sought on a number of occasions in the past. The NDP wants to address legitimate concerns about Canada's arms exports with a review that would look at past and current sales, the arms export permits regime, end-use conditions and enforcement, and broader international trends, which are all valid topics for review. However, in this motion it is asking to create an entirely new standing committee of the House to manage such a review.

The official opposition will not support this motion. The reason is quite simple. The foreign affairs committee already has the power and authority to study these issues or to create a subcommittee for such a study. In our view, establishing an entirely new committee devoted solely to arms sales would create an unnecessary burden on and consumption of limited House of Commons resources. Therefore, the official opposition will oppose the motion put by the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

• (1120)

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech.

I wonder whether he agrees that Canadians are very concerned about this issue and are entitled to more information, more transparency, and a truly open government that actually answers questions.

[English]

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I must say, it has been a pleasure in recent months to have worked with the member on the foreign affairs committee on a number of important issues.

The government has not been persuaded yet to strike a committee. However, there are a great many very important issues, to be fair, that the committee has been asked to address, and it will.

To answer my colleague's question directly, there is concern. There is concern among the Canadian public about a broad range of situations in the world today where arms have found their way into the hands of those who would abuse not only human rights but their own domestic populations.

I think conditions may seem to have changed in the years between the signing of some of our current contracts and the behaviour of the purchasing countries, bodies, and organizations in the years since. Therefore, I think that, yes, it is a valid topic that Parliament should investigate, but again, I would suggest that the resources of the House are too valuable and too thinly stretched to be focused on yet another standing committee. It would be best done by a subcommittee of either the foreign affairs committee or a joint subcommittee of foreign affairs and perhaps defence.

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon.

colleague for his speech. I would say that the foreign affairs committee is doing excellent work.

However, in light of the concerns Canadians have with regard to appropriate uses, why did the previous government fail to sign the Arms Trade Treaty?

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Mr. Speaker, as the member sits beside the chair of our foreign affairs committee, I quite agree with the remarks that the committee is applying itself very diligently and productively to the issues we have been assigned to investigate.

As I mentioned in my remarks about the Arms Trade Treaty, we have serious reservations about the possible encroachment, with the breadth of the treaty as it is written today, with regard to those Canadians who are legitimate hunters and trappers, quite law-abiding users of weapons that can be used improperly. However, on record in Canada, this is a major recreational sporting sector of our economy. Billions of dollars every year are invested and generated by this economy.

As I said in my remarks, little or no consultation, to my knowledge, has been undertaken by the government to speak to lawful gun owners in Canada about their concerns about what participation in and commitment to the ATT would mean to them.

• (1125)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and contribute to what I think is a very important debate. It is an honour for me to follow my colleague, our foreign affairs critic, someone who is doing a great job standing up for international human rights and for a principled and hard-headed approach to foreign affairs.

I want to congratulate the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie for bringing this motion forward. As my colleague said, we will not be supporting it, but it has been a pleasure working with her on these issues, and I appreciate the knowledge and commitment she brings to them.

I think, in general, we see from both Conservatives and New Democrats in the opposition a different attitude toward the importance of international human rights than we see, unfortunately, at least from the front bench, in the policies on the government side.

I am going to make five distinct points.

The first point I would like to make is about the procedural grounds on which I, and we as the official opposition, cannot support this motion. As I mentioned during questions and comments, I, and my colleagues who were at the foreign affairs committee the day this motion was proposed, supported the creation of a subcommittee to study the issue of the arms trade. This would have been a very effective way of ensuring scrutiny of this issue and of integrating a discussion on arms control within the broader discussion of foreign affairs.

*Business of Supply*

We have, of course, another subcommittee, a subcommittee on international human rights. The value of that subcommittee is that it feeds information through the foreign affairs committee to the House.

The use of subcommittees does not create the additional strain on House resources that a separate committee would create. It also ensures set-aside and cordoned-off time. The reason a subcommittee was not created is that its creation was opposed by all the Liberal members on that committee. It was something that we and the New Democrats agreed on at the time.

There are a range of different options for moving forward in a way that achieves some of the same objectives as this motion. It might even be worth contemplating a joint foreign affairs and defence subcommittee.

With regard to the study on this, the parliamentary secretary made it sound as if there were a current or imminent study by the foreign affairs committee on the issue of arms control. To my knowledge, that is just not the case. I believe that the committee is currently reviewing reports and is very soon to undertake studies of other very important matters, but it does not have an imminent plan to move forward on a study related to this issue.

I think we know who needs to be doing this job and where this job can be done. I do not think the creation of a stand-alone committee is necessary. However, the real impediment to the objectives the member in the NDP has talked about is the approach government members have taken on that committee. That is why, on some important procedural grounds, we cannot support the motion, although, as my colleague from Thornhill pointed out, there are many things, in substance, that are important to affirm.

The second point I want to make is that a strong and effective arms control regime is important, and it is particularly important to us here in the official opposition. My colleague laid out, very ably, aspects of the arms control regime we have in place and that we are committed to. They include, for example, the Export and Import Permits Act and the Automatic Firearms Country Control List. They include, of course, in the context of the LAV deal with Saudi Arabia, which we have discussed already and which I think will probably come up frequently throughout the day, the end-use permits to actually control and restrict the end use of those vehicles. There are mechanisms in place for responding if there are abuses, and we would expect the government to take those obligations very seriously.

My colleagues have been right to point out the important number of Canadian jobs associated with this deal. At the same time, we in the official opposition understand that who we are and the values we believe in have to come first. That is reflected in the approach we took: seeking opportunities for Canadian commerce but insisting, as a primary principle, on the protection of human rights.

• (1130)

The third point I want to underline today is that we must defend human rights, regardless of the cost. We have to be clear about our values. We have to talk about our values, and we have to recognize that in some cases, standing up for our values might involve sacrifices, whether commercial or otherwise. Who we are as a

country, the values and principles that define us and reflect international norms that are rooted in ideas about human rights and universal human dignity, exists prior to purely material or economic considerations. In many cases, in fact, we can and do have both, but we have to be clear about human rights.

I think it is worth saying to the government, because there is not an acknowledgement in the way the Liberals talk about foreign policy, that there is such a thing as a moral absolute.

About a year ago, I listened to a speech given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the University of Ottawa where he talked about moving away from a purely principle-based ethic in foreign policy to one that he called responsible conviction. Really, it was a way of saying, as I understood it, that we should not be holding fast to these ideas of moral absolutes, that we should be evaluating our response in a sort of highly contextualized and situational way.

I think, conversely, that there is actually a need for moral clarity in a murky world, for a government that is clear about our values and is clear that there are certain fundamental principles of human rights on which we will not compromise. Whether it is in our dealings with Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, Iran, or any number of other actors, if there is no such thing as an absolute when it comes to human rights, I would suggest that we cannot talk about a genuine commitment to human rights at all.

We, on this side of the House, believe in the need for Canada to speak with moral clarity, despite the murkiness of the world around us. That means calling out those who are egregious violators of human rights, and it also means being willing to talk about human rights with our allies.

The fourth point I want to make today in the context of this motion is specifically about Saudi Arabia and the Saudi system, because I know that it is an important part of what colours this discussion. I view the Saudi state as, in many ways, a contradictory entity, and therefore it requires what we might even call a contradictory response. In other words, we need to respond to the aspects of the Saudi state that we find objectionable, and we need to work with the aspect of the Saudi state that we can and should. That does not mean compromising our clarity about our values; it means recognizing the need to deal with different parts of the same state in different ways.

Of course, we know that Saudi Arabia is in some ways a conservative monarchy and that some of its international education programs play a role, perhaps indirectly, in fomenting extremism. This is a country with a terrible domestic human rights record, with an ideology that is very much, internally as it is expressed, at odds with our values. Yet it is a country that has historically had a more pro-western foreign policy, a country we have been able to collaborate with in certain respects that are important to the protection of our interests as they relate to our values.

*Business of Supply*

My colleague spoke very well, for instance, about the need to contain Iran and the fact that although, again, Saudi Arabia's approach to Israel is nothing that could be misconstrued as pro-Israel, there is agreement about the concern Iran poses in terms of stability for the region. There is a shared concern, in fact, about the Iranian nuclear deal.

These are interesting things to observe in how we relate to the Saudis. Above all, it must be said that the Saudi state needs to survive, because if, under the present circumstances, there were to be a Syrian-style revolution in Iran, the consequences in terms of human rights as well as international peace and security would be absolutely devastating.

• (1135)

I will speak very briefly to my fifth point. On the strategic balance of power in the Middle East, it is necessary that we have an effective alternative to Iranian influence. We know about the major concerns with growing Iranian influence. To the extent that the partnership we have with Saudi Arabia allows us to combat Iranian influence, it is important for both human rights and international peace and security.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I appreciate the support the Conservatives are giving my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie for her efforts to create a subcommittee to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

My colleague did a fine job illustrating the fact that some very complex situations, including in the Middle East, sometimes require a contradictory policy. Sometimes diplomats are called to do very complicated work and Canada has to make tough choices.

This further motivates me to support the creation of a committee that will specifically address arms exports. This committee could keep working indefinitely on examining these evolving situations. In 1999, the United Kingdom created a similar committee.

Does the hon. member not agree that despite the limited resources of the House, this requires a thorough and ongoing study?

[*English*]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, on this topic, though my colleague and I do not agree on all parts, we do agree on substantial parts of the direction here.

Here is the issue. He talked about having a committee that, in an ongoing way, studies these situations. That is not the proposal. It would not be a committee to study, in an ongoing way, the challenges of politics in the Middle East. It would be a committee specifically looking at one piece of that very complicated question, which is the issue of arms exports.

If the motion were to pass, the question would be how many standing committees the House should have. That is perhaps not as interesting a question as the underlying substantive debates about our foreign policy and arms control, but it is a question we have to consider in the context of how we vote on the motion, because we need an effective and cohesive system in the House for analyzing different issues. We have a foreign affairs committee, which can and should create subcommittees to address sub-issues. That is a more

effective way to go. The impediment to that clearly has come from the government side.

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

Mr. Speaker, the issue of human rights is something I have had the opportunity to speak a great deal on. When I reflect back on the Liberal Party, now the government, it is the party of the Charter of Rights. In fact, it was Pierre Elliott Trudeau who brought the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to Canada, which we all love and respect.

The late Izzy Asper founded the concept of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, which was the first national museum that dealt with human rights and the many tragedies that have occurred around the world, such as genocides and so much more. Human rights is a very important issue for all of us, but I can say that from a party perspective, I do not believe we are second to any other.

We need to recognize that the government is committed to enhancing both the rigour and transparency of Canada's export control process. We are pursuing many parallel paths to do so, but foremost is ensuring that Canada becomes a member of the Arms Trade Treaty, the ATT. The ATT aims to stop unregulated arms transfers that intensify and prolong conflict, lead to regional instability, facilitate violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses, and hinder social and economic development.

I am wondering if the member would agree that this would, in fact, be a very positive step forward and this is something that we could be talking more about today, just how important the ATT is for all Canadians.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps this is the pot calling the kettle black. The member has spoken a lot about human rights, among other subjects. However, with respect to the issue of the ATT, my colleague has addressed this very clearly. It is important that the arms control treaty recognize the legitimacy of lawful firearms ownership, and there are some concerns there with respect to law-abiding citizens owning and using firearms for legitimate purposes.

On the issue of human rights, I do not dispute that there is a lot of human rights talk that has come from some in the party opposite. However, for us, when it comes to foreign affairs, we believe in an absolute commitment to human rights and that clearly is not present in the approach of the government.

I could give a wide variety of examples we have already seen from the government in terms of shifting foreign policy to de-emphasize international human rights. We have its negotiations, or not, or something similar but not quite negotiations, on extradition with China. The Prime Minister has said this is something that is going ahead.



*Business of Supply*

We have the refusal to support our private member's bill on Magnitsky sanctions, a clear way of addressing human rights abuses in Russia. I do not know why the government is not supporting that. We have the elimination of the ambassador for international religious freedom and the creation of a new, so-called human rights department without its own ambassador, and effectively the downgrading then of an emphasis on—

● (1140)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. We really do not like to cut members off. It is the last thing we want to do. Just give us a glance every once in a while and we will try to give members some cues as to when the time is coming to an end.

We have exhausted the time for questions and comments. Now we will go to resuming debate, the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to say that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Burnaby South.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in favour of the motion moved today by my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie. Obviously, it is a very important issue.

I would like to begin by expressing how disappointed I was to learn from this morning's debate that the Liberal government plans to vote against this motion to create an arms export review committee, despite its rhetoric about openness and transparency.

While recognizing the discourse on human rights, which we appreciated for the most part, and the support the Conservative Party offered to my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie regarding its proposal at the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development to create a subcommittee on the issue, I am still disappointed that the Conservatives will not be supporting the motion.

When I heard the parliamentary secretary's speech, I felt a bit of déjà vu. That was exactly the kind of speech I used to hear in the previous Parliament. We were told that no such committee was necessary, because we already had the tools required, we needed to put the economy first, and so on. I am extremely disappointed.

With regard to economic issues, I have to say that the beauty of creating this committee is that it will allow us to study all aspects of the issue. At present, the mandate of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development is too narrow. Furthermore, the great thing about creating this committee is that it provides an opportunity to study international trade, Canadian defence and industry policies, as well as to examine issues related to foreign affairs and the protection of human rights. All these issues deserve serious consideration.

The government argues that this committee is not needed because the Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development is currently conducting a study. The House and Canadians are being misled. Why? First, the Arms Trade Treaty requires that we study its implementation and any legislative amendments. That is only one specific aspect.

Furthermore, members know that a committee conducts studies and hears from witnesses. However, to be honest, the time available is very limited. We sometimes would like to study the subject in more depth. However, a bill may require a change to the timetable, which can affect the committee's work.

Given all these limitations, the human rights abuses in various countries to which Canada exports weapons, and Canadians' legitimate concerns, we firmly believe that this issue deserves further study on an ongoing basis.

There is a precedent for this. In 1999, the United Kingdom created a similar committee responsible for conducting the same type of examinations, for example, a review of the government's annual report. In addition to conducting an in-depth study of these issues, the United Kingdom's committee also submits an annual report on arms exports and hears from many witnesses.

I heard some Conservative members asking if there will ever be an end to the creation of standing committees. They were wondering whether we are going to create a committee for every issue. In my opinion, the issue before us warrants the creation of a standing committee. Why? Because Canada's arms exports have increased. In fact, Canada has become the second-largest exporter of arms to the Middle East after the United States, and that raises many concerns. Of course, we also think a committee should be created for the same reasons that the parliamentary secretary talked about in her speech. She mentioned this industry's importance to Canada several times.

In my opinion, that is just one more reason why we should create such a committee. It would allow us to conduct a parliamentary review and monitor this important industry on an ongoing basis.

The NDP and I believe that the most important thing is human rights. The interesting thing is that I know that members are going to quote things that were said during the election campaign. There is no contradiction there. What we are asking the government to do is to keep its promise to be open and transparent and to give more power to parliamentarians who are not in cabinet. A committee like this one would allow us to meet those objectives. It is disappointing to see the government rejecting this solution, particularly after all its talk about openness and transparency.

● (1145)

Nonetheless, let us come back to the potential criticisms. Look at all the information that has come to light since the election campaign. We even saw videos posted by the *Globe and Mail* showing how Saudi Arabia uses these arms or these jeeps, as the Prime Minister likes to call them. Let us be honest, these are very serious problems and this new information gives us pause for thought. This is not a matter of having a contract, but a matter of issuing export permits. That is a very important nuance that the government and the minister do not seem to grasp.

*Business of Supply*

The minister told the House that he would be prepared to reconsider if he were given new information, but he is not keeping his word. That is one more reason to create a committee to address this issue, so that parliamentarians are not hampered by the minister's discretionary power. We have to be able to conduct this study ourselves without being hindered by the existing committee. In light of the Liberals' refusal to create a subcommittee on arms exports, we find that we cannot rely on the good faith of the existing committee. We have to form a specific committee to study this matter thoroughly.

I wonder why the Liberals are afraid to create this committee. I have yet to hear a strong or convincing argument from a Liberal member to justify their refusal to create this committee. All the parties are saying the right thing about respecting human rights abroad. So why not allow parliamentarians to monitor the situation and report to the House to help us keep our international commitments and uphold our values of protecting human rights?

I am very concerned because we are being told in no uncertain terms that we do not need this committee and that there are not enough resources. They are also quoting irrelevant snippets from the campaign. We want to hear a real argument against the creation of a committee.

After all, the Liberals would have a majority on the committee. They need not fear being backed into a corner, being made to feel ill at ease, or pushed into doing something the government does not want to do. We just want to ensure that the process is transparent so that Canadians can once again have confidence in the system.

These are the same arguments that we raised yesterday when debating the creation of an oversight committee for national security agencies. This is not just about reviewing facts and involving parliamentarians; it is about our relationship with Canadians. Opinion polls and our conversations with Canadians indicate that they have lost confidence in this process, especially since Canada does not monitor its arms exports.

Despite the parliamentary secretary's comments about the excellent regulations we have and the assessments carried out by Canada before exporting arms, it is also important to follow up because the world is quickly changing. As was said several times this morning, there are very complex diplomatic situations around the world. I would hope that the government recognizes the importance of monitoring these situations.

In closing, Canadians are increasingly becoming citizens of the world. We know that people care about protecting human rights. Canada has values and international commitments.

Government members keep repeating their famous empty phrase, "Canada is back". However, those are just words. We do not just want to hear them say it. We want them to make it a reality. We want real transparency and we want them to create a committee that will examine this issue and give power back to parliamentarians and, by extension, to Canadians, so that they can again have confidence in their institutions and the work we are doing.

This increasingly worrisome situation must be monitored in order to protect human rights. That is why I am pleased to support the motion of my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie. I hope that the

Liberals will see things the same way, regardless of the government's position.

● (1150)

[English]

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I already believe that Canada's export controls are some of the toughest and most transparent in the world, but there's always room for improvement.

I believe Canada should also become a member of the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty. However, it already meets many of those obligations. In fact, Canada is one of the reasons that arms trade treaty was implemented, a treaty that is becoming even more widespread around the world. However, we do not apply with respect to two of the articles: article 7, which deals with export assessment criteria and overriding risk tests; and article 10, which deals with brokering.

Could the member explain why we should create another standing committee and how other standing committees that we already have in Parliament can address the review, the investigation, and the understanding of this issue?

[Translation]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, first, Canada should have acceded to the Arms Trade Treaty a long time ago. We are pleased to see that today. However, it is just one piece of the puzzle. The government is focusing on that aspect of the issue, but we want to examine a broader issue.

As I pointed out in my speech, the government believes that the existing regulations are adequate, but there is no follow-up. The situation is changing rapidly and such a committee would allow us to monitor it.

Take for example Saudi Arabia and the information that was made public, including the videos that were posted following the election.

My colleague mentioned that there are other committees, but the issue before us extends well beyond the mandate of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

The United Kingdom set up a similar committee and it is working well. Why not do the same thing here in Canada?

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, which I listened to closely.

He called on the government to give a real argument against forming a committee. I would ask him to explain why the NDP did not support the Bloc Québécois amendment calling for all parties to be represented on this committee, whether they are recognized or not.

In his speech he talked about a democracy that should go beyond words and move into actions. I would turn the question back to him. I would like the democracy promoted by the NDP to go beyond words and move into action.

Why did the NDP not accept the Bloc Québécois amendment? Let them stop hiding behind the rules.

*Business of Supply*

• (1155)

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, we are not hiding behind any rules, on the contrary. It is thanks to the NDP that the Bloc Québécois was able to participate in the special committee on electoral reform and I am very proud of that.

The matter before us right now concerns the creation of a standing committee. I am not at all hiding behind the rules, which are open and transparent to everyone. That is the reality before us.

At the end of the day, the ball is in the government's court, and it is important that it support the proposal in order to ensure real transparency when it comes to arms exports.

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech, which, as usual, was delivered with confidence and aplomb.

As he mentioned, human rights are part of the arms sales issue. In light of that fact, we need to remember that, as a member state of the United Nations, Canada has certain international obligations. For example, article 55 of the United Nations Charter requires member states to promote respect for human rights in their international relations.

If we want Canada to be an important player on the world stage and to be taken seriously, is it not time that we respect these international obligations?

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Yes, as he said, it is time that we honour our international commitments. That said, we need to get the ball rolling here, at home. If Canada intends to step onto the world stage as an instrument for peace, an advocate for human rights, and a constructive voice in what are sometimes very difficult debates and discussions, it must start here.

We need a government that is willing to delve deep into these issues. Before it can lecture others, the government must ensure that all the right things are being done at home and that we are honouring the same principles that we expect others to follow.

[English]

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed listening to the debate.

My colleagues have outlined in a very good way the details of this motion, why it is important, and some of the objections that should be taken into consideration.

From my perspective, I think we have perhaps lost the plot a little. Maybe I can start with a bit of a story about what we are supposed to do in this place. When I was elected 2011, one of the first decisions I was asked to make was whether or not I would support the mission to send fighter jets to Libya. This decision, for new MPs, was very difficult, as it was for all parties involved. I believe the motion was to support a mission against Moammar Gadhafi, who was an international scourge and one of the worst human rights offenders in history.

What struck me during those discussions, both inside and outside this place, was that we were really talking about killing people. That is what we are really talking about if we send to fighter jets to Libya or arms to Saudi Arabia. In the end, as parliamentarians, we are deciding who is going to live and who is going to die, in one way or another. That should really underscore the discussions we are having here today.

This is why Parliament and democracy are important. In dictatorships, which we oppose because they are not the proper way to run governments or countries, it is usually a person or a small group of people who decide to make these decisions about who will live and who will die within their own countries, and then when they engage in military actions against other countries.

However, in a democracy, we are supposed to come to places like this Parliament and the Senate to discuss in a very open and transparent way how we regard our standing in the world, and to say whether or not we should engage in certain actions.

I think that is all we are talking about here. It is really the same thing. It is not about a direct motion, that is, whether or not we should take direction action in a country, whether to support or oppose a certain regime, but it is more of a macro discussion about how we see ourselves in the world, how we make decisions, and in this case whether or not we should sell armaments to particular countries. That should probably underscore this discussion.

We have a global affairs committee that discusses foreign affairs. I understand there were proposals made for subcommittees. This is a proposal for a new standing committee. I think that Canadians who are looking at this debate would really like us to get down to the issue of how we as parliamentarians will discharge our duties in making these very important decisions, to which they are also attached because they vote for us. Voters vote for MPs in various political parties, and we come to this place and make decisions, some of which have lethal consequences or result in the loss of human life in various countries.

Through this debate, Canadians will be shocked to know that our arms exports have doubled over the last decade. In fact, it might be one of our dirty little secrets. Canadians like to see themselves in a particular way. They like to think that we are going around the world in blue helmets keeping the peace. Our past Nobel Prize efforts at peacekeeping, again, are the ones by which Canada really emerged on the world stage.

We like to think of ourselves as givers of aid and generous contributors to reducing poverty around the world. However, through the course of this debate, Canadians will find out that we have doubled our arms exports. We are now the second-largest exporter of arms to the Middle East.

• (1200)

Therefore, it is a clash of values that we have here. Canadians who are watching this debate or reading about it in the media would think that the decisions the government is making, and that past governments have made, clash with how they see themselves as a Canadian.

*Business of Supply*

This place is for that. There are difficult choices to make. Whether we approve arms sales to one country or another is decided here, and it should be. Decisions have been taken now, both within the industries that produce these arms and the government bodies that approve the sales and export to other countries. I think many Canadians would say that this does not jive with their view of what Canada does, which is okay.

Again, this place is for that. It is for us to come to discuss the facts that are behind every decision we have to make, to ensure we get them straight. We debate in a public way, on TV, with recorded minutes and recorded votes as to what should be done. Decisions are taken, and those decisions have their effects.

The result of these decisions is that people will die. We cannot sell arms to a country and think that they will not be used, especially small arms and vehicles that have small arms attached to them. Therefore, this is worth debating in more detail to ensure we get the facts. I think most of my colleagues in the House would agree that these are probably the most important issues we talk about here.

The mechanism does not interest people, whether it is a standing committee, a subcommittee, or a special committee. I do not think that makes a ton of difference. However, what Canadians do expect from us is that when we are making decisions as grave as this and evaluating decisions about whether we should be complicit in someone's death, this deserves significant debate.

Therefore, because we have had new facts come to light about these sales, and we are not clear about how these deals have transpired, the short-term details about who benefits and who is not, or the long-term impacts of this deal, we propose that we have a standing committee.

Of course, in terms of a procedural decision, that is a fairly big one. Starting a new standing committee is a significant commitment. However, the issue that the committee would be studying is so important. It is probably one of the most important things at which we will be looking. It is reviewing our roles in participating in the deaths of people around the world.

Sometimes those military interventions are necessary. As I said, I voted to support the mission in Libya after a lot of deep thought. Again, that was approved unanimously in 2011.

However, this proposed standing committee would give us room not only to talk about decisions regarding arms exports, but also to review the impacts of these things. We could get regular reports from experts in this area, have a better understanding of our own arms industry, and have briefings, because the world changes. Places that are at war now will soon be at peace, and places at peace now unfortunately will be at war at some point. Therefore, committee members could get briefings on this and have very wholesome discussions.

There are a couple of things going on that are worth pausing for a second. I know the parties all have their entrenched votes scripted of where they will go. However, I would ask members to take a pause and think about the issue we are dealing with here, which is grave. It is one of the most important things we will decide as parliamentarians. Members should ask themselves if these types of decisions actually deserve a space of their own.

In my over five years as a parliamentarian, I would have welcomed this idea. It would be a committee that would have great merit, but that a subcommittee would not be enough. However, the committee would need a good degree of independence in order to look at all of these issues in great detail. Therefore, I urge the government to have a rethink on this and not dismiss this idea out of hand.

• (1205)

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in London, Ontario, the city I represent, General Dynamics Land Systems is a very important company, employing over 2,000 people. It is central to the defence sector in that city and it is central to the defence sector in our country.

Could the hon. member tell the House why the NDP supported the work of the company, but now has changed its position? Did the New Democrats call the company to tell it this beforehand? Have they reached out since? Would the hon. member and his leader accept an invitation to come to London to visit General Dynamics, speak to the workers and really articulate and underline the implications of what they have called for and the job losses that would result? This is coming from a party that says it represents the working class.

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart:** Mr. Speaker, we have very able members who represent London and have for a long time. That is the kind of fogged question that just seeks to score political points rather than have actual debate. At issue here is the creation of a standing committee to review these issues. It is not to cancel particular deals, or not to support particular deals. It is to understand them better and to ensure we have the kind of debate we need so Canadians get the information they need.

I am not sure why the Liberals would not approve such a committee. They have not offered any kind of solution other than to throw things out that do not really matter. I would ask them to consider this motion and perhaps if they do not agree, to put up their own proposal as to what we could do instead.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to hear my colleague's comments on human lives. This is a life-and-death issue, but the Liberals think it is in the same league as jobs created in the industry. Even the people who work in those industries feel uncomfortable knowing or suspecting that the weapons they make will probably be used to violate human rights in other countries.

In June, the Liberals announced that Canada would accede to the Arms Trade Treaty, which requires states to monitor arms exports and ensure that those weapons are not used to violate human rights. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International want the United Nations General Assembly to immediately suspend Saudi Arabia from the Human Rights Council because of its gross and systematic violations in Yemen.

*Business of Supply*

Mounting reports and evidence prove that our weapons have been found in places where human rights are being violated. Our proposed committee is the best way to study where, when, and how the weapons we export are being used. It makes perfect sense to me that Canadians should have transparent access to that information, and it is our responsibility to ensure that we are respecting international rights.

• (1210)

[English]

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart:** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's comments as always. It does not have to be a jobs versus killing people kind of debate. People who work in these industries work very hard and do nice jobs. I think it would be assuring for them to know that this committee had thoroughly studied their deals and had given them a seal of approval rather than have this kind of fog around the products they produce. I see that as a win-win. I do not see this as killing jobs in any way. It is developing a better understanding of what is the very important issue, which is Canada's role in what eventually is that people die. Again, that would make Canadians feel much more comfortable.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague from London West.

I rise today to speak about the government's commitment to human rights. I do so as a parliamentarian, as a member representing a city that thrives because of the defence sector in part, and as someone who has taught human rights policy for a number of years at Western University. This is an issue I take extremely seriously.

The promotion and protection of human rights is an integral part of Canada's constructive engagement in the world. We view human rights as universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated.

We have all seen how hatred and xenophobia have taken root. A record number of refugees are now displaced. Everyone has to do more to protect the most vulnerable and marginalized people in the world today. We do this by embracing diversity.

Last week the right hon. Prime Minister spoke in front of the UN General Assembly and told the world that Canada was stronger, not weaker, because of our differences. He said that we should embrace diversity. As a multicultural, multi-faith and inclusive society, Canada is well positioned to champion peaceful pluralism, respect for diversity and human rights internationally.

How do we do this? Canada is enhancing and expanding its efforts through multilateral organizations, bilateral engagement, development assistance, and trade and policy services. The UN is the main forum where we advance our international human rights objectives.

Canada actively participates as an observer at the UN Human Rights Council and is fully engaged in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee. Canada is also party to seven UN human rights treaties, which are established treaty bodies to regularly monitor state compliance. Canada actively participates in the universal periodic review process, which evaluates the human rights performance of all 193 UN member states at regular intervals. Canada was last reviewed in 2013 and will be up for review again in 2018.

The promotion and protection of human rights is an integral part of Canada's development programming and humanitarian assistance. Our development programming integrates the principles of inclusion, participation, equality, and non-discrimination. Our humanitarian assistance ensures full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with international law.

With regard to trade, Canada expects Canadian companies operating abroad to respect human rights and promote improved performance through the UN guiding principles on business and human rights, the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises, and the voluntary principles on security and human rights, showcasing Canada's updated corporate social responsibility strategy as well.

Canada's missions abroad foster partnerships between companies, governments, and civil society to promote respect for human rights. Canada consults regularly with civil society organizations both at home and abroad through a network of missions, including our permanent mission to the UN and Geneva and New York. Canada is a strong advocate at the UN for the full participation of civil society. This is becoming increasingly important given the efforts of some countries to limit civic space both at the UN and more broadly.

Canada also acknowledges the important leadership role played by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Canada is directly contributing \$50 million to the office over the next three years.

Canada also works to advance international standards on important issues and promotes human rights around the world in a variety of multilateral forums ranging from UN bodies to the G7. For example, Canada is advancing the rights of women through our membership on the UN Committee on the Status of Women. Key issues for Canada related to the rights of women include addressing violence against women, sexual and gender-based violence, improving maternal newborn and child health, women, peace and security, gender equality, and women's economic empowerment. Canada was elected a member of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2016. Canada is also a strong supporter of the UN Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security.

Canada is an active promoter of the rights of children and has helped to lead international efforts to end child early and forced marriage. Canada was instrumental in bringing the issue of children in armed conflict to the international agenda, and continues to support efforts to eliminate violations of children's rights in conflict.

*Business of Supply*

●(1215)

For the past 13 years, Canada, in partnership with a strong cross-regional group of similarly concerned countries, has successfully led an annual resolution at the UN General Assembly on the situation of human rights in Iran. This fall, Canada is leading this resolution again.

Canada has joined the global movement to support the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex persons. Our embassies around the world support grassroots LGBTI organizations that are fighting against discrimination, violence, and unjust laws. In July, the foreign affairs parliamentary secretary attended a global conference of LGBTI human rights and joined with 29 other countries to found the equal rights coalition. Canada is also a founding member of the freedom online coalition, which seeks to protect and promote people's human rights online. We also work bilaterally and multilaterally to promote Internet freedom, which remains a key component of open democracy.

Canada's international support for human rights extends to other areas as well. We oppose the death penalty and support the abolition of the death penalty internationally. Our government will undertake clemency interventions in all cases of Canadians facing execution in foreign jurisdictions.

Canada recognizes the key role played by human rights defenders in protecting and promoting human rights and strengthening the rule of law, and we are committed to supporting their work. We are concerned that through new legislation and increasingly harsh tactics, governments and other actors are restricting civil society, promoting discrimination against individuals from vulnerable and marginalized groups, and threatening human rights defenders and other civil society actors.

Canada believes strongly that freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right. On May 17, 2016, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs announced the creation of the office of human rights, freedoms and inclusion. The new office expands on the work undertaken by the former Office of Religious Freedom by bringing these efforts together under a comprehensive vision that includes all human rights and addresses issues of respect for diversity and inclusion.

Of course there is much more to be done. We will continue to seek out opportunities to strengthen human rights around the world. I have highlighted the human rights element to all of this because it is important. If we look at the comments of my hon. colleagues in the NDP, they are discussing human rights, as they should be. It is an important value.

I also wish to discuss an economic element to all of this. Economics matter for any member of Parliament, but since we are discussing issues that have a direct impact on London, Ontario, being the member of Parliament representing London North Centre, it would be remiss of me not to mention the importance of General Dynamics Land Systems to the London economy. This company employs over 2,000 people. The result is that \$230 million is injected into the London economy each and every year. London has been hard hit by the loss of manufacturing. This advanced manufacturing sector that we see propelled forward by GDLS is incredibly

important. We are also talking about 10,000 indirect jobs in the London region. These are well-paying, middle-class jobs that put food on the table, that allow middle-class families to send their children to school, and to raise their families in a prosperous way.

GDLS also works to support and sustain a network of 500 suppliers in all regions of Canada. That is incredibly important for the House to understand. We are talking about jobs. We are talking about members of Parliament who represent ridings across the country that benefit because of GDLS. GDLS also employs 650 engineers, and tens of millions of dollars have been invested in research and development. As the government and the country moves toward an innovation agenda, as we should, this is the sort of example that highlights the importance of a firm such as GDLS.

My colleagues opposite have shifted positions. They supported the work of GDLS but now they do not. I invite all members of the NDP to come to London to speak to the employees of GDLS and explain clearly why they have changed their position. Why did they support the work of GDLS? These are working people, represented by Unifor. Why have they shifted their position? I beg of them an answer.

●(1220)

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think my colleague actually read the motion, because that is not the position that is in question. What is actually in front of us is a motion to create a committee to study the export of arms. In fact, I think that is something he could appreciate, because I am looking over the comments he made in the last election. Even before that, in 2011, he actually called Saudi Arabia's princes "tyrants", comparing them to such colourful characters as Colonel Gadhafi, the shah of Iran, and Saddam Hussein. When he was asked how he reconciled that with the position he now has, he said, "I was elected on October 19th. I can't say I've had as much time as others have, in the previous government, for example, to look at this and analyze it."

That is great to hear because we want to give him that opportunity with the creation of this committee. We are not flip-flopping here. We just want members like him to be able to sit down with experts and witnesses, and analyze this so we can better understand the role Canada is playing with the export of arms. What does he think of that?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos:** Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the hon. member recognizes that there are indeed committees in place that can look at the kinds of questions members have put forward. The trade committee, for example, and the foreign affairs committee have this ability.

As for comments that I have made, I have indeed criticized Saudi Arabia's human rights record. It is a concerning human rights record, but the way to push countries to change is not by walking away, it is by actually engaging with countries. We do not walk away. We engage. When we are at the table, we can criticize; when we walk away, we cannot.

The member does not answer the question. Why did the NDP shift its position on GDLS? Why did the New Democrats support the workers, and why have they abandoned them now?

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening intently to the member's speech and I noticed, just like the member for Beloeil—Chambly, that he distinctly avoided dealing with the contents of the motion. He was skirting closely, I believe, the issue of relevance in this chamber, which is Standing Order 11 (2), if I remember correctly.

What we are dealing with is whether we should create an arms trade committee, a standing committee of the House to specifically deal with one issue. I personally disagree with putting new committees together to deal with a single specific issue. I think it could have easily been dealt with by the foreign affairs committee. As we heard earlier today from the member for Thornhill and the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, there actually was a motion to create a subcommittee to deal with this issue but the Liberal members voted against it.

I do not want to hear what the government is doing because this member is not a member of the government; those are the members in the front bench. What I want to hear is what we as parliamentarians can do. Why did those Liberal members vote against creating a subcommittee to deal with this issue?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos:** Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, there are committees in place that can look at these sorts of questions. I believe the hon. member shares that view. In fact, I'm quite happy he asked the question because it gives me an opportunity to highlight the fact that the foreign affairs committee, of which I am a member, will be looking at sanctions policy in the coming weeks and months. The questions that have been raised in the opposition day motion by the NDP will be looked at.

The New Democrats realize that full well, so there is political gamesmanship going on here. If in my speech I have highlighted human rights and talked about the economic importance of the defence sector to London, Ontario, and to Canada more generally, it is because the motion is frivolous. It is based on politics. There are very important issues to discuss here: issues of human rights, issues of economics. I invite all the hon. members of the NDP, and of the Conservatives if they wish, to come to London to visit the folks at GDLS. They are doing great work. I just hope the members continue to support them, certainly in the Conservative Party. However, the NDP has walked away. I do not know why.

• (1225)

**Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to speak to this very important topic. It is encouraging that members of the House share the interest of our government, and all Canadians, in maintaining high standards for peace, security, and human rights.

A key priority of Canada's foreign policy is the maintenance of peace and security. In line with that, Canada has some of the strongest export controls in the world, which are very much in line with those of our allies and security partners. All exports of controlled goods and technology, including military goods, are carefully reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with these objectives, as well as with other key foreign policy objectives, such as the protection of human rights.

In addition, our government is enhancing the rigour and transparency of Canada's export controls with respect to military

and strategic goods and technology. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated earlier this year, the government is undertaking measures in a number of different areas.

We will be joining the United Nations' Arms Trade Treaty, the ATT. This treaty aims to stop unregulated arms transfers, which intensify and prolong conflict, and creates common international standards for the export of weapons. In order to do this, we will make all of the necessary changes to legislation and regulation to be able to implement all of the treaty's obligations.

It is important to recognize that Canada meets nearly all of these obligations already. However, some additional work is required. That being said, I would like to underline that the treaty was designed to bring other countries up to the high standards of export control that Canada already has in place.

The criteria we currently use to assess export permit applications, which have been implemented through policy for many years, will now be a legal requirement.

Canada will also implement controls on brokering activities by Canadians who facilitate the transfer of arms between third countries. This is a new regulatory area for Canada, and we are consulting with industry and NGOs on how best to implement this obligation. We will introduce legislation to enact the necessary changes, with the goal of ensuring that Canada has all of the necessary laws and regulations in place so that we can accede to the Arms Trade Treaty in 2017.

We are also making changes to improve transparency, specifically by making more information about exports of military and strategic goods available to Canadians. Annual reports on how the Export and Import Permits Act is being administered and annual reports on exports of military goods from Canada will now be more transparent, more user-friendly, and more informative, and will be tabled in Parliament on time, beginning next year.

Of note, on June 17 of this year, at the same time as the Arms Trade Treaty was being tabled in the House of Commons, the government also cleared the decks from the previous government and published the 2014 and 2015 reports on exports of military goods and technology from Canada. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed, these reports will now have a fixed date for publication, and this date will be enshrined in legislation for May 31, each and every year.

These are substantial improvements over past reports. However, we intend to go further. Relevant stakeholders, including NGOs and industry, are being consulted on how we can make these reports even more informative, transparent, and easier to understand for the Canadian public. Our goal is to provide additional facts, content, context, and explanation, so as to make the reports clear and more useful to all readers.

*Business of Supply*

While we will do all that we can to provide as much information as possible to enhance transparency, we must do so in a fashion that will not harm Canadian business interests or negatively impact either competitiveness or the livelihoods of ordinary Canadians who are employed in this important commercial sector.

This issue is very important to me as the member of Parliament for London West. Many of my constituents work at General Dynamics Land Systems, located in the riding of London—Fanshawe. These hard-working Canadians and their families rely on jobs created by this regional employer. GDLS, the eighth-largest regional employer, hires over 2,400 people, with approximately 2,100 employees in the London and Edmonton facilities. It is our local and global leader in light armoured vehicle platform and subsection integration. It has over 35 years of experience in supporting and protecting our soldiers.

● (1230)

During the election campaign, I was asked by a number of constituents if the Liberal government would sacrifice the jobs at GDLS because of concerns with the deal made with Saudi Arabia. I said during the campaign, and have continued to say without wavering, that I would do all I can to continue to support the jobs at GDLS.

Canada has a strong history working with the defence industry. My father worked on the Avro Arrow in the 1950s as a draftsman working on the engine of this amazing aircraft. He was one of the 5,000 employees who lost their jobs on that infamous day when the Conservative government decided to turn its back on Avro Arrow. I will not let that happen again.

GDLS Canada relies on the Government of Canada to set the trade and export policies under which it conducts its business. Defence goods are among the most highly regulated export commodities in Canada. GDLS Canada exports in full compliance with the laws and regulations of the Government of Canada. Canadians expect an export control system that is rigorous, transparent, and predictable, and that is what we deliver.

We are delivering on our campaign commitment by joining the Arms Trade Treaty, thus promoting responsibility, transparency, and accountability in regulating the global trade of conventional weapons. This is the right thing to do. We are committed to the jobs at General Dynamics Land Systems, unlike members in the third party who are now turning their backs on the thousands of workers in the London region who count on these jobs.

We are confident that we can find the right balance between safeguarding the commercial interests of Canadian businesses and delivering on our commitment to further enhance the rigour and transparency of the export control process, and accede to the Arms Trade Treaty. This treaty is the result of growing international concern about the direct and indirect consequences of the global arms trade on conflict, human rights, and development.

The ATT does not restrict the type and quantity of arms that a country can export, but requires that these be exported in a responsible manner. It is aimed at ensuring that individual states have an effective export control system in place to regulate the

legitimate arms trade while, at the same time, using transparency measures to combat the illicit trade.

The ATT sets out robust global rules to stop the flow of weapons, munitions, and related items to countries when it is known that they would be used for truly horrific purposes, including genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. It requires all its state parties to assess the export of conventional weapons to a high standard to ensure that they are not used to commit human rights abuses, violate international humanitarian law, or contribute to international terrorism or organized crime.

For the first time, it specifically requires that states also assess their exports against the risk that they would be used to commit serious acts of gender-based violence or violence against women and children, seeking to protect those who are so often victims in the use of conventional weapons.

It is important to note that the ATT does not require its member states to automatically halt all exports to countries with challenging records on human rights or other areas of concern. Rather, it must assess the risk of an individual export being used for nefarious purposes and consider options to mitigate this risk. In other words, states must apply due diligence in considering exports and consider both the risks and benefits of the export of conventional arms.

The ATT also requires transparency and efforts to prevent diversion of weapons. This is critical in the fight to prevent the illicit transfer of conventional weapons. These weapons, when traded illegally, too often fall into the hands of those who do not respect human rights or who commit acts of terrorism.

It is now essential that we rejoin our international partners and allies in their collective effort through the Arms Trade Treaty. Indeed, Canada is the only NATO ally and only G7 partner not to have signed or ratified the treaty. This is in keeping with neither our Canadian values nor our broader policy objectives of reducing conflict and instability, promoting human rights, and countering terrorism.

Acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty would complement Canada's existing engagement on the responsible trade of conventional arms. It would allow Canada to be more effective and to work multilaterally in its quest for a more transparent and accountable arms trade not only here in Canada but throughout the world.

● (1235)

**Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and for the list of much-needed improvements that are potentially coming.



*Business of Supply*

The problem is this. In my riding of Kootenay—Columbia, my constituents care deeply about human rights and they also care deeply about well-paying jobs. When they look at what has happened recently with some of these arms sales, they tell me they are concerned that Canada's reputation, nationally and internationally, is one of caring more about money than about human rights. That is the message they give to me. That is where we are now.

The proposal we have from my colleague this morning is forward looking. How can we give Canadians more confidence in the future that Canada is doing the right thing about arms sales? A multi-party committee—I will not say all parties, respecting my Bloc and Green colleagues—looking at arms sales, making perhaps better decisions for Canada and its future, will potentially still ensure that there are well-paying jobs, but be able to change the opinion that many of my constituents have right now that the Liberal government cares more about money than it does about human rights.

Would the hon. member not agree that a multi-party committee focused on this issue may give a greater sense of confidence to Canadians as a whole and certainly the people in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia?

**Ms. Kate Young:** Of course, Mr. Speaker, human rights are very important. There is no question here. That is not what we are debating.

The point is that we already have an international trade committee and an international foreign affairs committee, and it is within their rights to debate these very issues.

We take human rights seriously and we know these committees do as well, and we know that they will ask the appropriate questions to make sure the human rights issues are addressed.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the parliamentary secretary mentioned committees and in her initial speech she completely avoided speaking directly to the motion and the kind of procedural nature, which is the creation of a new standing committee, and really skirted the issue of relevance in this House, as I mentioned before when another member spoke.

Both the member for Thornhill and the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan said that there was a motion brought forward at the committee meeting to create a subcommittee to look at this specific issue, and it was voted down by the Liberal members.

For the parliamentary secretary, I ask why the Liberal members voted down that motion.

**Ms. Kate Young:** Mr. Speaker, I think I answered that by saying it would be redundant to have a subcommittee when we already have committees in place that can handle this very topic.

I question why members opposite do not respect that committee, why they think they should have another committee deal with this. This is exactly what these two committees are set up to deal with.

I want to also mention that this government cleared the decks from 2014 and 2015 and published the reports. We have now launched a consultation with NGOs and the industry on the transparency Canadians expect from these reports going forward. This is the information that the committees need and they will get.

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that Canada's defence and security industry is very much integrated into many other sectors of the economy, including aerospace, automotive, marine sciences, and cybersecurity; it supports close to 63,000 highly skilled and high-paying jobs across the country; and it contributes \$6.7 billion to Canada's GDP.

There are levels of expertise from coast to coast, right across the country. Could the esteemed member from London West highlight the importance to her riding of these jobs in this industry?

● (1240)

**Ms. Kate Young:** Mr. Speaker, it is so important to the people of London West, London—Fanshawe, London North Centre, Elgin—Middlesex—London that the jobs at General Dynamics Land Systems stay in place.

There is no reason for any of the questions about human rights to be discounted, but these jobs will continue as long as we as a government make sure the right questions are asked of everyone along the way.

It is important for all of us to stand behind this company and make sure the jobs continue.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague the hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

Mr. Speaker, speaking in support of the motion on the floor, I will start off by saying once again, as my colleagues have been echoing all morning in this House, that for too long Canadians have had too little information about our arms exports to countries with questionable human rights records. This has to change.

Liberals have not been fully transparent with Canadians about our arms exports, but we have a right to know who Canada is doing business with and under what conditions.

There are increasing allegations that Canadian weapons are being used to commit human rights violations in countries like Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Sudan.

It is clear that Canada's arms export policy is not working, and it is really time to have a national conversation about arms exports, with a multi-party commons committee that would collaborate across the floor.

Human rights are not optional. If the government wants to show Canada that it is a leader in human rights, then it needs to ensure that it, and we, are walking the talk.

I was very moved at a ceremony in my community, in Nanaimo, right on the waterfront, on August 6, which is the anniversary of Hiroshima bombing. Members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a very long-standing activist organization within our community, was talking about the UN vote that was coming up on nuclear disarmament. They shared my optimism that, given the campaign commitments around peace and security and restoring Canada's international reputation on the world stage, our Prime Minister was going to direct that Canada vote in favour of negotiations to end the nuclear weapons trade.

*Business of Supply*

However, sadly, last month, Canada voted against negotiations for a global treaty banning nuclear weapons. It was shameful. It was a shock to everybody. These nuclear negotiations had been called for by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; 68 countries ended up voting in favour of the motion, so Canada was on the outside of that international consensus; and the vote was called “the most significant contribution to nuclear disarmament in two decades” by one of the UN member countries.

The Liberal government's vote last month also flew in the face of a 2010 resolution, in this House, encouraging the Canadian government to join negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention. The motion was adopted unanimously in this House and in the Senate, with support from all parties, including the Liberals. However, it was a real sad point that they did not follow through and carry on with that commitment that would have made us proud on the international stage. We want to move forward in a more positive way. There is more United Nations consensus with which our country can join.

A 2009 resolution of the Security Council stressed the particular impact that armed conflict has on women, children, refugees, and internally displaced persons, as well as on other civilians who may have specific vulnerabilities, including persons with disabilities and older persons, and it stressed the protection and assistance needs of all affected civilian populations.

As the New Democrat spokesperson for the status of women, I want to bring a particular gender lens to the debate.

The United Nations and international aid agencies say women are among the most heavily impacted victims of war. Tens of thousands suffer from sexual violence, rape, and lack of access to life-saving health care.

Amnesty International says women and girls are uniquely and disproportionately affected by armed conflict; women bear the brunt of war and are the vast majority of casualties resulting from war; rape and sexual violence target women and girls and are routinely used, not only to terrorize women but as a strategic tool of war and an instrument of genocide; systematic rape is often used as a weapon of war in ethnic cleansing; and, in addition to rape, girls and women are often subject to forced prostitution and trafficking during times of war, sometimes with the complicity of governments and military authorities.

• (1245)

In all countries, everywhere in the world, sexual violation of women erodes the fabric of a community in a way that few weapons can. This is the moral challenge to our country and the government. Six hundred and three million women live in countries where domestic violence is not yet considered a crime. Are we exporting weapons there?

In many countries there is repression, the silencing of abuse, and the mistreatment and imprisonment of women, human rights defenders, and activists. Are we exporting to those countries?

In some countries women are considered perpetual legal minors, permanently under the guardianship of male relatives. Are we exporting there?

In some countries it is actually legal for a man to rape his wife. Are we exporting arms to those countries?

We hear again and again that Canadians want to have more scrutiny over the destination of Canadian weapons, and they want to know that we are not exacerbating these human rights abuses in countries abroad.

At the NDP convention in April, Stephen Lewis gave a very powerful speech, and I quote:

We're not supposed to be sending armaments to countries that have a 'persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens.' Saudi Arabia is the embodiment of the meaning of the word 'violations.' And the government of Canada refuses to release its so-called assessment of the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia. So much for the newly minted policy of transparency.

He went on to say that it was a huge pleasure to have a prime minister who unselfconsciously calls himself a feminist, yet is selling weapons to a regime "steeped in misogyny".

Is it not time that we looked more closely at the regimes we export weapons to? Polls show that most Canadians disapprove of arms deals to human rights abusers. Many Canadians would be shocked to know that Canadian weapons exports have nearly doubled over the last 10 years. While Canada used to export arms mostly to NATO countries, under the Conservative government our arms exports shifted to include many countries with very troubling human rights records. Canada is now the second-largest arms dealer in the Middle East, after the U.S. Saudi Arabia is now the world's second-largest buyer of Canadian-made military equipment, after the United States.

Our arms export rules were supposed prohibit the sale of military hardware to countries whose governments have a persistent record of seriously violating the human rights of their citizens. However, it is clear that our arms export controls are not working. While the government argues, as the Conservative government did before it, that Canada has strong arms export regulations, in recent months Canadians have grown increasingly concerned about Canadian arms exports falling into the wrong hands.

Canada does not control or track the use of its arms exports overseas. Worse, it was revealed in August that the Government of Canada has weakened its arms export policy to make it easier to export military hardware to states that abuse human rights.

We have a few pieces of good news, despite all of this tough stuff. I am very glad that the government has agreed to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty. We look forward to seeing the details of that. It is a move in the right direction.

We do have a pre-election commitment from the Prime Minister. He said to the press that Canada must stop arms sales to regimes that flout democracy, such as Saudi Arabia. That was reported in the *London Free Press* on August 10, 2015.

*Business of Supply*

We have a government that says that it is committed to equal rights for women and that it is deeply committed to transparency.

I urge the government, in the spirit of co-operation, to agree to a House committee that would provide parliamentary oversight of arms exports. This oversight is badly needed. We would have multi-party co-operation investigating current and future arms exports, and we can follow the example of other countries that have taken this step.

Let us move forward. Let us do the right thing collectively. Let us make Canada proud on the world stage again.

• (1250)

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the hon. member, if she is not already aware, that the foreign affairs committee will be examining these sorts of issues in an upcoming study of the Special Economic Measures Act.

Committees are enabled to do this, whether it is the foreign affairs committee or the international trade committee. Committees already have the power to do this. Leave it to the NDP to come up with an idea for another level of bureaucracy.

The leader of the NDP had a position in favour of supporting the workers at GDLS, but then shifted that position. Did he inform GDLS? Has he informed the company? How would the member reply to questions and concerns from unionized workers at GDLS, who wonder about why the NDP said it represented them to begin with and has now reneged on that support?

The hon. member for Outremont has talked in glowing terms about his admiration for Margaret Thatcher. I am not sure where the NDP stands on these kinds of issues.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Mr. Speaker, I will say three things.

One, we are not proposing to end arms manufacturing or exports. I know there is a constituency in favour of that. However, this motion is about striking a committee to investigate the human rights records of our customers. Therefore, if we get our business in order, there is no reason that we cannot continue to manufacture arms within the right framework.

Second, the committee that the member described is not studying the human rights record of our arms customers. It is doing an economic study, not a human rights study.

Nonetheless, I was glad to have the support of the members opposite for our New Democrat opposition day motion on pay equity. In that case, we all agreed to strike a special committee to look at the urgent need to bring in pay equity legislation, an issue that has languished for 20 years. That committee met and did its work and tabled a report to the government.

Because I sit on the status of women committee, I know as a committee member that we have lists as long as our arms of the things we want to work on. The rationale for having an additional committee specifically focused on just this task is that it would be its only requirement. Many members of the House are not sitting on a committee and would certainly be able to lend their expertise.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy of the NDP is truly breathtaking. I have listened to the left for decades now, and all that those members do is spout anti-western rhetoric. “Disarm the west” is their mantra. They would have Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and Pope John Paul all lay down their swords, their great words, and their military—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I am sorry. We have a point of order.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I have a question of validity. I do not know why the member is attacking us over Pope John Paul when we are talking about exports to Sudan.

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you request the member to stick to the relevance as to the idiocy of his discussion.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Mr. Speaker, that is a point of debate.

• (1255)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I will let that pass.

The hon. member.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Mr. Speaker, obviously these points need to be heard.

It is because of the anti-western stance by the left for decades and decades that Lenin called them “useful idiots”. It is because they quite clearly helped communism survive for many years.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, we must have some decorum, if he is starting to spout words like “idiots” in the House. We do not have mirrors here, so I would ask—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Once again, I believe the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is bringing up debate.

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Mr. Speaker, if the truth hurts, that is the way it is.

In terms of these arms sales, I agree with my colleague opposite that it is the workers in those industries who are truly important. The NDP members talk a great game about being the workers' party, but they are clearly the party of the elites. They want to see these people lose their jobs.

I would ask the member if they will go and ask the union to have those members eliminated from the union.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Before I go to the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, I want to remind the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay that there is a process here. I would appreciate it if he did not scream at the people who are talking.

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

*Business of Supply*

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Mr. Speaker, I am having trouble figuring out what the question was in the middle of that tirade, but I will take the opportunity to say that I do not know any Canadian workers who want to have the kind of blood on their hands that we hear about, in some cases from very vulnerable people as a result of human rights abuses.

If we had a parliamentary committee that could look at the financial arrangements between sales and the receiving country, we could have more confidence in going forward. A lot of new information has come out about human rights abuses in the receiving countries since that deal was first discussed, and since the Liberals signed off on it.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie for moving the motion calling on Parliament to create a House of Commons standing committee on arms exports, in order to guarantee the parliamentary oversight that is truly necessary, given some of the contracts approved by successive Conservative and Liberal governments.

My colleague's proposal is really interesting because it would enable members to scrutinize current and future exports and to give their opinions on the matter. It would also allow members to comment on the policies surrounding the sale of arms, including the Export and Import Permits Act. Finally, parliamentarians would also publish reports on the studies done by the committee in order to inform Canadians of the various issues related to arms exports, including human rights issues, in particular.

Why is it important that such a committee be created? I will first address the international context. The Middle East is currently embroiled in a number of incredibly intense conflicts, whether in Syria, Iraq, or Yemen, with Saudi Arabia intervening.

In Africa, the southern region of South Sudan, Libya, and Mali are extremely troubled. The common thread among nearly all those regions is the involvement of Canadian enterprises that are selling arms to authoritarian, if not dictatorial, regimes.

Journalist Alec Castonguay said in *L'actualité*:

During these two years, Canada also:

exported military arms and equipment to the tune of \$882 million to countries where gay rights are non-existent or very weak, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Nigeria...

sold roughly \$860 million worth in military arms and technologies to nations where there is little to no freedom of expression or freedom of the press: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, China... Vietnam...

sent \$863 million in exports to countries where there is little to no gender equality [as my colleague just mentioned]: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain...

made shipments worth \$633 million to nations where criminal justice rights are ignored:...Turkey, Egypt, China...

This is an indefensible record. I hope that the Liberal government will change its policy and not just rely on its post-campaign slogan "Canada is back".

The recent examples of arms sales fall far short of Canadians expectations when it comes to human rights.

I will begin by speaking about the most well-known contract, the Saudi arms deal. Last April, the Minister of Foreign Affairs quietly approved export permits for 11 billion dollars' worth of light armoured vehicles to be sent to Saudi Arabia, hoping it would go unnoticed. These vehicles may be equipped with machine guns and other guns of various calibres. These are not just Jeeps, as the Prime Minister likes to say. It is the government's duty to ensure that these vehicles will not be used against the civilian population.

Finally, between the election campaign and the minister's approval, the situation on the ground really changed. We are now in a war situation where increasing allegations and reports are being made against the Saudi army, particularly with regard to the national guard's use of Canadian equipment against civilian populations. We are particularly concerned about that.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs indicated that, if new human rights violations came to light, he would cancel the export permits. However, despite repeated calls from Canadians and non-governmental organizations to do something about the alarming situation in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is still sticking to his guns, if members will pardon the expression, and honouring the contract in full.

This is especially frustrating because the basis for cancelling or postponing a contract is not the existence of proof that Canadian arms are used, but the simple fact that they could be used. That is very serious. In fact, according to a number of allegations, Canadian arms could be used in cases of human rights violations.

For that reason the NDP is asking the Liberals to suspend export permits granted for the sale of light armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia while waiting for an investigation of the human rights situation.

In light of the international context and this very dubious sale to Saudi Arabia, rigorous controls for arms exports are in order. This is also about domestic policy and the transparency of government measures. Canadians must be able to obtain information from a reliable source, and that source must be a parliamentary committee created to study arms exports.

● (1300)

Since the beginning of this debate, we have heard many times about the United Kingdom, where the role of the committee on arms export controls is to provide information to the British people. Every year since 1999, members of this committee have published a report analyzing the export policy. The committee collects information not only from the government, but also from academia, business leaders, and public servants, who truly enrich the debate. The committee examines export data in light of ethical considerations. In the most recent hearing to be made public, a committee member took a stand and declared that selling arms to Yemen was choosing the prosperity of the United Kingdom over the lives of the people of Yemen. Arms exports are not just a trade issue and require that we think about respect for human rights, a very cherished Canadian value.

*Business of Supply*

The war in Yemen and South Sudan is raising serious questions at Global Affairs Canada and not just in terms of diplomacy. I am talking about Streit Group, a Canadian company that uses its plants in the United Arab Emirates to supply its clients, including in Yemen and Sudan. However, this group was flagged by three separate UN review panels that oversee sanction enforcement mechanisms. They criticized Streit Group for selling hundreds of armoured vehicles to war-torn countries. Canada has imposed sanctions against each of these countries, including prohibiting Canadian citizens residing in Canada or abroad from selling arms and military materiel.

The Liberals asked the RCMP to investigate this group and its alleged violation of Canadian sanctions, as well as the UN arms embargos. For reasons of commercial confidentiality, Global Affairs Canada claims it does not want to disclose information on this matter, including whether trade commissioners helped Streit group.

The Americans fined that company several million dollars for failing to comply with these rules.

Considering their past actions and the present controversy, we need answers to a number of questions. For example, how did the Government of Canada support Streit Group in its commercial activities? Did Streit Group get help from Canada's trade delegates in the United Arab Emirates? How does Global Affairs Canada do due diligence on the companies it decides to promote? What loophole do we need to close to ensure that Canadian export rules apply to exports from manufacturing facilities located both here and abroad?

New Democrats believe that citizens have the right to be informed and to participate in the debate. They have the right to know if companies are complying with arms export laws and regulations. Certainly they should know if our own companies are following the rules governing our exports to the countries I mentioned and whether they are doing business with countries that are violating human rights elsewhere. This whole point of this committee is transparency. The government must be accountable to Canadians for its actions.

The NDP is asking the Liberals to move forward instead of backward and tear up the Conservative playbook. On this issue in particular, the Liberals promised change. They promised to ensure respect for human rights, but their policy did away with mandatory consultation of human rights advocates and the requirement to produce documentation on the end use of weapons. Not everyone knows this, but the law on human rights consultation has been watered down. Trade is taking precedence over all of our human rights concerns. That is really worrisome. Canadians have the right to get answers to these crucial questions.

I am ready to take questions.

● (1305)

[English]

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a most interesting debate, but where do we draw the line? Can we make a subject simply black and white? In the indigenous philosophy, everything is holistic. It is interconnected.

Everyone wants human rights and no war. However, take cars, vehicles, and the environment. We all know that they are not a benefit to the environment and that they cause health problems, yet we all drive. Products are still delivered to our homes in vehicles.

I am proud that on May 17, 2016, Canada's foreign affairs minister announced the creation of the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion. This new office stands on the work undertaken by the former Office of Religious Freedom by bringing these efforts together under a comprehensive vision that includes all human rights and addresses issues of respect for diversity and inclusion.

Human rights is a long walk to a better world. The current institutions of Parliament are ready and willing to study, investigate, understand, and report on human rights, and they can do so currently under the rules we have today.

Obviously I disagree with the member, but she can offer her comments about what I have said.

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

However, the current House of Commons export monitoring rules are practically non-existent. Many experts have said that Canada has some gaps in terms of monitoring its arms exports. Furthermore, there have been numerous reports of multiple human rights violations in countries in conflict where Canadian arms have been used.

We therefore need to ask ourselves where we are at. We have the right to obtain information about the places and circumstances in which arms sold by Canadians are being used, whether they are produced in Canada or elsewhere. That is exactly why we are debating it today. We simply want all the facts to be known.

Over the next few years, we need to have a permanent committee looking into the upcoming export contracts in order to get that information.

If the Liberals care so much about defending human rights, why will they not support this motion?

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I find it really troubling that the government is supporting arms exports to regimes that have refused to protect human rights and that have attacked their own citizens. In Sudan, for instance, the social situation is extremely dire.

Does my colleague believe that the decision to support arms exports to Sudan will undermine stability in the region?

● (1310)

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Timmins—James Bay, who is always very compassionate in his interventions.

We have the moral duty to ask questions about very complex matters. Yes, we do have a responsibility towards the countries where we send Canadian arms. We must ensure that our arms are not used against civilians.

*Business of Supply*

We heard some Liberals say that people in Canada would lose their jobs. The people who work in military arms factories are also asking what we are doing and whether our arms are killing women, children, or people who speak out about their country's domestic policies. In some countries arms are used against dissidents.

Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and China are among the 10 main destinations for Canadian military products, according to a 2015 Global Affairs Canada report. The data is quite recent.

MPs know that we do business with countries that clearly do not respect human rights, but they look the other way, saying it is no big deal because we are making money. That is nonsense. I do not agree, and neither does my party. I believe that most members also do not agree.

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Today, I will be talking a lot about Canadian jobs, which are often unionized, well-paid, and highly skilled jobs that we have the duty to protect. However, first, I would like to point out, as some of my other colleagues have already done, that this government is working hard to improve the rigour and transparency of our export controls and is trying to combat the illicit trade of weapons worldwide.

We are keeping our election promise to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty, which is designed to promote responsibility, transparency, and accountability in the regulations surrounding the global trade of conventional weapons. It is the right thing to do and we are proud of our approach.

The promotion and the protection of human rights are an integral part of Canada's foreign policy. As the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs has often said, this is a Canadian value that we will continue to defend at every opportunity.

In addition to these efforts, members on this side of the House know that highly skilled, well-paying jobs in the manufacturing industry are essential to the growth and prosperity of the middle class.

We also know that many of the companies targeted in today's motion play a key role in the Canadian economy. This innovative sector generates spinoff effects in the rest of the economy, integrates Canadian exporters into global logistics chains, and supports well-paying manufacturing jobs across the country.

In 2014, the manufacturing sector contributed \$6.7 billion to Canada's gross domestic product and supported nearly 63,000 jobs across the country. Close to 640 companies work in the defence and security sector. Most of them are small and medium-sized businesses. They play a key role in other manufacturing and high-tech sectors, again, across the country.

[*English*]

There are hon. members in this place who have sought to misconstrue the true nature of this sector. It is a vast, diverse sector and is present in many of the communities we have the privilege of representing.

For example, there is Canada's dynamic aerospace sector, which includes aircraft fabrication, structures, and components; maintenance, repair, and overhaul; air-based radar and other sensors; and space-based systems and components. There is Canada's maritime sector, which includes ship fabrication, structures, and components; and Canada's ICT sector, which includes communication and navigation systems, satellites, cybersecurity, software, electronics, and components.

These businesses are responsible for thousands of high-quality, high-skill jobs, and the benefits are felt by families in communities large and small. All across the country we have highly skilled workers performing maintenance, repair, and overhaul services on a wide variety of vehicles, aircraft, and Royal Canadian Navy and Canadian Coast Guard ships.

Each region of Canada has benefited from substantive investment and the development of specializations in a variety of defence manufacturing activities. For example, there are strong aerospace clusters in Quebec and in western Canada. There is an Ontario-based vehicles cluster. There are shipbuilding clusters on two coasts and defence technology clusters in Montreal and Ottawa. In some communities, these businesses are key to supporting the broader community. A prime example of this is southwestern Ontario, the home of Canada's vehicle manufacturing sector. Maintaining these high-skill, high-paying jobs is critical to the region's broader manufacturing sector.

I emphasize once again that these are not low-skill, part-time jobs. Workers are in fact characterized by their high level of skill. Engineers, scientists, and researchers accounted for more than 30% of the defence industry in 2014. These are professions our government proudly supports in a 21st-century, knowledge-based economy.

● (1315)

Because the sector is highly skilled and innovative, the jobs in this sector are high-paying. In 2014, the direct jobs from the direct defence sector provided an average compensation close to 60% above the manufacturing sector average.

Canada's defence businesses possess strong linkages into important global value chains, generating high-value exports. Roughly 60% of Canada's defence sales are attributed to exports, representing an export intensity that is close to 20% higher than that of the overall Canadian manufacturing average.

As I mentioned earlier, the defence and security industry is made up almost entirely of small and medium-sized enterprises. Although the sector is export oriented, these small businesses owe much of their livelihood to larger supply chain opportunities.

Our defence industry requires exports to be sustainable. Of course the majority of our exports go south to our American friends. Canada is a proud partner in the North American defence industrial base. We are, and will continue to be, good neighbours and good partners in North America.

*Business of Supply*

Canada's defence firms are sources of technological dynamism and have contributed to innovations across a range of sectors, including aerospace, space, marine and information communications technologies, or ICT. This is particularly true with respect to technology spillovers flowing from defence-related research and development in areas such as propulsion, detection, navigation, communications, composites and materials.

Of course, this is much more about economics. Canada's defence and security industry helps enable mission success for the Canadian Armed Forces, both at home and around the world. The Canadian Armed Forces could not be successful in what it does without the Canadian industry ensuring that our military has the right skills, equipment and training to succeed on every mission.

Without a commercially viable defence and security sector, industry support to our armed forces and its objectives would not be possible. As an example, in the maritime sector the national shipbuilding strategy is re-establishing an important industry and supporting Canadian technological innovation. At the same time, the strategy and the renewal of the Canadian Coast Guard fleet are essential to the Government of Canada's ongoing efforts to keep Canadians safe on the water and to help navigate the billions of dollars in cargo that travel through Canadian waters each year.

• (1320)

[Translation]

Our government understands the importance of an armed force that will monitor our coast lines, protect our continent, contribute to international peace and security, and help during natural disasters, but all of that is impossible without the active role played by our businesses and workers.

To sum up, Canada's defence and security industry makes an important contribution to our economy. It provides high-paying, innovative work to thousands of Canadians in various economic sectors all across the country. We should be proud of the Canadians working in that industry.

The NDP should not so callously abandon the thousands of workers whose livelihoods depend on the survival of those companies.

[English]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I found that an absolutely fascinating 10 minutes of my life, to hear probably the most put together numbers of ridiculous comparisons of side issues, such as the supply chain opportunities, the knowledge-based economy, technological dynamism, technology spillovers, mission success, and then of course the insensitivity of the NDP. The issue here, and the member never mentioned it once, is whether there should be a committee to oversee the sale of arms to countries with dodgy human rights records. I would think that is not being insensitive.

I do not want to bring the conversation down, but let us talk about South Sudan, about massacres, about rapes, about the 170 armoured vehicles shipped into South Sudan, and about the weapons that Canadians are putting into Yemen. Let us talk about the fact that we now have a salesman to sell more weapons into the Middle East. How many credible regimes are there in the Middle East? Can we

even count them on more than two fingers? That is now the second largest.

I did not hear a single word about what the government will do to ensure we are not just selling weapons to countries that rape and kill their citizens. To me, that is a Canadian value. I might be insensitive, but it is the role of Parliament to ensure we stand up for something once in a while and ensure that when we sell weapons to countries, they are indeed allies that are sharing our values and not just murdering, raping and torturing their own citizens.

**Mr. David Lametti:** Mr. Speaker, I said at the outset of my comments in French that we were committed to greater transparency, ensuring that we did not export arms to places where we should not be exporting them, that we committed publicly to implementing the ATT, and we remain committed to that. We have been committed to that since the beginning of our mandate and even before, during the election campaign.

Obviously, what is happening in South Sudan is horrific and we condemn that violence. We are doing our best as a government being proactive in ensuring that these kinds of arms sales do not happen in the future.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, given the sensitivity of many of the issues that come before the House, one does not question the importance of human rights. There are other standing committees. We can talk about the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development or the Standing Committee on National Defence. Our committees are charged, through Standing Orders and the desire of Parliament, to deal with important issues.

Would my colleague not agree that there are subject matters such as this that are quite doable in standing committees? In fact, my understanding is that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development is planning to deal with this specific issue. I do not quite understand why the New Democrats want to form another standing committee when there is already a standing committee that is quite capable of dealing with what is being suggested in this opposition motion.

**Mr. David Lametti:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has hit on the main problem with the motion in front of us today, and that is it is superfluous. Standing committees deal with this and there are also a number of different parliamentary institutions, such as ministerial responsibility, that place responsibility where it should lie and allow these matters to be dealt with in a substantive and effective way.

There is no reason for this kind of duplication on this sort of committee. There are already committees in which opposition members participate in a very meaningful way, and will continue to do so.

*Business of Supply*

•(1325)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to address the motion before us today. There are a number of things that come to mind. I would like to start off by talking about the importance of human rights.

This is fairly universal. Canadians truly care about what is happening around the world. I do not question that. The Liberal Party does not question that. The Prime Minister and the Government of Canada not only do not question it, but are very much proactive on that file.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau brought Canada its Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We are a party of the charter. When I think even of my years in the Manitoba legislature, I cannot help but think of the late Izzy Asper, a gentleman who had the idea of having a human rights museum. Today, we have the Canadian human rights museum in Winnipeg, its first national museum.

There no doubt are individuals on all sides of the House who have played a leading role in different capacities in dealing with the issue of human rights. However, I do not believe for a moment that we should have to abandon our thoughts on human rights. We can be strong advocates, but at the same time recognize Canada's valuable contributions moving forward on a wide number of fronts.

We need to recognize Canada's defence industry. It plays a critical role not only in Canada's and other United Nations' militaries around the world, but it also plays an important role in providing thousands and thousands of jobs in all regions of our country. Our middle class is very much dependent on those jobs. There was a time when even New Democrats appreciated those jobs.

There is the multi-billion dollar, multi-year deal with Saudi Arabia, which the NDP is criticizing today. However, that was not the case a few months ago during the election. In fact, the leader of the New Democratic Party was very clear with Canadians, saying the New Democrats would not back out of the agreements. A local NDP member of Parliament guaranteed that the New Democrats would fulfill those contracts with Saudi Arabia. I found it interesting when one of the members said that some facts had changed. The only fact that has changed is that we are no longer in an election. While we were in the election, the New Democrats seemed more interested in those defence industry jobs. Today, they seem to have written that industry off.

Canada is one of the most proactive countries and is very much aware of human rights. We have things in place to ensure that as much as possible we have a responsible export policy.

The New Democrats are proposing yet another standing committee. One of the members said that the government of the day, the Prime Minister, said yes, to a separate standing committee on pay equity. It was an NDP motion. We acknowledged it as a good idea, we accepted it, and we voted for it. However, this motion is not a good idea. This is just not necessary.

I am surprised the New Democrats have chosen to politicize such an important issue to the degree they have. I could pull those very specific quotes where we hear hypocrisy oozing out on the issue. I wish I had the vocabulary to demonstrate, like Pat Martin used to do

from the New Democratic benches. I am sure people would recognize that what is happening today on this issue is of the utmost importance and Canadians need to be assured that the Government of Canada is in fact doing its job.

We are committed to enhancing both the rigour and transparency of Canada's export control progress. We are pursuing many parallel paths to do so. The foremost is ensuring that Canada becomes a member of the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty, known as the ATT.

•(1330)

The ATT aims to stop unregulated arms transfers that intensify and prolong conflict, lead to regional instability, facilitate violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses, and hinder social and economic development. It also promotes responsibility, transparency, and accountability in the global arms trade.

Canada already closely controls the export of all goods and technology listed on the export control list. This includes all dual-use goods and technology, not just military goods as required by the ATT. That would include things like chemicals that could be used in chemical warfare. It also includes nuclear-related things. The Government of Canada is aware of many different things and that is one of the reasons we have these export rules.

The government is committed to delivering more transparency so that the export control system combines national security along with human rights, along with Canadian jobs, and there is nothing wrong with defending Canadian jobs, and a domestic defence industry that supports Canada's military. It makes sense.

We have demonstrated tangible leadership with regard to the Arms Trade Treaty. The government is committed to ensuring that Canada becomes a state party to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Winnipeg is the home of Lloyd Axworthy, who is playing a leading role with respect to the ban of landmines. We have done all sorts of things on the global front dealing with humanitarian causes. Not only are we looking internally, but we are also looking at how Canada can play an international role at making sure the right thing is being done, that human rights are being advocated for in all regions of the world.

With the entry into force of the ATT in December 2014, Canada must accede to the treaty to become a state party to it. This process is being pursued as a priority by the Prime Minister and the government, but it will take some time as legislative and regulatory changes are expected and necessary before Canada can accede to the treaty itself.

I would encourage my friends in the New Democratic Party to look at the standing committees that we currently have. The NDP member on the foreign affairs standing committee would be aware of the fact that the foreign affairs committee is looking at this very issue. As opposed to playing politics within the chamber on this important issue, I would encourage members to look at that standing committee and its commitment to do a study, which is on its agenda. I would encourage them to pursue that.



*Business of Supply*

I posed a question earlier to an NDP member. I asked what the party's position is today with regard to the Saudi agreement. During the election campaign, those members were clear that they supported it. The leader of the New Democratic Party made it very clear as did the member of Parliament from London. I would ask the current members as they stand up and address the debate today if they have flip-flopped. If they have that is fine. I respect that. However, they should at least be transparent with Canadians as to what they hope to accomplish and whether they support the Saudi Arabia agreement.

•(1335)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to give my colleague some information that is a little more up to date. I am a member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. I am familiar with the issues the committee works on. Yes, we are going to address the issue of Canada's accession to the Arms Trade Treaty.

That being said, I encourage my colleague to read the motion. It is not about the Arms Trade Treaty, but rather about ongoing monitoring of various aspects of our arms exports abroad, as well as the broad trends and existing and future agreements. There is a whole range of issues that require ongoing monitoring by a permanent committee, and not just an ad hoc study that will sit on a shelf somewhere.

I would also like to inform my colleague about the situation in Saudi Arabia and in Yemen, including the number of people who were executed by the Saudi Arabian government in January after the election, the fact that we have seen images of Canadian arms being used in Yemen, and the fact that reports also now indicate and we have every reason to believe that Saudi Arabia, which is using Canadian arms, is responsible for war crimes in Yemen. Yes, that all happened in the past year, so I hope my colleague can understand the issue.

That being said, I know that Canadians want more information. They really want the House of Commons to follow up on issues that matter to them and they do not have a lot of information.

I am therefore using this opportunity to ask the following question: can my colleague tell me whether in 2015 the Government of Canada approved the sale of arms to the Hong Kong police, which represses dissidents, including booksellers and others? Can he answer me with a yes or a no?

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that the member actually acknowledged that the foreign affairs committee is in fact looking into the issue.

One of the things that I would suggest to the member—

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Mr. Speaker, I said the opposite. I said that the committee was not looking into these things. The hon. member is putting words in my mouth.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Order. That is a point of debate.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, if the member would just calm down a little, she would understand that what I have indicated is that they are in support of the foreign affairs committee looking into this particular issue.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** At the end of the day, what I would suggest—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** If I could just interrupt the hon. member for a moment, I am having a hard time hearing what is being said with all the shouting going back and forth. I am sure members have a lot to say to each other. If it is something that is very important, shouting across the floor is not going to do it. Members can just take it to the lobby or another room, and I am sure it will work out much better.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I hope we can kind of reset the clock on this.

The member proves the point I was making. In her question, she said that the standing committee on foreign affairs is in fact dealing with the issue. Is it dealing with it directly? What do members think they are going to be talking about when they talk about the Arms Trade Treaty? At least in part, they are going to be talking about what is in the motion. If the New Democrats really want to see an independent, stand-alone committee, maybe that will come out of the standing committee's recommendations. We do not know. We should at least allow the standing committee the opportunity to have a good, thorough debate and discussion on the issue.

It is interesting that it is the members opposite who are asking for more transparency, but when I posed the question they avoided a very important point. When they talk about Saudi Arabia, the NDP used to support the agreement. We have no idea whether or not they support it today. When we ask the question, the New Democrats evade it. They do not want to answer the question. Canadians have a right to know where the NDP is on the issue. The leader, during the election, when he was concerned about jobs and who knows what else, made it very clear that he supported the Saudi Arabia agreement.

However, to listen to the NDP members today, we doubt that. We begin to believe that they do not support it. Why can they not answer that very basic question?

•(1340)

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this important debate. Before I begin, I should indicate that I will be sharing my time with the member for Windsor West today.

I think it is really important that we start with what we are talking about and what we are not talking about. This is a forward-looking motion that is designed to achieve greater transparency and greater oversight. It calls upon Parliament to create, by amendment to the Standing Orders, an oversight committee for the issue of arms sales abroad and related procedural matters to that particular motion.

*Business of Supply*

The objective is to say, learning from what we have done in the past, how we can do better in the future. The proposition in the motion that is before Parliament today is that we create a committee that would study this because our allies are doing a much better job and because we lack the information they have to do that job. That is what I would like to focus on in my remarks today.

In the last couple of days we have been dealing with another important initiative, Bill C-22 in which the Government of Canada has liberally adverted to the experience in the United Kingdom with its security intelligence oversight committee, and called for greater accountability through that process and greater access for parliamentarians to information about national security operations in our country.

Today's motion would do the same thing, but in a different context. It would create oversight of how arms exports occur in Canada, particularly when we learn more information about human rights abuses that may or may not be occurring in a particular country.

Let us examine the situation in the United Kingdom. Just as the government would want us to learn from their experience in national security oversight, I am suggesting that the House could profit from learning about the United Kingdom experience in this same area.

It was over 15 years ago that the United Kingdom set up a parliamentary committee on arms export controls. That committee had people drawn from a whole variety of other parliamentary committees to examine all aspects of the United Kingdom arms exports, from licensing to broader policy issues such as human rights. Every year in that country there is a government annual report on U.K. arms exports, and it has recently been focusing on exports to countries of concern, many of which are the subject of the debate we are having here today. It is looking at the role, for example, of U.K. exports to Saudi Arabia and the war in Yemen, which of course are very much at the core of why this debate is before us today.

That is about oversight, but what about the need for greater transparency and information? The British public, through that committee, has had much more access to information about what is going on so that they can hold their government to account as to the extent to which arms exports are being sent to countries most people in Britain would not want to receive them.

What is the situation in Canada? We have an Access to Information Act, but its exceptions swallow the rule. The moment anything to do with international affairs or foreign policy comes up, it is a black hole. The ability to actually find out what is going on is very limited. This committee would be an opportunity to hear, not just from the public, NGOs and the like but also from people in industry, which is perfectly appropriate, as well as government representations and indeed the public so that we can have a broader national conversation about this important issue.

I had the honour of working with the former member for Mount Royal, Irwin Cotler, a champion of international human rights, and we are on a committee called the Raoul Wallenberg human rights committee, with members drawn from all the representative parties here. We had the opportunity to meet the wife of Raif Badawi here in Ottawa, who was arrested and imprisoned in that country for

insulting Islam, sentenced to 10 years and a thousand lashes. That international human rights debate was the subject of great concern across this country.

We have understood in recent years more than we understood before about where Canada's arms are going. I will admit, I had no idea the extent to which Canadian arms abroad have become an important component of international trade in arms. Canada's weapons exports have nearly doubled over the last 10 years. I confess, I did not know that.

● (1345)

In fact, Canada is the second-largest arms dealer in the Middle East, according to *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*, the defence industry publication. Now Saudi Arabia is the world's second-largest buyer of Canadian-made military equipment after the United States. I do not think many Canadians are aware of that information. It may be that I am the last to know these things, but I find it very disturbing, as I think a lot of Canadians would, that we have become such an important arms export contributor in the international sphere.

Therefore, I ask myself, what do we have to hide as a country? Why can we not know more? Why can we not know the human rights records of the countries to which we are sending arms? Yes, we have assessments, but those human rights assessments have been watered down over the years. They are not as available as they should be to the Canadian public and to us so that we as the representatives of the public can have a better idea of just exactly where our money is being spent, where our arms are going, and the extent to which we are contributors to world peace. I think that is something that we need to look at very carefully.

Apparently our existing arms export rules have changed over the years. They are supposed to prohibit sales of military hardware to countries "whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens", and here is the condition, "unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population". Well obviously there are problems, because we have seen in the Saudi example how arms sent to that country for domestic purposes have been diverted to put down Shia protests in one part of the eastern provinces of Saudi Arabia, and, it seems, to be used by the Saudis in countries like Yemen, where human rights atrocities have been so widespread. Over 6,000 people have been killed there.

Do Canadians realize that their arms may be used in that theatre of war? Do we not need to know whether light armoured vehicles, which are used for the suppression of those people, are in fact made in Canada? Maybe that is good public policy. Why can we not have a committee tasked with doing just that, not as an add-on to other work that the foreign affairs committee might be doing but as a stand-alone committee to address what is obviously a growing and important industry in our country, and its ramifications? Why is that any different from what we do with other committees that look at an area of our economy and address its ramifications?

*Business of Supply*

Why would the House be opposed to greater transparency and accountability through an oversight mechanism like the British have? Why does the current government refuse to see that what it proposed two days ago in one bill, following the U.K. example of oversight and transparency, should not be used a couple of days later in another important area of our economy and society? That is what is before the House today. I really fail to see how this can be politicized as if we were somehow trying to talk about past events, who supported what and who did not, and how much information we had at a particular time versus how much we have now.

Anyone who has seen the videos of the repression of Saudi citizens with Canadian light armoured vehicles at least has to ask questions about whether we are on the right track. We do not have time, as parliamentarians, to cover every single piece of policy. Why can we not give a multi-party committee the opportunity to look at it, to get the information that members need, and to report to Canadians what it can legitimately report to them about what is going on with our dollars abroad?

That is what is before us today. I urge the House to support a motion that would provide greater accountability and greater oversight of our arms export industry.

• (1350)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is a question for my colleague more on the form of debate today. My colleague just gave a very impassioned speech, and earlier in the House the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie also gave a very impassioned speech. While we might not all agree on this, sometimes we get passionate.

The member for Winnipeg North used a turn of phrase that a couple of my colleagues mentioned. He told the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie to “just calm down”. I am just wondering if my colleague would like to comment on the appropriateness of that turn of phrase, given that there were a lot of other men who gave speeches in the House today that were equally impassioned, but that turn of phrase was not used to them.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, if anyone felt offended by it, I would apologize. However, I would let the member know that it was a point of order that was raised as I was answering the question at the time. It is not necessarily to justify it, but it is just to apologize.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** That is more of a debate. I am not sure if this is going anywhere.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, very briefly.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, I accept the apology from my colleague opposite. However, I would note that he has a very bright and dynamic young woman as a daughter who is a member of the Manitoba legislature—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I am going to have to cut that off, because I believe that is going to debate.

The hon. member for Victoria.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if I have much to add on that.

I understand the debate that the member for Calgary Nose Hill is having with the member for Winnipeg North. I hope I was not

accused of using any inappropriate language. I do not have anything to add to that debate.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the crux of the motion that we are discussing here today really is accountability. I would like my friend to talk about what the Liberals have to fear with greater accountability.

What we are asking for here, quite simply, is parliamentary oversight via a review process done by elected officials sworn to serve this country and to ensure that the products we export, which are similar to asbestos or other toxic materials, do not cause significant health dangers and the death of others.

What is wrong with accountability?

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Speaker, of course, I agree entirely. We should follow the truth where it leads.

Accountability sometimes means learning unpleasant truths. When we have more information, it sometimes puts a different perspective on what we think we know. What is sadly lacking, of course, is that kind of information.

The member used the example of asbestos. When I was growing up, asbestos was everywhere. Now we are spending billions to remove it, because we know more. I think we can follow that logic in this area as well with the billions of dollars in sales of Canadian products to other countries, which may or may not be contributing to peace.

When we learn more, we might consider that is the case. We might also learn that we used to sell primarily to NATO allies and that we are now selling to countries like Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and China to a larger degree, countries where human rights abuses may or may be taking place.

Accountability means learning more, getting more information, learning the truth, and making informed decisions with the information we have. That is what this motion is about. I do not see why we cannot accept it.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on such an important motion. I thank my colleague for putting it forward. A lot of hard work and thought went into this substantive motion. It is an important issue. It has several aspects showing that this is a serious issue for our country that needs to set an example, especially after our government has been saying, “Canada is back”. I suppose what we are showing here is that Canada is back, in continuing arms sales in an unaccounted way.

What I also find really difficult about the situation is why would we abdicate our responsibility for products and goods once we sell them by saying, “It’s not our fault, but because the receiving country sold them to somebody else”, or “they decided not to follow the rule of law or the order that has been made before”.

*Statements by Members*

However, let us look at the reality. Some of the countries that have Canadian-made weapons do not even have proper relationships with Canada. These weapons are ending up in other jurisdictions. Some are sold directly to nations where we have an embassy and other types of connections and so forth. But after their use, perhaps in a second life, sometimes what we are debating is the first life cycle. This is the first life, but in the second life cycle and the third life cycle, they can end up abroad. We would have to look no further than proxy wars like that in Yemen where we have these situations.

All we are calling for is having accountability back in the chamber so that all Canadians will have a connection to the products and services that are exported outside our country and will have their say in that, by having representatives who are informed about that. It goes to committee. When witnesses are called to committee, if they lie or make up information that is not truthful and knowingly present it to committee, that is perjury. There is an accountability measure in the committee system, more than just public shame and public opinion. That is law.

I think that is the fairest thing to do when some of our customers then use our machines, our materials, to do things that were not supposed to be done.

The reason I mentioned asbestos earlier is that, quite literally, Canada was exporting death with asbestos. Pat Martin, a former member of Parliament, spent more than a decade working on this issue, raising it, bringing up the fact that men, women, and children were often dealing with asbestos without having the proper safety requirements for this, a product that is now illegal in Canada, but which it was okay for others to use, in that once it was out the door, "Don't worry about it. We're all done with it".

How can we say this on such an important issue when we know our customer base is growing in regions where there is significant conflict and war and, in fact, where regimes are often using tactics that include the use of weapons against their civilian populations? Are we supposed to abdicate our responsibility for that?

I believe that if we do the right thing and have that accountability, it will increase the responsibility of our customer base and also improve our chances of making sure that other illegal arms are not dispersed to countries and other jurisdictions.

In fact, we are not the only country doing this. The United Kingdom, for example, is going through the same process. Why does it matter? It matters because their public money is often involved in this. So, they have a right have a say in that.

When we look at some of the programs that we are assisting arms manufacturers with, they include research and development, supports for exporting and, thanks to the previous governments, a series of tax cuts that have gone unaccountable, in terms of where that money went. Often, much of that money left Canada anyway, but the reality of the matter is that Canadians have a vested interested financially and ethically, in social justice terms, to have that accountability in this chamber. There is no better place to do it.

• (1355)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. member will have four minutes and 49 seconds remaining when debate resumes.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

[*Translation*]

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec's National Assembly is unanimous: health falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec. The transfers have to be maintained at 6% without conditions.

The government chose the worst scenario. It unilaterally imposed the Conservative cuts along with the NDP conditions. It is time the Liberals listened to reason. By refusing to hold the transfer increase at 6%, the government is attacking the quality of care delivered in Quebec. This is not trivial. The government is attacking sick people in Quebec.

That is why I am inviting the 40 Quebec members of the Liberal caucus to take a clear stand. Are they for or against the unanimous will of the National Assembly, clearly expressed this morning, to have the necessary funds for its health care system?

The Bloc Québécois is standing up for the sick; what about the Liberals?

\* \* \*

• (1400)

[*English*]

**MONTREAL EXPOS**

**Mr. Marc Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 12 years ago today, over 31,000 fans gathered at the Big O to thank and bid farewell to the Expos. After 36 years and nearly 3,000 games, MLB in Montreal came to an end on the same day that the 1994 Expos were recognized as the best team in baseball. From Jarry Park to the Big O, Rusty Staub to Vlad Guerrero, and sadly, to Blue Monday, the Expos were an unforgettable part of Montreal and Canada.

[*Translation*]

I am sure there are Canadians across the country who still remember that last baseball game and who still wear an Expos cap with pride in their heart and a tear in their eye. I am sure that they, like me, dream of the day when baseball and the 'Spos return to Montreal. I hope that I will one day be able to take my kids to a game so they can watch the Expos trounce none other than the Blue Jays.

[*English*]

Let's go, Expos.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL SENIORS DAY**

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my gratitude to the seniors in my riding and to those throughout Canada. As members know, October 1 is National Seniors Day, and I want to take a moment to acknowledge the great contributions of seniors across the nation.

The current economic downturn and higher taxes from the current government make seniors more vulnerable. Also, the baby boomers have joined the ranks of seniors, posing a challenge in ensuring that their needs are met.

The last decade has seen changes in Canadian society, from homegrown terrorism to a large influx of refugees. This may cause some concern among seniors. However, we must ensure that these concerns are dealt with equality and respect.

\* \* \*

#### ELSIE WAYNE

**Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1993, the then Progressive Conservative Party opposite was reduced to two members. Today I rise to pay tribute to one of them, Elsie Wayne, better known as just Elsie.

Elsie Fairweather Wayne passed away on August 23 at the age of 84, surrounded by her loving husband Buzzy and two children, Daniel and Stephen.

Elsie started in politics in 1977, first as a city councillor then in 1984 as mayor, and finished her career in politics as the member of Parliament for Saint John, serving from 1993 to 2004. She loved her greatest little city in the east.

Elsie played a pivotal role in shaping the future direction of the Progressive Conservative Party and served briefly as its interim leader.

I have many fond memories, especially from her later years as such a loyal fan of the Saint John Sea Dogs. I did not always agree with what she said, but it was hard not to admire her strength and conviction. She was truly the people's MP, an MP I strive to be every day in Saint John—Rothesay.

\* \* \*

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I bring good news from Nanaimo—Ladysmith. Climate action is a win-win for our local economy and our global environment. We are innovating and cutting greenhouse gas emissions while adding well-paying jobs.

Two groups are building affordable housing with energy conservation in Nanaimo. VIU carpentry students have dedicated 5,000 hours of work to Habitat for Humanity's new build. The Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre is building affordable housing using a passive energy design that uses 80% less energy.

This is good news countrywide. Canada's green-building industry employs more direct full-time workers than the forestry, mining, and the oil and gas industries combined.

On November 10, we will celebrate climate solutions, innovation, and job creation at Nanaimo's John Barsby school. The climate fair is at 5:30 p.m., and the forum is at 7:00 p.m. I invite all members to come and add their voices on climate solutions that add green jobs.

#### Statements by Members

#### CANADIAN GOLF HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

**Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize a constituent of Etobicoke—Lakeshore, my good friend Bob Weeks. Bob Weeks is known by many for his on-air reporting work, as an analyst for TSN covering golf and curling, and previously as the editor of *SCOREGolf* magazine.

Today I want to recognize Bob following his induction into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame in July, a recognition that is well deserved. However, this is nothing new for Mr. Weeks, as he had previously been inducted into the Ontario Golf Hall of Fame, the Curling Canada Hall of Fame, and best of all, the Etobicoke Sports Hall of Fame.

I would like to congratulate and recognize Bob for his many contributions and achievements over a diverse career, but with all of these halls, I think his next stop is the hall of fame of halls of fame.

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● (1405)

[Translation]

#### RICHMOND—ARTHABASKA PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, during the Paralympic Games in Rio, I was glued to my computer screen watching the three athletes from my riding perform brilliantly.

Paralympic athletes exemplify the “where there's a will, there's a way” mindset, and we can all learn something from their determination and perseverance.

Para-cyclist Nicole Clermont of Saint-Denis-de-Brompton came in ninth in the 3,000-metre race, but a fall forced her to give up her third-place position in the 72-kilometre race.

Guillaume Ouellet, a para-athlete from Victoriaville, took fourth place in the 5,000 metres. He also ran a personal best in the 1,500-metre race.

Para-cyclist Charles Moreau of Victoriaville won bronze in both the 60-kilometre race and the time trial.

Watching you all was thrilling, and I know that my House of Commons colleagues will join me in congratulating you. Congratulations to the three of you and to all Canadian athletes.

*Statements by Members**[English]***CANADIAN VETERANS**

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to recognize two of my constituents who live at Stillwater Creek Retirement Community, each of whom are veterans who proudly served our country. Rear Admiral William Christie was a chief engineer in the Royal Canadian Navy and is currently the oldest living Canadian admiral. He celebrated his 97th birthday on September 21.

I would also like to recognize Able Seaman George Melnechuk, who this year was awarded the Legion of Honour from France for his heroism and courage during World War II. He celebrated his 92nd birthday on September 22.

I invite all members to join me in commending Rear Admiral Christie and Able Seaman Melnechuk for their service and dedication to Canada.

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**VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

**Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, southwest Nova Scotia is having the worst drought it has seen in many years. This summer a forest fire destroyed 400 hectares of woodland in South Shore—St. Margarets and West Nova, and it raged for days.

Not all of my hon. colleagues may know this, but in much of rural Nova Scotia, firefighters are all volunteers and put in countless hours of training in preparing to keep our forests, families, and communities safe.

Volunteers worked around the clock for days, not only battling the fire but also supporting the firefighters. Volunteers fundraised, collected donations, and made sure that our volunteer firefighters were fed and hydrated. Many local businesses continued to pay their employees while they were fighting these fires.

The fire was eventually contained, our beloved Kejimikujik National Park was saved, and nobody was injured. I would like to ask all members of the House to join me in thanking our volunteer fire services and the communities that support them.

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**DAVID ALEXANDER WILLIAM COOK**

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this past week we lost a great Canadian, and I lost a great friend and adviser, David Alexander William Cook. I have great memories of my visits with Dave. I remember going into his dealership, Farm World, and sitting down with Dave and his sister Marge to discuss farm machinery, trade, grain prices, the situation in Ukraine, and other issues. We always had great discussions, and he would present his ideas with great passion and tenacity.

He was a truly gifted salesman, and he could sell and convince like no one else. His dealership was known for flying out parts to customers, and he sold huge volumes of New Holland combines and tractors across the Prairies. Every farmer across the Prairies knew of Farm World and Dave Cook. He was a big man who had a big heart,

who loved his family, his employees and customers, and the Lord. We will miss Dave. I will miss Dave.

To his wife Donna, his five children, and his 16 grandchildren, please accept our condolences, but also take comfort in knowing that Dave is in a better place and remembering all the great things Dave did. He was truly an exceptional man and an exceptional Canadian.

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● (1410)

*[Translation]***CANADIAN YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM**

**Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is the perfect time to be young. Yesterday, the member for London—Fanshawe, the member for Simcoe North, and I attended the launch of the EF Canadian youth ambassador program, which will send 30 Canadian youth to represent Canada at the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

I invite all members to participate in this program and to nominate students from their riding.

*[English]*

I am also proud to stand here as one of many in our caucus who are setting up local youth councils in our ridings to hear the priorities of our young people.

I therefore encourage the students in Whitby to submit their applications to my office before tomorrow's deadline.

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**CANADIAN CONSULAR OFFICERS**

**Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am usually sworn to silence by privacy and diplomatic confidentiality. However today I want to talk about the success of our team.

I want to thank the army of consular officers in Canada and abroad. They know how important their job is, and they work around the clock to assist Canadians. The fruits of their labour are not always made public, but the last few weeks have been a brilliant example.

I also want to express my gratitude to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister. Their unequivocal leadership sends a strong message to the world that Canada will never give up on its citizens.

I want to thank MPs on all sides for raising consular cases while avoiding tempting partisanship shots. The families of Canadians stuck abroad inspire me with their grace and determination. My fellow Canadians should try to avoid getting in trouble when travelling, but they should know that their government will always have their back.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**JACQUES DEMERS**

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House to highlight Senator Jacques Demers's induction into the Quebec Sports Hall of Fame.

True to his reputation for overcoming any obstacle, Mr. Demers wanted to be in Terrebonne to accept this honour.

For all Canadians experiencing family, educational or health challenges, Jacques Demers has been and continues to be a great source of inspiration, pride and, above all, hope. He was always smiling, as is typical of someone with an unflinchingly positive outlook on life and a firm belief that no challenge is too great.

I invite my colleagues to congratulate Jacques, to thank him for continuing to inspire us, and to wish him a quick recovery.

Go, Jacques, go.

\* \* \*

[English]

**SHIMON PERES**

**Mr. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to remember Shimon Peres, a pillar of Israel's founding generation and one its most respected statesmen. He gave more than 60 years of his life to better the lives of others.

Having served as both prime minister and president, Shimon Peres worked relentlessly to establish Israel's independence.

[Translation]

Having guided his country through several defining moments, Shimon Peres was a visionary.

Even in the most difficult situations, he remained optimistic and determined to reunite Palestinians and Israelis in a peaceful coexistence.

[English]

Today, the Prime Minister and members of the Canadian delegation departed for Israel. They carry with them the condolences of this House and, indeed, all of the country.

Shimon Peres was a patriot whose pursuit of lasting peace will live on as a blessing and inspiration for all future generations.

*Yehay Zichrono Levrachah.*

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[Translation]

**SAINT-LUCIEN CRANBERRY FESTIVAL**

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today in the House to invite Canadians to participate in the very first edition of the Saint-Lucien cranberry festival, which will take place on October 7 and 8. Events include cranberry farm tours, a country market, entertainment, games, activities, and more.

This summer, as I was doing my usual tour of the municipalities, I visited several cranberry farms and I was pleased to note what a vibrant community Saint-Lucien is.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the organizing committee of this event, which is led by the president of the cranberry festival, David Gauthier, as well as the municipality of Saint-Lucien. This wonderful citizen-driven initiative promotes the development and vitality of their community. In addition, the participation of residents of Saint-Lucien will no doubt contribute to the success of this festival.

Come and discover our region. I hope you will join us at the cranberry festival. Come have some fun at this unique event in our lovely region, the greater Drummond area.

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● (1415)

[English]

**NATIONAL SENIORS DAY**

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, October 1, this Saturday, Canadians will celebrate National Seniors Day by taking time to pay tribute to seniors. They are also going to thank local organizations that are helping seniors.

For over 32 years, Langley Meals on Wheels has been providing hot, nutritious, affordable meals to Langley seniors. It serves seniors whose lives are changed, making them somewhat dependent on volunteers to help them maintain a healthy lifestyle. Langley Meals on Wheels delivers hot, fresh, homemade, cooked meals and provides important friendships for those who may be isolated or at risk.

Providing loving care to our seniors at home, helping them keep their independence, gives them dignity and demonstrates our appreciation for them.

This National Seniors Day, I want to acknowledge the incredible work done by the volunteers at Langley Meals on Wheels for their ongoing love and support for seniors.

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**PRIME MINISTER'S YOUTH COUNCIL**

**Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister for youth, I would like to welcome the first 15 Canadians who have been selected to serve on the Prime Minister's youth council, a council that will represent the diversity of our country and bring a strong voice for youth issues from coast to coast to coast. They were selected from more than 13,000 applications that have been submitted thus far.

[Translation]

These young people's enthusiasm shows that, if they are given the chance, they will seize any opportunity to make their voices heard.

I encourage the young people who applied but were not chosen to take heart. Your application will automatically be considered for the second wave of youth council recruitment, and the new members will be announced in early 2017.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

I extend my congratulations to these incredible young Canadians. On behalf of the entire House, I welcome them to our nation's capital today.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister has a real problem on his hands. He agreed to attend a private invitation-only reception hosted by a huge law firm. This might not be a problem if only that firm did not do legal work for the Irving family, and it might not be a problem if the lobbying arm of the firm did not lobby for the Irving family. This is a buffet of conflicts of interest.

How could the fisheries minister agree to be the guest of honour at this exclusive reception?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some time ago I was invited by one of the leading law firms in Atlantic Canada to attend an annual event for the business community in Toronto. It is the same event where Premier Stephen McNeil of Nova Scotia spoke last year. I was looking forward to telling those business leaders about our government's Atlantic growth strategy and how this government is investing in historic ways in Atlantic Canada. That is the purpose of going.

If the hon. member thinks there is something wrong with telling business leaders about what our government is doing in Atlantic Canada, I disagree with her.

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is very interesting because the fisheries minister is also the Prime Minister's point man on litigation involving the government, and his job is to manage all the legal action the government is facing. When a huge law firm comes calling to ask him to be the guest of honour at a reception and it boasts and bills him as a trusted adviser of the Prime Minister, there should have been some alarm bells.

How could the fisheries minister not realize that this is a conflict of interest? Where is his judgment?

• (1420)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to tell the member where my judgment is. My judgment is such that, when I received that invitation, I asked the Ethics Commissioner for her advice as to whether it was appropriate to attend that event. She confirmed to me in writing that it was. The hon. member has significant difficulty understanding that. On this side of the House, we always respect our ethical obligations.

We are not afraid to tell the whole country about the important work our government is doing in Atlantic Canada. I will never apologize for talking about the Atlantic growth strategy with business leaders anywhere in Canada.

**The Speaker:** I want to remind the hon. member that all members here can understand things. We do not want to question the ability of members to be able to understand things.

The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here again we have the Liberals defending their actions by saying the rules made me do it. How about some good judgment when it comes to conflicts of interest?

The minister of fisheries is in charge of the government's litigation strategy. He has been ordered by the Ethics Commissioner to not have any dealings with the Irvings. The law firm hosting this party recently represented J.D. Irving Limited in court, and that same firm is now promoting its access to the minister. If it walks like a conflict of interest, if it talks like a conflict of interest, it is a conflict of interest.

Where is the minister's judgment?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my judgment told me that when I received this invitation, as many members of Parliament and ministers do, I asked the Ethics Commissioner if it was appropriate for me to attend. This is an annual event that has taken place over a number of years where guest speakers are invited to meet the business community in Toronto, hosted by a particular law firm.

Law firms do not tell the public who is on their client lists. Nothing about that event speaks to a particular file, a particular client, or particular litigation. This is an event to talk about our government's proud record in Atlantic Canada.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government should spend a little less time with its friends and more time taking care of its provincial partners.

When it comes to health care transfers, no one can say that the government has a very good relationship with the provinces. Instead we see an obvious lack of leadership on the Liberals' part and an unprecedented degree of interference into provincial jurisdictions.

When will the minister really listen to her provincial counterparts and eliminate the conditions attached to the health transfers?

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just today I met with two health ministers, including Quebec's minister of health and social services.

Canadians are proud of their public health care system and they expect their government to make sure that it will always be there for them. The Canada health transfer is going to increase by over \$1 billion next year, bringing it up to more than \$37 billion.

I will continue holding meetings with my provincial and territorial counterparts.



*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it just so happens that the federal minister told us yesterday she had had some good discussions with her provincial counterparts, but Quebec's health minister said no discussion had taken place.

Today, about an hour ago, the minister stated that she is extremely worried about what is going on in health care. The facts are the facts. The government is treating the provinces paternalistically and infringing on their jurisdiction. That is against Canadian federalism.

When will they show some respect for their provincial counterparts and eliminate the conditions attached to health transfers?

[*English*]

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to meet not one but two of my provincial counterparts today in Ottawa to discuss with them the importance of health care in our country. I have had good discussions with all of my colleagues across the country. I respect their jurisdiction.

Canadians do well when all stakeholders collaborate, and that includes every level of government that has a responsibility for health care. This will be necessary for Canadians to have the health care they need and deserve.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, by breaking their promise and adopting Stephen Harper's cuts to health care, the government is letting Canadians down.

Now the premiers are denouncing the lack of consultation and conservative approach that the Liberal government has adopted. They are also protesting the decision of the Liberals to impose over \$1 billion in federal cuts on the provinces next year alone.

Will the federal government reverse these cuts to provinces and agree to their simple request to sit down with the Prime Minister?

• (1425)

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important that the House understands the facts clearly. There will be no cuts to health care. In fact, the Canada health transfer will grow next year. I look forward to very excellent conversations with my counterparts across the country.

Canadians want a health care system that is there for them. All levels of government have a responsibility in that. When we work together, we will find synergies, and we will ensure Canadians have the health care they need.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is hard to believe when the Prime Minister has been ignoring the request of the provinces to meet since July.

The Liberals promised that they would not make any changes without negotiating with the provinces. In opposition, the Liberal health critic called the 50% cut to the health escalator walking away from medicare. However, now in government, the Liberals have adopted that very reduction, and unilaterally will remove \$36 billion from health care and continue to ignore requests for a meeting.

Could the minister please explain how this is real change?

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the approach of this government to health care is fundamentally different from anything we have seen in the last decade.

The Prime Minister made it very clear to me that he wanted me to negotiate a new health accord with the provinces and territories, and that is exactly what I am in the process of doing.

We will not only increase the Canada health transfer, but we will negotiate new investments in health. We will ensure that Canadians have the home care they need. We will make the transformations. I will do that in collaboration with my colleagues.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are on board with Stephen Harper's health care cuts, and the provinces are furious. The Liberals said they wanted good-faith negotiations with the provinces, but now that they are in power, they are unilaterally cutting \$36 billion and trying to impose a list of conditions on Quebec.

Does the minister understand that people wanted to do away with Stephen Harper and his policies?

[*English*]

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government is not making cuts to health care.

I am actually curious as to how members of the New Democratic Party think they would not have had to make drastic cuts when they said they were going to deliver a balanced budget.

This government is prepared to invest new money in health care. We are prepared to work with our counterparts across the country to invest in home care, and to ensure Canadians have better access to mental health care.

I look forward to delivering a new health accord.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the government is saying one thing and doing another. All of the provinces, particularly Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia, denounced the government's approach to health care accords. The people of those provinces are having déjà vu. They are very familiar with that attitude. It is exactly the same as the Conservatives'.

How many provinces will it take for the government to listen to reason and cancel its cuts?

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have had very good discussions with my counterparts across the country, and that includes all of the health ministers.

We will keep talking about what we need to do to improve health care systems across Canada.

*Oral Questions*

Canadians expect us to work together. We are working closely with the provinces and territories. We will improve Canadians' health care system.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we already have a Toronto minister responsible for Atlantic economic development. We have the possibility that a Toronto judge could take the Atlantic Canada spot on the Supreme Court. Now to get in good with the Prime Minister's Atlantic kingpin, one has to get an invitation to a private reception in Toronto, literally being held on Toronto Street.

The Minister of Fisheries secret event is billed "Get the Atlantic Edge". Why does getting the Atlantic edge have to mean dodgy unethical cocktail parties in downtown Toronto?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it will not surprise you that the exaggerated and fabricated beginning of that question around ethical challenges is exactly that.

When I received the invitation, the commissioner confirmed to me in writing that it was appropriate for me to accept that invitation. The member knows very well that ministers and members of Parliament attend events around the country all the time.

The Atlantic growth strategy announced by my colleague, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, in Prince Edward Island in July is something all of us are proud of and I welcome an opportunity to talk about it.

• (1430)

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to his ethical screen, perhaps the minister has misunderstood the definition of the word "screen". Maybe he is thinking about an enormous screen door with great big holes in it, big enough for him and his friends to jump through. However, I do not think that is what Canadians have in mind.

Where is the minister's judgment?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, all ministers and all members of our government have an ethical judgment that is entirely superior to that member's former party. When we receive invitations like this, we proactively reach out to the Ethics Commissioner. Her office confirms that it is entirely appropriate for us to accept events like that.

The member knows very well that it is the ethical and proper way to handle these sorts of situations. That is exactly what I did. I am sorry he is so traumatized that our government is engaged in Atlantic Canada.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Most members on all sides have the ability to sit here quietly and listen to things that are provocative from the other side. I am asking that we all do that now and let us listen to the member for Huron—Bruce.

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Group m5 is the lobbying and PR wing of the law firm where the minister will

be the guest of honour on Wednesday. It has a long list of clients, including Irving Oil and J.D. Irving.

What a coup it must be to have the Prime Minister's Atlantic kingpin and trusted adviser. The problem is that the minister is not supposed to have anything to do with the Irvings. That should include clinking glasses at fancy Toronto restaurants with lobbyists.

How could the minister not see this blatant violation of his own ethics declaration?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, if the Ethics Commissioner in her judgment does not see any violation whatsoever, the hon. member should accept her judgment. On this side of the House, we value her judgment with respect to ethics considerably more than that member's.

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with answers like that, I think the fisheries minister is going to get to know Justices Charbonneau and Gomery really quick and really long.

The ethically challenged fisheries minister has had rules forced on him by the Ethics Commissioner, so he cannot have any dealings with Irving. Therefore, what is he going to do on Wednesday? He is going to break every rule the Ethics Commissioner told him not to do. There are 330 MPs in the House who see the conflict. Why can the minister not see it?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, simply because the member fabricates and asserts a falsehood does not make it true. I have received written confirmation from the Ethics Commissioner—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister knows that we do not suggest that a member fabricates falsehoods in the House of Commons.

We will go on to the member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian history is littered with Liberals doing whatever they can to help out Liberal lobbyists, and they always have the same excuses. They will say they followed the rules. They will say this is just us listening and consulting with people. They will say I was just doing this as an MP, not a minister. However, every time it is friends of the Liberal Party who get access, favours and closed-door meetings.

I will ask this one more time. Where is this member's judgment?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my judgment is that it is important for Canadians to understand our government's commitment to growing the Atlantic economy.

That is why, when I received this invitation, I forwarded it to the Ethics Commissioner to confirm that nothing inappropriate was the case with my attending the event. I received that confirmation at which point I accepted the invitation.

To go to any group to talk about our government's commitment to growing the Atlantic economy, to welcoming new immigrants to Atlantic Canada, I am proud to do so, and I will take every opportunity I can to do exactly that.

• (1435)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard accepted an invitation to attend a private cocktail party at a law firm. That would not be a problem if the firm in question did not have ties to the Irving family. It would not be a problem if the firm was not lobbying for Irving. It is a conflict of interest festival.

How can the Minister of Fisheries agree to be the guest of honour at this reception? Where is his judgment?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, under no circumstances would I place myself in a conflict of interest. That is precisely why I sought the advice of the Commissioner before accepting the invitation.

When she confirmed that it was appropriate for me to speak to a group of Toronto business leaders about the economy in Atlantic Canada and our government's commitment to grow the Canadian economy, I was pleased to accept the invitation.

\* \* \*

[English]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a report issued today confirms that Canada is not on track to achieve its 2020 emissions reduction goal. This dire prediction was reached even before the approval of a new LNG project, emitting what some are calling a carbon bomb of 10 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year.

Canadians want action, so where are the promised investments in clean energy alternatives for northern communities? Where are the investments in energy-efficient housing? Where is the plan to deploy green infrastructure? We are running out of time.

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government understands that the environment and the economy go together.

I was very pleased to hear Rachel Notley, the Premier of Alberta, say this with respect to yesterday's budget approval. She said that this was "an important combination of sustainable economic growth while ensuring that you address environmental issues".

I would also like to refer to Brian Cochrane. He is a business manager for a union representing over 12,000 members in B.C. He said that the Pacific NorthWest LNG's project environmental approval was very good news for B.C. members of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 115 who were standing by to help build this important energy facility.

### Oral Questions

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on a day when we are talking about the Prime Minister's youth council, maybe we should start thinking about what kind of planet we are leaving for those young people.

[Translation]

Torture is immoral. It is ineffective and goes against every one of our international commitments to human rights. The ministerial directive allowing the use of information obtained through torture is still in place under the Liberals. This practice tarnishes Canada's reputation and certainly goes against our values.

Will the government repeal that directive or not?

**Mr. Michel Picard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, obviously we do not agree with this type of activity. However, ministerial directives are there to protect the safety and security of Canadians as well as their rights and freedoms. Although the directives are currently being reviewed, they are part of our consultation processes. They are also the reason why we submitted the plan for a committee of parliamentarians for study: precisely to review this type of activity.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberals claimed that Brookfield relocation services apologized to them, yet today it was confirmed that no such apology was ever issued. As a matter of fact, all we got was more damning evidence. In a statement yesterday, Brookfield confirmed our assertion that Telford and Butts claimed expenses with no justification or receipts.

These so-called personalized cash payouts need to be explained. Why did the Prime Minister sign off on these?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just in case nobody has heard the answer before, these relocation policies have been in place since the 1970s. They were most recently reviewed by the previous Conservative government in 2011. Our government recognizes that these policies need to be reviewed, and that is why our Prime Minister has asked the President of the Treasury Board to review the relocation policies.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask that the minister take this seriously, please. The Prime Minister's friends were shamed into giving some of that money back. However, everyone knows that a bank robber who returns part of the loot does not get away without repercussions.

### Oral Questions

Telford and Butts occupy the most powerful unelected positions in the government. They accepted money that now even they claim was unjustified. When will the Prime Minister do the right thing and explain why they were given it in the first place?

• (1440)

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member has heard my response, time and again. If she does not like my response, maybe she wants to hear it from Guy Giorno, former chief of staff to Stephen Harper. He said:

The federal relocation program—which applies to hundreds of moves annually, including moves by employees of government, military and RCMP—exists for a very good reason.

The relocation process is run by an independent third party. The third party determines the actual costs according to program criteria.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has a never-ending supply of excuses to defend the Prime Minister's friend and his chief of staff.

Yesterday, they told the House that the moving company lied. However, that is not true. My father always used to say that when you constantly change your story, it is most certainly because you have something to hide.

Why is the Prime Minister unable to simply say to Canadians that his staff and his government have the bad habit of abusing taxpayers' money?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the policy on the reimbursement of moving expenses has been in place since the 1970s. It was Stephen Harper's Conservatives who developed this policy.

We know that this policy needs to be reviewed. That is why the Prime Minister has asked the Treasury Board to revisit this policy.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, not only did the moving company not lie, but it said that some expenses were claimed without providing receipts. It bears repeating that repaying expenses only because you were caught red-handed does not make it acceptable.

This Prime Minister and this government must show some discipline when handling the money of Canadian families.

When will they stop spending money recklessly and defending the indefensible?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if members do not want to listen to my response, they perhaps might listen to Guy Giorno, a former chief of staff, who said that the relocation process was managed by an independent third party and that the third party determined the real costs based on the program's criteria.

### LABOUR

**Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals took office, they said that the days of lack of respect for workers were over.

However, yesterday, without even the slightest hint of embarrassment, the Liberals voted against prohibiting the use of scabs. The use of scabs violates bargaining rights and is damaging to labour relations.

Why is the Liberal government abandoning workers? Why is it refusing to protect bargaining rights?

[English]

**Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that this is a government that respects workers and businesses and understands that collective bargaining works. In most cases by far, 95%, collective agreements have worked and there is no need for replacement workers.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### HOUSING

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, social housing stock in Canada is in rough shape. Over 170,000 people are on waiting lists. Many mayors and social housing leaders are meeting tomorrow in Toronto to sound the alarm. The government needs to do more, not less. Toronto is facing a repair backlog of \$2.6 billion. The system is no longer working.

Will the minister provide the funding needed to renovate existing social housing units and build new units, and will he resolve the long-term agreement issue once and for all?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take the opportunity my colleague is giving me to remind members of just how committed the new Canadian government is to improving social housing. In the last budget, we allocated \$2.3 billion to affordable housing, a historic investment that will make a huge difference in the lives of hundreds of millions of Canadians.

We also announced that we would work with our partners to ensure that these investments produce significant, tangible results. That is exactly what I am going to do tomorrow in Toronto.

[English]

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the most pressing issues in Davenport, my downtown west Toronto riding, is an urgent need for more affordable housing. Affordable housing options are needed for individuals and families whose incomes cannot keep up with the increasing cost of housing, for new Canadians looking to establish themselves near city services and supports, and for seniors who are looking to downsize but not move out of the neighbourhoods where they have lived most of their lives.

Indeed, this need for affordable housing is a problem across the country. Could the minister responsible for housing update the House on what the government is doing to address this urgent need?

•(1445)

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is indeed re-establishing federal leadership in housing. Through budget 2016, we made a historic \$2.3-billion investment for urgent housing needs, including almost \$600 million to support social housing and \$200 million to support seniors' housing. In Toronto, this represents an additional housing investment of over \$150 million.

I am looking forward to participating tomorrow in the City of Toronto housing summit to help deliver tangible and real results for all families, in Toronto and across Canada.

\* \* \*

#### TAXATION

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has been a difficult year for hard-working Canadians since the finance minister came to office. Wages are remaining stagnant, taxes have gone up, and Ontario Hydro rates are skyrocketing. What is the response from the government? It is to introduce even more new taxes, increasing the costs for Canadian families.

If taxpayers voted for change, I do not think they anticipated they would actually have to root for it in the seat cushions of their couches so they could pay their bills.

What is the Minister of Finance doing to help his own constituents in Ontario who struggle to pay these bills?

**Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. We will take no lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to growing the economy. They left us 10 years of unprecedented low growth in the country.

What we have done, and I think my colleague misunderstood, is that our government reduced taxes for nine million Canadians in the first bill we passed in the House. We went on to introduce the Canada child benefit, which benefits nine families out of 10. Then, we are going to announce the Canada pension plan. We are working for Canadian families—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I know members are all enjoying the debate, but let us try to let one person speak at a time.

The hon. member for Milton.

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they are actually compounding the problem they have by slowly eliminating the ability of Canadians to save. If we think about it, the tax-free savings account, eliminating savings bonds, encouraging debt in the country, just because the Liberals know how to spend, does not mean that Canadians do not know how to save.

Given the Liberals' apparent adversity to fiscal responsibility, I wonder if they are actually coming up with new legislation to eliminate our ability to save at all.

**Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague on the other side, the first thing we did was reduce taxes for Canadians. We then went on to introduce the

#### Oral Questions

Canada child benefit. We are going to announce the Canada pension plan. We are making historic investments in infrastructure and innovation in the country. That is what Canadians want. That is what we are going to deliver.

\* \* \*

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of infrastructure, last night the Liberals passed a motion that before making any decision on infrastructure spending an analysis and new implementation plan would have to be developed regarding greenhouse gases. The motion means that all federal infrastructure projects are now on hold until they go through a not-yet-established analysis, and jobs that Canadians desperately need are not going to be created.

Could the minister please tell the House how long communities will have to wait until this implementation plan is developed?

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we believe that economic growth and environmental sustainability go hand in hand.

I am proud to say that we have approved more funding in the last year than the previous government did in five years combined. We have approved 700 projects, and 60% of those projects are currently under way, creating jobs and opportunities for Canadians.

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he did not answer the question, so I am going to try it again.

Communities are getting mixed signals. The minister has issued community infrastructure project lists. Communities need to know where they stand. People need jobs and they need them now.

We need a clear answer. Will the Liberals implement the motion and create an implementation plan, yes or no?

•(1450)

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are delivering on our commitments, as we speak. We approved 700 projects under public transit and waste water infrastructure, and the vast majority of those projects are currently under way, creating opportunity.

It was the previous government that failed to invest in infrastructure. That is why when we talk to mayors and when we talk to provincial leaders, they agree with us and they support our plan.

\* \* \*

#### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this week, the Chief Electoral Officer recommended limiting the length of election campaigns.

### Oral Questions

It just so happens that I have introduced a bill that would cap the election period at 46 days. In the last election, Stephen Harper doubled spending limits by extending the election to 11 long weeks. This cost the taxpayer \$440 million. Canadians want to remove the influence of money and attack ads from our elections.

Will the Liberals support my bill to limit the length of elections?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for his work on this. The government is anxious to work with him to undo many of the changes that happened in the unfair elections act, and also to specifically look at making sure that both the length of elections and the rules are as fair as possible for everyone.

I also want to say that we are very acutely listening to the Chief Electoral Officer's comments on the need to modernize our system, the need to improve it, and to bring it into the 21st century. I know the party opposite is working hard with us to do that. I hope all members in the House will work with us on this process.

\* \* \*

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Union of B.C. Municipalities called upon the government to deal with abandoned vessels.

Earlier this year, I introduced Bill C-219 that would create a federal responsibility for dealing with these vessels, which are a black mark on our local environment and economy. We need to stop passing the buck to local governments. We need federal leadership.

Will the government support my bill and get to work cleaning up abandoned vessels?

**Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting Canada's marine and coastal areas. We are working with our partners to develop options to address the issue of abandoned vessels and wrecks, which can pose environmental and safety risks and cause local economic harm.

We are proud to support the private member's motion put forward by the member for South Shore—St. Margarets on this important subject. This is a first step in the right direction.

\* \* \*

### SOFTWOOD LUMBER

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking. In Alberta, the forest industry employs over 19,000 people, the majority of which are in my riding of Yellowhead. My constituents and the forest industry deserve to know what the future will be. We cannot afford another drastic hit. There is no time to waste. Too many jobs are at stake.

Will the minister do her job and ensure that the deal is signed with the United States by the deadline of October 12?

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me assure the hon. member that the minister is doing her job.

I would remind him that the agreement expired on the previous government's watch and it did nothing to start negotiations. We have, in contrast to that approach, been intensely involved in negotiations right from the beginning. We are continuing to work hard on this.

We appreciate the compliment given to us by the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George, who said, "I can appreciate that there's been a considerable amount of work to this point done by both Global Affairs and the minister."

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, forestry workers and their families across Canada are worried about their futures. This is because the Liberals have failed to secure a new softwood lumber agreement with the United States.

Almost 400,000 men and women are at risk of losing their jobs come October. All the Minister of International Trade has offered so far are poor excuses and a lack of action.

After a year of inaction by the Minister of International Trade, will the Prime Minister finally take action, call President Obama, and get a deal to protect Canadian jobs?

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows full well, our negotiating team has been involved in this file right from the beginning. They are in constant contact with their American counterparts and with representatives from the industry across the country, with workers from across the country, as well as with all provincial governments.

B.C. Premier Christy Clark said this about the minister:

I've got to give her credit, she's worked day and night to try and resolve this. It's been her central focus for the last several months.

• (1455)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I hope we will finally get an answer and not just the same old Liberal Party lines.

The softwood lumber agreement is an essential agreement that could endanger the lives of 400,000 workers and their families across the country. This government does not seem all that concerned about the jobs that could be lost in Quebec.

Will the Liberal government ratify the new agreement or just keep taking selfies to show Canadians it is doing its job?

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to share what others are saying about our approach.

The Conseil du patronat du Québec applauded everything we have done in defence of the Quebec forestry industry. The Quebec Forest Industry Council says it is pleased with our position on Quebec's forestry regime. Even the spokesperson for the Lac-Saint-Jean Unifor forestry unions praised our government's efforts.

The opposition is alone in refusing to recognize everything we are doing to protect workers in Quebec and Canada.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**EDUCATION**

**Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that access to education for Canadian youth is an essential part of building a brighter and more prosperous future for Canada. Yet far too many young people face financial barriers to accessing post-secondary education.

Could the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour please update the House on how the government is helping young Canadians access higher learning?

**Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, post-secondary education must remain affordable and accessible. That is why we are investing \$1.53 billion over the next five years for middle-class Canadians.

As of August 1, we increased student grants by 50%, which will benefit 363,000 students. We must also remember that the previous Harper government froze Canada's student grants since 2009.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday in Winnipeg, the Minister of Veterans Affairs informed veterans that they were going to have to wait a very long time before getting an answer on the option of a disability pension.

It is becoming increasingly clear that this government was making empty promises during the election campaign. On top of that, this summer it broke its solemn commitment to veterans when it took them back to court in the Equitas case.

When will the minister admit that his promises to our veterans were simply window dressing during the election campaign?

[English]

**Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government acknowledges the significant contributions of veterans and Canadian Armed Forces members and what they have given to this country in protecting our peace and security.

Our sacred obligation to those members is outlined in our mandate letter from the Prime Minister. We remain committed to each and every line item in that, including an option for a lifetime pension.

We delivered greatly in budget 2016, increasing financial security for veterans and their families. We will continue to work forward aggressively on this file.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AEROSPACE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Bombardier, a flagship of the Quebec and Canadian economy, is facing a number of challenges.

The aerospace sector is clearly not a priority for the Liberals. The Government of Quebec has made its share of investments, but we still have no idea what the federal government plans to do.

Will the federal Liberal government ever stop studying and finally begin supporting growth in the aerospace sector, protecting our jobs, and providing some assistance to Bombardier?

[English]

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, we have been very concerned about this sector. We understand its importance to our Canadian economy. It employs over 200,000 people in good-quality jobs and contributes \$28 billion to our GDP. That is why we are working on a solution with the company to make sure that the company and sector succeed, to make sure that we have good-quality jobs in Canada, and to make sure that we invest in R and D. We will continue to work with the company on a meaningful solution.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Seamus O'Regan (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I grew up in Labrador. The residential schools settlement is an issue that is close to my heart. Residential schools represent one of our province's and country's darkest chapters. Meaningful reconciliation must be a top priority of our government. Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs update the House on the government's efforts to settle the Newfoundland and Labrador residential school lawsuit?

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his support and advocacy on this issue. In February, we negotiated a \$50 million settlement for survivors of residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. This week, we welcomed Justice Stack's ruling in favour of the negotiated settlement. All parties can now move forward with implementation of the agreement, including the extremely important work of commemoration, healing, and closure for survivors. Negotiation rather than litigation remains our government's preferred method of advancing reconciliation.

*Business of Supply***ETHICS**

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the chair of the cabinet committee on litigation management is headlining an exclusive event on the taxpayers' dime for a law firm whose clients are people for whom the minister has an ethics screen, and it is being co-hosted by a lobbyist firm whose senior VP is the national co-chair of the Liberal Party of Canada.

In the minister's mandate letter, it says that upholding ethical standards is an obligation that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law. Is the minister upholding the standard?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yes, I am.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, all members of the Quebec National Assembly, sovereignists and federalists alike, are unanimous. The message is clear: health falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec, and Ottawa is certainly not going to be the one to decide how Quebec manages its money.

Rather than imposing Conservative-style unilateral cuts, with NDP-style conditions, will the minister maintain the 6% transfer increase without conditions, as the Quebec National Assembly is unanimously calling for?

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the provinces and territories are on the front lines. They provide excellent care and know what improvements need to be made. It is really important that we work together. The Canada health transfer is going to increase by more than \$1 billion next year, bringing—

**The Speaker:** Order. Apparently there is a problem with the interpretation.

It is working now, so I would ask the hon. minister to start again.

**Hon. Jane Philpott:** Mr. Speaker, it is important for everyone to hear this: the Canada health transfer is going to increase by more than \$1 billion next year, bringing it past the \$37 billion mark. We are committed to being a good partner to the provinces and territories and working with them.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec's nurses are worried. Yesterday, their president said that decreasing the transfers would truly put Quebec's health care system in jeopardy and would decrease Quebec's ability to provide care to those who need it, the sick. The government is attacking the sick in Quebec.

I do not want the figures. I want to know whether the Minister of Health is going to hold the transfers at 6% without condition, as the nurses of Quebec are calling for. I just want a yes or no.

[English]

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that nurses across Canada have supported the approach of our government toward our discussions on the health accord. In fact, they have said that we must drive innovation, we must work together, and we must make sure that new money puts health care on the road to long-term sustainability. The Canadian

Nurses Association has supported this. Today, we heard from the Canadian Medical Association, who also agrees that the federal government needs to be a good partner with the provinces and territories and needs to collaborate on health care for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to pre-empt what the government will be enlightening us on, but I understand that we will possibly be debating the Paris accord next week, which we welcome. We hope that the government will pay that same important attention if the Liberals decide to send Canadian men and women into harm's way and will take its time on those important decisions.

With that in mind, I want to ask the hon. House leader what the government is proposing for the rest of this week and for next week.

[Translation]

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will continue to debate the NDP opposition motion. Tomorrow we will resume debate on Bill C-22, on the national security committee of parliamentarians.

[English]

I understand that tomorrow will be the final day of debate at second reading. I thank the opposition for their co-operation on this matter.

Next week we will debate a motion for the ratification of the Paris Agreement. As my colleague mentioned, I anticipate a very robust debate, as there is much interest by hon. members on all sides. I am working with the other House leaders to complete the debate with a vote on Wednesday.

Pursuant to Standing Order 51, the House will have a debate regarding the Standing Orders and procedures next Thursday.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—CREATION OF A STANDING COMMITTEE ON ARMS EXPORTS REVIEW

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise again to talk about our NDP motion, which I am quite proud of in the sense that it would bring accountability on a very important issue.



*Business of Supply*

One thing I have learned, representing Windsor West, is that social justice is part of our DNA. Where we live, we were originally a francophone settlement. It was aboriginal prior to that, then francophone, then British. We have also lived through a number of things that have marked us, such as the Underground Railroad, where people came to freedom. People who were slaves in the United States came to our shores in Windsor West to find freedom and justice.

I believe this issue of selling military arms across the globe and ramping up those sales is something we should have at least a lens of Parliament on. That is all this motion is about. It would not make anything different, aside from the fact that we would get greater public accountability. For heaven's sake, would it not make sense for the world right now to examine arms sales as we are sending them out into the world? Would it not make sense, given the fact that we are faced with constant terrorism, and manufactured weapons, vehicles, and munitions are ending up in the hands of others? It is a simple thing that can be done and that makes sense for a lot of reasons.

We heard that Canada is back. That is exactly what the Prime Minister said. The Prime Minister said that Canada should “stop arms sales to regimes that flout democracy such as Saudi Arabia”. He said that in *The London Free Press*.

Not only do we get a continuation of the Conservative policy of basically duck and weave on accountability on this but we get an enhanced flavour from the Prime Minister trying to say that Canada is back. That means something different, which is that they are going to continue the policy. Canada is back doing the same things it has done before, and that is unfortunate.

All we are calling for is a parliamentary committee to examine this. That is important, because then the workers, business people, traders, and domestic and international procurement people would come to committee. When they come to a committee, their testimony has to be accurate. It cannot be a lie or they would be perjuring themselves and there would be significant consequences.

One of the things I argued about when I was on city council back in the day was why we continued to do business with people who had bad records or criminal records. I am not saying that this is the case in this situation, but what we would do is find out about the records. If we found out that arms sales from Canada were directly or indirectly going to another destination, we would have some accountability and maybe some best practices and could lead in the world.

Right now we are ramping up arms sales in the Middle East. Given the state of the Middle East, would it not make sense to at least take a pause? Given the horrific scenes we see day in and day out, and given that we have had decades of conflict affecting civilians and children in a cycle of violence and that we have to deal with the consequences back here when they come for freedom, safety, and democracy, would it not make sense that Parliament do its job? Parliament should do its job, and anyone saying anything different is abdicating responsibility and basically turning a blind eye. That is often a worse situation than just turning their backs, because they are leaving people in and are growing the problem. It is passive aggressive behaviour.

It is time we fix this. This motion would do just that. It would bring accountability for Canadians on the weaponization of the world.

• (1510)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the last federal election, the leader of the New Democratic Party indicated that a multi-billion dollar contract that went over a number of years was something the New Democratic Party would support. Can the member indicate to the House whether part of that commitment included having a special committee, as the member is talking about? If the answer is no, could the member please indicate why the NDP members refuse to have any confidence in the standing committees we currently have, one of which, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Economic Development, has already committed to doing a report on the issue we have been debating today?

• (1515)

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, we cannot improve Parliament and bring up new situations by going back.

Let us apply that logic. I would say to the parliamentary secretary, because he represents the Prime Minister on multiple occasions, that his Prime Minister said that Canada must “stop arms sales to regimes that flout democracy such as Saudi Arabia”.

When times change, we need to change.

With the bombing and the destruction, and for the women and children who are involved, it has gotten even worse. I am not burying my head in the sand. It is time the member did the same.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thought we might hear a bit about the relationship between this motion and sports betting. I will ask my question in a bit of a different direction.

We agree with the member on the importance of having a parliamentary committee study this issue. At committee we supported the creation of a subcommittee on this.

I am curious about the member's thoughts on why this motion does not direct the foreign affairs committee to study this or create its own subcommittee. Surely there has to be a limit on the number of standing committees we have in this House. At the same time, this is something that could and should be studied within the context of the foreign affairs committee.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member tried to make light of my bill on sports betting. I will leave it at that.

Women and children are affected by this legislation. These little jokes about the situation are not helpful to the debate. They certainly apply directly to the manner in this House.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague if he could expand a little on how this issue of human rights deserves to have its own committee so that it can adequately address the weaponization he referred to in his speech.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, what it can do is add value for other types of human rights issues. They are connected in different ways. Some are intended, such as when arms are sold to organizations and countries that have nefarious practices. Some inadvertently come into effect through regime change and other types of activities that lead to the weapons finding a second or third home.

This committee could add some substantial value. The United Kingdom, another Commonwealth partner, is looking at this. We could actually set best practices on selling manufactured weapons from Canada.

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this debate. I will be splitting my time with the member for Laurentides—Labelle.

I am pleased to rise and participate. I want to thank the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie for her motion. In another life, she and I were co-conspirators on a number of issues, most particularly with respect to corporate social responsibility. However, I regret that I will not be able to support the motion for a very simple reason. It appears that we are going to amend the law first and then find out about the evidence second. We should at least go through the business of finding out the evidence first, then if the law needs to be amended, we should amend it after we have heard the evidence.

It does give me an opportunity to talk about the Canadian defence industry. The Government of Canada is committed to working with the industry to strengthen it, both for economic and military purposes. A stronger defence industry builds a stronger economy. A stronger defence industry builds a stronger military, and a stronger military builds a stronger Canada.

Our government has demonstrated its commitment to providing the Canadian Armed Forces with the equipment they need to take on the important tasks we assign to them. This is a particular aspect of the minister's mandate letter, which states that the minister needs to "Ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces have the equipment they need".

If there is one thing we can all agree on today, it is the fact that we ask a lot of our service men and women. We expect them to defend Canada and North America and to take on international peace and stability tasks abroad, often with partners and allies within the context of international coalitions, such as the one operating in Iraq today. These are highly dangerous missions. In fact, at this very moment, there are literally thousands of Canadian Armed Forces members deployed abroad.

In order to do this they must be well equipped. If they are going to be well equipped, it would be preferable that it be with Canadian equipment. That is why military procurement in Canada aims to achieve three broad objectives: timely delivery, fair and transparent procurement processes, and economic benefits to Canada.

In order to achieve those three goals, we have to have a defence industry if there are to be economic benefits. In the business of procurement, one of the things is obviously the economic benefits. If we had no defence industry, we would be very hard pressed to get economic benefits out of any procurement.

The Department of National Defence defines the requirements. Public Services and Procurement Canada sets the procurement strategy; and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada administers the industrial and technological benefits policy. Each year, defence procurement represents a significant area of federal expenditure. For example, Mr. Speaker, in your riding of Halifax West, there were direct expenditures of \$116 million in your riding alone. If one just applies a multiplier of one, that means something north of a quarter of a billion dollars gets spent by the defence department each and every year in your riding. Almost 2,000 employees are postal coded in your riding alone, Mr. Speaker. I knew that would get your attention.

Defence procurement also represents a significant portion of public services. In this particular instance, at \$6.2 billion, it constitutes 42% of the government's procurement on average over the last 10 years. Contracting by the Department of National Defence under authorities delegated by Public Services and Procurement Canada to DND accounted for an additional \$700 million.

The vast majority of DND projects are completed successfully without any issues. Still, over the last year, we have looked at defence procurement to identify where improvements could be made. We are now taking actions to complete those changes.

• (1520)

We are improving our procurement capability by hiring and enhancing our professional capabilities. We are drawing lessons from our allies, particularly Australia and the United States, where the governments have been working closely with industry to make in-service support more efficient, and we are streamlining internal approval processes to cut approval times in half.

I am confident that these measures will help improve our procurement and make it easier for our men and women in uniform to get the equipment they need in a timely manner. All of this is to say that the success of Canada's defence industry is critical to the success of our military. Their products and innovation and creativity lead ultimately to highly effective tools and greater protection of Canadians in uniform. This is a critical relationship and one that we want to continue to build on.

However, beyond the benefits to our military, there is another important reason to keep our defence industry strong, that being the Canadians they employ. For instance, the Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries says that the sector employs 63,000 Canadians and generates \$10 billion in annual revenue, roughly 60% coming from exports. For instance, the direct spending in the riding of London North Centre, which abuts London—Fanshawe, is \$375 million. I know that might cause some jealousy, but nevertheless, even again using a multiplier of just one, that is three quarters of a billion dollars being spent by defence in one riding and one riding alone.

*Business of Supply*

Defence industry jobs are skilled jobs and pay quite a bit more on average than most industrial jobs do, and the products they produce are in high demand. As technology advances, as the battlefield becomes more complex and more dependent on information technology, the equipment needed by our men and women in uniform grows ever more sophisticated. The research and development these companies undertake will drive even more innovation and more Canadian expertise.

This is how Christyn Cianfarani, President of the Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries, put it in an opinion piece just this week:

...defence procurement and defence R&D can be powerful instruments in the innovation policy arsenal, and can help foster new, as well as strengthen existing clusters. This can lead to commercial applications that have enormous long-term benefits for a country's productivity and competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, I know you have copious free time for reading and may I suggest that you read the book, *Start-up Nation*, which shows how the Government of Israel uses its defence capabilities to innovate. Those innovations in turn lead to significant commercial applications, which lead to wealth generation in that nation.

Canadian defence companies are technology firms. They are innovators in areas such as radar satellites, including RADARSAT-2 and the forthcoming RADARSAT Constellation mission. Canadian companies are truly world class and their work is highly dependent on our own military. It is harder and more complex for Canadian firms to market their products abroad.

It just does not make sense. This is not a motion that we can support.

The government is committed to working with the defence industry. The government is committed to supporting this important sector, as it seeks markets to support high-paying, high-skilled jobs.

At the present time, we are leading a multinational NATO task force in Latvia; potentially contributing to peace support operations in Africa; fighting the fight in Iraq against Daesh; and doing daily operations both here and in North America. We support the great work they do. A stronger industry builds a stronger military, and a stronger economy builds a stronger Canada. I think that is something we can all agree on.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, what I find unfortunate today is that all too often the debate is drifting from the motion that we are debating.

We are not here to question the fact that military procurement for the Canadian army or its allies is done by Canadian companies. We are not here to lament the fact that exports of Canadian arms have almost doubled in the past 10 years.

No, what is worrisome is that Canada used to export arms mainly to NATO countries. However, during the past 10 years, under the Conservatives, Canada's arms exports have changed and now we export to many countries with a troubling human rights record.

In fact, today, Canada is the second-largest arms dealer in the Middle East. If existing controls were actually functional, we would not be debating this motion. Clearly, they are not.

Does the member not agree that part of our work as MPs is to look into the government's activities, which include Canadian arms sales? Does the member not support greater transparency on this matter?

• (1530)

[*English*]

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the hon. member that the role of MPs is in fact to scrutinize government activities and spending. However, before I would amend any legislation to that effect and create another committee, I would at least like to establish the evidence that would support such an amendment to the legislation.

As to the original preamble in her question, I would point out to the hon. member that we trade with five of the largest countries in defence procurement: the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Hong Kong, and the U.S. I am sure that the hon. member and I would agree that the only country that is a bit problematic in that whole list is Saudi Arabia.

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this motion is the latest in a series of repeated attempts by the NDP to actively undermine Canada's defence industry. The 70,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs in Canada would include over 1,000 in my home riding of Guelph.

In the coming months, we will be discussing legislation around the Arms Trade Treaty, as we promised during the election campaign, and I wonder whether the parliamentary secretary could expand on the redundancy of this motion.

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely correct that we have a bit of a cart-before-the-horse problem here. We have not gone through the necessary hard work, the sloggy process, of determining what would be appropriate amendments to the panoply of legislation that applies to exports of various forms of armaments. Until we go through that hard, conflicting, and sometimes morally ambiguous work, then I would suggest that the hon. member is absolutely correct that this is, if not a premature motion, certainly an unnecessary one.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with some of the things my colleague said. Conservatives are not going to be supporting a call for a separate standing committee on this issue. However, the Liberals on the foreign affairs committee voted against having a subcommittee to study the arms control issue, and contrary to what we have heard from some Liberal members, there is not a study currently scheduled on this issue at the foreign affairs committee.

*Business of Supply*

We are not going to assume there is a big problem here, but would it not make sense, given some of the issues that have been raised and certainly the importance of this area, for there to be a study at the existing committee or at some subcommittee thereof to develop some clarity around what is happening in this situation, and especially whether some of the rules that have been in place for a while are being effectively enforced in these cases?

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, I am in no position to comment on how a committee conducts its own affairs. Not being there, it would not be appropriate for me to comment as to whether it is prepared to do a study or not.

I do take note of the fact that the government has agreed to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty. Because it is a treaty and because the government must necessarily put it on the floor of the House in order to have it ratified, that will probably be the first window and probably a very large window of opportunity to debate the very issues that are within the subject matter today.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about this important topic. It is encouraging to see that the members of the House share the interest of our government and all Canadians in maintaining high standards for peace, security, and human rights.

One of Canada's key foreign policy priorities is to maintain peace and security. In light of that fact, Canada has one of the strongest export control systems in the world, and that system is consistent with those of our allies and security partners.

The Government of Canada strives to ensure that Canadian exports are not prejudicial to peace, security, or stability in any region of the world or within any country. All exports of controlled goods and technology, including military equipment, are carefully checked to ensure that they meet these objectives and the main objectives of our foreign policy, such as the protection of human rights.

Our government is enhancing the rigour and transparency of Canada's export controls with respect to military and strategic goods and technology. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs said earlier this year, the government is undertaking measures in a number of different areas.

For one thing, we will accede to the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty. This treaty aims to stop unregulated arms transfers, which intensify and prolong conflict, and to create common international standards for the export of weapons. In order to do this, we will make all of the necessary changes to legislation and regulation to be able to implement all of the treaty's obligations.

It is important to recognize that Canada meets nearly all of these obligations already. However, some additional work is required. That being said, I would like to underline that the treaty was designed to bring other countries up to the high standards of export controls that Canada has in place.

The criteria that we currently use to assess export permit applications, which have been implemented through policy for many years, will now be a legal requirement. We will also outline a clear policy on how overriding risk assessment, as set out in the

treaty, would apply in the assessment of proposals to export goods covered by the treaty.

Canada will also implement controls on brokering activities by Canadians who facilitate arms transfers between third countries. This is a new regulatory area for Canada, and we are consulting the industry and NGOs on how best to implement this obligation.

We will introduce legislation to enact the necessary changes in order to ensure that Canada has all the necessary laws and regulations in place to be able to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty in 2017.

We are also making changes to improve transparency, specifically by making more information about exports of military and strategic goods available to Canadians. Annual reports on how the Export and Import Permits Act is being administered and annual reports on exports of military goods from Canada will now be more transparent, more user-friendly, and more informative, and will be tabled in Parliament on time, beginning next year.

It should be noted that on June 17, 2016, at the same time the Arms Trade Treaty was tabled in the House of Commons, the government also tabled four reports on export controls. They were the 2014 and 2015 reports on exports of military goods and technology from Canada, and the 2014 and 2015 annual reports to Parliament on the administration of the Export and Import Permits Act.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed, from now on, those reports will be tabled on a fixed date, which will be enshrined in the law. Canadians can expect those reports to be tabled no later than May 31 each year.

● (1535)

In keeping with standard practice, these reports will also be published online as soon as they are tabled in the House so that all Canadians can clearly understand how the export control system works. We have already made additions and improvements to these reports, including those that were tabled in the House in June.

The purpose of the improvements that have been made to date was mainly to make the content easier to understand; provide additional data and information, including the proportion of strategic export permits issued to the 12 destination countries; present the data in a more clear and straightforward manner; provide more context; explain the data; remove complex technical jargon; and eliminate the need to compare various data across all reports.

The government also provided a clearer explanation of the decision-making process in its reports, including the obligation to keep track of the number of applications that were rejected, withdrawn, or returned for administrative reasons without any measures being taken.

*Business of Supply*

We have made significant improvements to previous reports and we intend to do more. We are holding consultations with relevant stakeholders, including NGOs and the industry, in order to determine how we can make these reports even more informative, transparent, and easy to understand for all Canadians.

Our goal is to provide additional facts, content, context, and explanations so as to make the reports clearer and more useful to all readers. While we will do all we can to provide as much information as possible to enhance transparency, we must do so in a fashion that will not harm Canada's business interests or negatively impact either competitiveness or the livelihoods of Canadians who are employed in this important commercial sector.

We are convinced that we can strike the right balance between protecting the commercial interests of Canadian businesses and keeping our commitment to make the export control system more rigorous and transparent and to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty.

● (1540)

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this NDP opposition day is extremely important, as is this motion, especially when we think of the controversy surrounding the Liberal government over revelations that it recently used evidence obtained through torture.

Let us not forget the sale of light armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia, a country that is still holding prisoner Raif Badawi, a Canadian citizen whose wife is in Sherbrooke. My colleague from Sherbrooke has worked very hard on this file and knows it very well.

There are rules prohibiting the sale of arms to countries that commit human rights abuses. In that case, how can we sell arms to Saudi Arabia, when we are trying to free a Canadian citizen in that country who was charged with having a political opinion? I do not understand it. That is why this committee must be established immediately.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Mr. Speaker, I do not see how a new, redundant committee, in other words, a committee that would do the same work of existing committees, would change anything. It would create more red tape in our parliamentary system and would not change the situation.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, like several of his colleagues, the member failed to directly address the wording used in the motion. They spoke about human rights and manufacturing jobs in the defence sector, but they did not answer the questions asked by our party and the NDP.

Why did the Liberal members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs vote against creating a subcommittee that would have studied this issue? We would not have had to debate the NDP motion in the House today, because the subcommittee would have already started studying this matter.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Mr. Speaker, I have two things to say about that.

First, we do not control what committees do. They are independent. If there were a new committee, it would also be independent and make its own decisions. I do not see how that would change anything.

● (1545)

**Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his very intelligent presentation.

The Canadian defence industry is an extremely important sector of our economy. Our Liberal government will introduce a bill to accede to the UN Arms Trade Treaty.

Can my colleague explain why the opposition motion was not required for today's debate?

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Mr. Speaker, it is not that I do not believe that the committees should or could study this type of information; it is just that I do not see how a new committee could change things when the current committee can already carry out such a study.

As was mentioned, there are 70,000 jobs in this sector. It is important to do the necessary research on how this sector is used. However, having two committees rather than one study this issue would not change anything.

[*English*]

**Ms. Cheryl Harcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to make this quick. I am trying to get my head around the disappointments that are happening in this chamber today. I just heard one member extrapolate data to justify denying human rights. Now, I am hearing another member tell us that he is proud of his government's transparency.

I have a quick question for the member. Can he give us some details about the military permits that were just released for the military dictatorship of Thailand?

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Mr. Speaker, I would love to be able to answer that. I do not actually know those numbers.

I do not see how the motion affects any of that, if the existing committee is already in place.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the fine member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to an extremely important motion that was moved by the NDP and that could change many things in terms of our respect for human rights and our efforts to ensure human rights are upheld around the world.

*Business of Supply*

First of all, the motion states that Canadian arms exports have nearly doubled over the past decade. That is significant. It is a huge industry. We need to take a closer look at it. In addition, the motion states that Canada is now the second-largest exporter of arms to the Middle East, after the United States. We are not a small player here. Given that not all countries in the Middle East respect human rights, Canadians expect a high standard from their government when it comes to protecting human rights abroad.

We have talked about that many times. We have also raised some of the problems related to the use of torture abroad and the use, in Canada, of information obtained through torture. We want to repeal the ministerial directive that allows this use, and we expect the Liberal government to come to its senses and do just that. It is very simple. Canadians care about the values of democracy and human rights, and they know that this is tarnishing our reputation.

The motion also states that Canadians are concerned by arms sales to countries with a record of human rights abuses, including Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Sudan. Accordingly, there is a need for Canadians, through Parliament, to oversee this practice.

Nobody can do that oversight now. There is no committee devoted exclusively to arms sales abroad. The Liberals have to stop saying the committee or the process would duplicate what is already being done.

That is why we are proposing the creation of an arms exports review committee. Now that we are the second-largest exporter of arms to the Middle East, this is a major issue. Only the United States exports more than we do. Recently, a number of problems, such as winning the largest arms sale to Saudi Arabia, have attracted our attention.

The mere mention of Saudi Arabia shocks a lot of people. Sherbrooke is home to the wife of Raif Badawi, a Canadian who was imprisoned for his political views and was even lashed. We do not know his health status at the moment, and we are worried about him. My colleague from Sherbrooke has worked so hard to support the family and free Raif Badawi. That is not a country that respects human rights.

When we found out that the government signed a huge deal to sell light armoured vehicles, the Prime Minister tried to keep a lid on it saying that they were just small jeeps and it was no big deal. However, jeeps with machine guns attached to them is not something you see driving around the streets of downtown Drummondville. These are not just small jeeps. These are military vehicles. We do not want the sale of such vehicles to be taken lightly. This has to be done with as much transparency as necessary.

In fact, the Liberal government was elected on a promise to be transparent.

● (1550)

As I said earlier, none of the committees currently has the necessary information to adequately assess criteria for the sale of materiel to countries such as Saudi Arabia in a way that is transparent and respectful of human rights.

We urged the Liberals to send us the documents on the human rights compliance assessment of Saudi Arabia. It is all well and good

to want to sell arms to Saudi Arabia, but we have to know whether an assessment has been done. It is called a human rights assessment. The assessment was finally made public by the Liberals. When we saw it, it was clear that this would not work. We cannot sell light armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia.

The human rights assessment did indeed show that these rights are being trampled and are not respected. These arms export permits should not have been issued.

That conclusion raises the following questions, which I would like to ask our Liberal colleagues. How can the Liberals say that they are following Canada's current guidelines for issuing export permits given the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia? There is a chance that those light armoured vehicles will be used to commit human rights violations against the people of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, as the assessment of the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia has shown.

Canada is not able to guarantee how and when the Saudi regime will use those light armoured vehicles. Does the government really intend to rely on the assurances it is given by the Saudi government? That does not make any sense.

Earlier, in his speech, my colleague opposite said that there was no reason to create such a committee because we already have one. I repeat: right now, there is no committee that focuses on foreign arms sales. Yet, Canadian arms exports have recently doubled. Canada is the second-largest exporter of arms to the Middle East. The government may even be in the process of signing weapons contracts with a military junta in Thailand. No one has given us any answers in that regard. We cannot allow that to happen. That is why we need to set up this type of committee.

Obviously, my colleague is going to ask why we would set up a committee like that here in Canada when no other countries are doing it. That is not true. The United Kingdom has had a parliamentary committee on the sale and export of arms to foreign countries since 1999. As my daughter would say, "That is before 2000. We were not born yet. That was the old days." That committee has been around for a long time, so it is something that can be done and done well. Canada could emulate the United Kingdom. We need to do so because more and more weapons are being sold to countries with questionable human rights records.

The fact that the British committee exists means that the British public now has greater access to information on the arms trade of its country, which was not the case before. If Canada were to create this committee, we would have much more information. For example, we would know whether Canada is preparing to sell arms to Thailand's military junta. We have not been given an answer.

How can we sell arms to Saudi Arabia and ensure respect for human rights? We asked the question, but we have not been given an answer. That is why this committee is vital.

I would like to congratulate my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie, who does a great job on all matters of diplomacy and foreign affairs.

*Business of Supply*

•(1555)

I congratulate the member on moving this motion, and I encourage everyone to support it.

[*English*]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect an export control system that is rigorous, transparent, and predictable.

Plans for acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty are subject to intensive consultation with NGOs and industry before introducing legislation this fall, at which time all parliamentarians will have the opportunity to scrutinize and review these plans.

Does the hon. member really see short-circuiting the normal parliamentary process as a good thing?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, I have here a little note to the effect that there are new reports that the Saudi forces used tactical equipment manufactured in Canada during raids against dissidents, which caused mostly civilian deaths. Pieces of equipment were found indicating that they were manufactured in Canada.

That is what the recent assessment of the situation shows and why selling these light armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia is so puzzling. We need an additional safeguard, one we could rely on if this committee existed. The committee could make this information public and scrutinize it to ensure that we uphold our reputation as defenders of human rights.

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, the issue of arms exports goes far beyond the current mandate of all existing House of Commons committees. Since this debate began, we have been hearing that there is no need because we already have committees.

The issue currently before the House overlaps with the work of many committees, including the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, the Standing Committee on National Defence, the Standing Committee on International Trade, the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, and the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

There is an expression that says everybody's business is nobody's business. Would my colleague agree that that seems to be the case here?

•(1600)

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, who works very hard. We went on an agricultural tour together this summer. I know how dedicated she is to her constituents. That is extremely important, and I am happy to have her as a colleague.

She hit the nail right on the head. There is no committee devoted exclusively to arms sales abroad. Committees deal with a lot of other issues, but the situation has changed over the past 10 years. We used to sell arms primarily to NATO countries. In the wake of the Stephen Harper Conservatives era, we are selling more and more arms to countries with highly questionable human rights records.

We asked the Liberals, and I will ask them again, if they can confirm or deny that Foreign Affairs issued a permit to export arms to Thailand, which is controlled by a military junta. We think it did, but nobody can tell us. That would be utterly unacceptable.

That is exactly why we need this committee. In fact, that is what makes this committee vitally important to our country now that we are selling so many weapons, an increasing number of them to Middle Eastern countries.

[*English*]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by thanking the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie for her incredible work on this issue, and for bringing this issue in today's motion as part of our opposition day.

The motion comes at a very important and crucial time for Canada. Over the last number of years we have seen some cracks appearing in the government's narrative that all is well and all is under control with respect to our arms exports.

I want to read the first four main points of the motion for the constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, and indeed all Canadians, so that it is clear what the motion is about. It states:

...(i) Canadian arms exports have nearly doubled over the past decade, and that Canada is now the second-largest exporter of arms to the Middle East, (ii) Canadians expect a high standard from their government when it comes to protecting human rights abroad, (iii) Canadians are concerned by arms sales to countries with a record of human rights abuses, including Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Sudan, (iv) there is a need for Canadians, through Parliament, to oversee current and future arms sales...

Those are the facts.

I am most troubled, because we have heard that the Liberal government will not support the motion, which means it is basically against parliamentary oversight and more accountability. It is not putting its money where its mouth is. It is just a lot more talk from the Liberal side, with no real action on this front. That is a real disappointment.

I will enjoy bringing this to light time and time again. As we approach 2019, we will have a whole textbook full of examples of the Liberals saying one thing and doing another.

Every Canadian has a right to know what the government is doing with respect to the business of arms deals. I do not believe it should be a secret. Canada is selling arms to countries with terrible human rights. I want to be clear. This is not a normal export. This is not about whether one supports the defence industry or not. We are not saying that we should be stopping our arms exports. We simply want to know if the arms go to countries that have a real accountability mechanism, and whether we can track those arms after they have been sold to those countries. After that it seems to be a big black hole.

*Business of Supply*

These are not normal exports. They are designed with one purpose in mind. They are military grade weapons and hardware. Let us be frank about this. They are designed to kill other people, or put down unrest or enhance security. For that reason alone, we need more control over how they are being used.

The oversight that we need to establish for our arms exports is not an unprecedented change. We have had a few members in the NDP raise this. The United Kingdom, which is one of the biggest arms exporters in the world, has a parliamentary oversight committee that was set up many years ago. Some members have argued that the NDP by advocating for this committee is somehow going against our own defence industry. Would those members use that same argument against the British? Would they say that the British are against their own arms industry because they want to have more accountability and oversight? It does not make sense.

We need the tools to look at exactly how this export regime is working. The British committee examines all aspects of arms deals, from licensing to broader policy issues.

Because of the government's history of not being forthcoming with information like that, we have to look to the fact that the government is ultimately accountable to Parliament. Of course the appropriate ministers have to stand in the House and explain themselves. However, that often comes with a lot of effort from the opposition side. Also, if the government is lucky enough to hold a majority in the House, it can quite easily dictate how it releases that information.

Polling among Canadian shows that people are against selling weapons and negotiating arms deals with countries that are serial human rights abusers. If we had this committee, we could be doing what the U.K. is doing right now, and reviewing the exports to Saudi Arabia in particular. The evidence is that our military-grade weaponry and hardware are being used in Yemen, and also to put down political dissent.

•(1605)

The fact that our exports have gone up so much to the Middle East, which, frankly, is a powder keg right now with so many conflicts going on there, I do not see why the Liberal government would be against this type of oversight. Back in the day we used to sell mostly to our fellow NATO allies. Those absolutely are countries with which we can do business. However, when it comes to ones with questionable human rights, that is where we need to have far more oversight.

The reason for a new committee that would specifically look at arms exports is because arms exports do not fit into any one simple category, and this needs to be clearly explained for the government side. For example, arms exports could rightfully be brought up at the committees on international trade, or defence, or foreign affairs, or labour and human rights. They all have stakes in this one issue. Therefore, it is prudent that we set up just one committee so we can look at those multi-faceted issues.

Saudi Arabia has been mentioned a lot in this debate. It is the world's second-largest buyer of military equipment from our country. We have been told by the Conservatives, and now the Liberals, that Canada has strong export rules, and that we are supposed to prohibit

sales to countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of human rights of their citizens unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population. I would submit to the House that this certainly is not the case with Saudi Arabia.

We have also heard questions from my hon. friends on this side, because there is a lot of secrecy about the arms deal that was done with the military government in place in Thailand. Of course, Thailand has been experiencing an amount of unrest.

The other thing is that this summer Canadians were treated to the news story that the government had weakened its arms export policy. We do not control or track the use of arms exports overseas, so there is no way of telling how they are being used.

I appreciate that we are going to eventually sign-on to the arms trade treaty, but we still do not have a timeline. Of course, officials from Global Affairs Canada have suggested that the expected treaty will not raise the current standards for Canadian arms exports.

We heard about the Streit Group in the news and how some of its machinery ended up going to Sudan. This is the problem with these arms companies when they have bases of operation in many different countries. They might have a base in Canada, but if, like the Streit Group, which has operations in the United Arab Emirates, it kind of muddies the water and becomes harder for us to track them down. Therefore, if we have a committee whose sole purpose is to examine these issues, we can focus with laser-like precision on this issue.

In 2012, the Streit Group was accused of violating international law by selling armoured vehicles to Libya. The UN has been involved in that and has brought this to light.

Saudi Arabia certainly has a very large record of human rights abuses. We know that Canadian-made tactical equipment was used by Saudi forces in raids against dissidents. We have seen evidence of military gear with the made-in-Canada stamp, and so on.

We need this parliamentary oversight for our arms exports before we are treated to more bad news. I do not think we can wait for the legislation for the arms trade treaty to come forward.

This is very much like the national security committee that is being proposed. We need to have a multi-party standing committee with the ability to summon witnesses, really review some of our export rules and any treaties that are coming about, and with laser-like focus, spend the time on that.

I appreciate the chance to stand in favour of this motion. I certainly hope some members will come to their senses and see to it. It really is in the best interest of our country.



*Business of Supply*

• (1610)

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I respectfully suggest for the hon. member that the international trade committee has the ability to look at these sorts of questions. The foreign affairs committee has the opportunity to examine such questions. In fact, it will do so in the coming weeks when it carries out its study of sanctions policy in Canada. That committee will be examining the sort of work that is being called for in the opposition day motion. There is no reason to create another committee, another level of bureaucracy, to examine these sorts of questions and concerns that are important but can be done within the existing structure.

I also hasten to add that in my city of London, Ontario, General Dynamics Land Systems, a very important firm, central to the defence sector in that city and across the country in fact, does incredibly important work. The NDP seems to support the workers and GDLS, but has since changed its position.

I wonder if the hon. member is aware of the fact that between 1980 and 2016, GDLS has been involved in producing vehicles that have been involved in 35 missions, and that includes 8 chapter VI related United Nations peacekeeping operations, 7 chapter VII sanctioned United Nations operations, and 4 NATO-related operations, as well as 14 operations in support of domestic emergencies in our country, including flooding.

Could the NDP comment on that, because the workers at GDLS want to know its thoughts?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Mr. Speaker, I am more than happy to respond to those points.

First, with respect to the member's statements about the committee work, the Standing Committee on International Trade has so many files to look at, such as softwood lumber. Our trade is so multi-faceted. Yes, the committee might have a bit of time to look at global arms, and so on, but that will be just one study. Because of the allegations of abuse in our global arms exports, we need a committee that looks at it as just one issue.

With respect to the workers in the member's home riding, the New Democrats are always going to stand with workers. However, I reckon that if he were to ask the workers if they would be comfortable with their exports going to a regime that is responsible for human rights abuses, they would say no. We are proud to support those workers and the work they do, but we need an oversight committee to ensure our exports are going to proper countries. I think the workers in his riding would agree. I hope he has the chance to ask them that.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is fascinating to hear my friend from the Liberal side suggest that a study on sanctions is the same as a study on the arms trade. They are perhaps related, but very distinct items.

I want to ask my friend in the NDP about this issue of our relationship with Saudi Arabia. It is an extremely complex relationship. We should very much call out the very serious human rights abuses there at the same time as we recognize some of the strategic considerations insofar as there is a growing threat from Iran to international peace and security everywhere, especially in the

Middle East. Saudi Arabia is sort of a counterweight in many ways to Iran.

There is a tension there between this long-term concern about containing the influence of Iran in the region, but also recognizing some of the real issues of human rights in Saudi Arabia. Where does that leave us in how we should relate to Saudi Arabia? I am curious about the member's thoughts on that.

• (1615)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate his question because it really goes to the crux of the issue. Saudi Arabia and Iran are two opposite ends of the pole in the Middle East and both are competing for influence. However, we should not forget that while Iran is trying to further its influence in the region, Saudi Arabia is too, through some means of which ordinary Canadians may not be so proud.

With the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and the fact that there are so many, I do not see the rationale behind exporting more arms to a country that is just going to keep on inflaming the fights going on there. At the very least, there should be an oversight committee to study these issues in-depth and focus with laser-like precision on our exports to Saudi Arabia. If Canadians saw the witness testimony on that, a lot of them would be quite illuminated as to how our country is really doing business in the region.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be dividing my time with the member for Calgary Shepard.

Every morning from coast to coast Canadians get up and go to work and more than 63,000 of those Canadians are employed in high-value jobs in the defence industry. It is an industry that has historically served a great purpose in helping keep the world safe.

In World War II, for example, Canada was known as the arsenal of democracy. Canadian defence industry production was pivotal in furthering the war effort. It also amounted to almost \$10 billion in the production of necessary military arms and equipment, but the price tag is not really important. It is the role that it played. During that time the Canadian industry was able to build more than 800,000 military transport vehicles; 50,000 tanks; 400,000 field, naval, and anti-aircraft guns; 1.7 million small arms; and much more. More importantly, those defence industries kept the world safe, safe from a tyranny of a type never before seen.

My friends in the NDP think that those engaged in the defence industry are engaged in some kind of dirty business. They actually do believe it. They talk about dirty arms traders. They do not want to see any arms trade at all. They regard it as a dirty and shameful business. I respectfully disagree.

*Business of Supply*

I believe it is a noble effort, and in World War II we saw that. We saw those industries rise to meet the existential challenge that our civilization faced. Notably, there were other surprising effects. Women by the tens of thousands entered the workforce through these very defence industries. The social change that resulted despite the unfortunate nature of the impetus for it was an advancement for women and for society. The products produced by those women in the Canadian defence industries helped to keep Canada safe and helped to protect the world, helped to make the world free in a very dangerous context.

While the need for military defence was clearly greater at that time, today our defence industry continues to serve a similar and important role. It also performs an important role in both our economy and the global economy.

The continued existence of the defence industry means that we are doing our part to keep our country safe and secure and should be able to, God forbid it be needed, ramp up that production to meet any future requirements in what is an uncertain and increasingly dangerous global environment. It will ensure that Canada can rise to the occasion to do its part. Should we wipe out that industry, which I would argue is one of the logical outcomes of the motion before us today, Canada would not be able to do its part. Therefore, no, I do not believe as many in the NDP do that defence industries are a dirty business. They are doing important and in fact patriotic work.

The companies that make up the Canadian defence industrial base and the types of jobs they offer are the kinds of jobs Canada needs, the types of jobs governments should value in today's highly competitive global economy. The salaries of Canadians in this industry are 60% higher than the average Canadian industrial wage. The industry contributes \$6.7 billion annually to Canada's gross domestic product. This industry serves as a vital and innovative part of Canadian manufacturing. In fact over time we know that some of the greatest innovations in technology, some of the greatest advances, have come out of military imperatives and defence development.

Out of the \$10 billion in revenue the defence industry generates annually, approximately 60% of the industry's total revenue is generated through exports. The majority of the industry depends on exports. Without those exports, as I said, the industry simply would not be able to survive.

Typically, national governments are the purchasers of Canadian defence equipment and the unique conditions under which this industry operates results in a circumstance where we have to have confidential agreements with other governments. It is a government-to-government relationship in the end. Reflecting the special nature of those sales for both sides is the fact that purchases are generally made through the Canada Commercial Corporation. It is a crown corporation and this by definition shows that governments regard these purchases as important strategic and tactical decisions.

• (1620)

In those circumstances I pose some common-sense questions.

If a government is looking to purchase important assets for the defence of its country, how much would it want to expose that to

open scrutiny its potential enemies could see? Would it want them to know and understand the technical capabilities of the equipment it was acquiring? If it were seeking the customization of equipment to meet its particular needs, would it want those details potentially exposed to its enemies? I can assure the House that in most cases customization is exactly what the customers are looking for to meet their particular national needs.

What is the common-sense answer to these questions? It is pretty clear. If we create a process, as the motion seeks to do, that risks the national security of the potential customers, they will simply go elsewhere.

The agreement for the light armoured vehicles, LAVs, from General Dynamics in London will bring \$15 billion into the Canadian economy over the next 14 years and will help employ 3,000 people in London, Ontario. However, the thing to consider above all else is that if they did not buy those LAVs from us, they would simply have gone somewhere else. There were others offering to sell those LAVs. There is a lot of competition out there from suppliers who do not have a process that jeopardizes the security interests of prospective purchasers. More than 10,000 are currently employed in the sector in London, Ontario, and any measures that could drive down exports would be devastating for the local economy and for that entire industrial cluster.

The international marketplace, as I said, is a highly competitive environment for military sales. Winning contracts requires a first-rate product, and it also requires a certainty of process. This is especially so when one considers the fashion in which so many governments support foreign military sales.

If one were to then insert a parliamentary committee into that process, it would simply put an end to most exports for exactly the reasons I said. Countries would simply not be interested in subjecting themselves to the security and tactical risks involved. We know that in the case of the LAVs sale, for example, it is exactly the capabilities of those vehicles that have been raised as one of the objections. People want to know what those capabilities are. The customers naturally do not want to expose capabilities to enemies because that would make them vulnerable.

If we then put that into a public context, into a public committee where those things were aired, it would not only negatively affect the industry's ability to negotiate deals with other governments, it would in fact wipe it out. It would lead to the loss of thousands of jobs.

What New Democrats are proposing today in the motion will undoubtedly not just have a negative impact on Canada's economy and put the defence industry at risk, it would likely wipe out the bulk of that defence industry. That does not bother them because of course they know this will happen. It does not bother them at all because that has actually been the overall goal of the NDP, to shut down the defence industry.

*Business of Supply*

New Democrats regard it as a shameful and a dirty business. They have talked about the arms trade sneeringly, disregarding, I think, its noble history and the noble objectives of it in the future and currently. Seeing the end of that very industry would be a satisfactory outcome to many in the NDP. That is the real purpose of this committee, shutting down that industry, which they regard as an undesirable one they do not want to see in Canada.

New Democrats know that industry relies on those confidentiality agreements. They know the necessity of tactical information being kept secure, of capabilities of equipment being kept secure, and they know that if we then exposed all those things in a parliamentary committee, it would undermine that confidentiality.

I spent some time as trade minister and had the opportunity to work in that capacity with our Canadian Commercial Corporation. I know that we have the utmost controls and protections, both at that level and of course at the export control level. Governments have that ability to determine whether a particular sale makes sense, is in Canada's interests, has regard for human rights, has regard for our national security.

All those things we can protect, but the fashion in which one seeks to protect it is important. If we do it through a process that guarantees the loss of all those sales, that puts at risk the national security of our customers, we know we will have no customers.

That means that once again, another NDP policy initiative, if it were embraced, would result in what happens with most NDP policy initiatives. First, when New Democrats see an industry that is successful, they say regulate it. This is an example. Once it is regulated to death, if it is still going, they say they have to tax it some more. If it is still going after that, once they finally tax it and regulate it enough to start getting it on its knees, then they say it is time to subsidize it. We can expect that in the future if we do this.

• (1625)

I say let those industries continue their good work. They do good work for Canada and for our national security. We should not cripple them and handicap them and cause the tens of thousands who work in very good jobs in the sector to lose those jobs.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is not that often I stand in my place following the member to extend a compliment, but I do appreciate how the member across the way has highlighted what needs to be emphasized. We do have a very strong defence industry in our country. We have a process already today that will allow for the type of study that the New Democrats are suggesting in the motion we are debating today. We call it the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Within that grouping of members of Parliament, they have the ability to look at a wide variety of different issues, including this one. I understand that one of the things they are looking at is the subject of how Canada can continue to play a strong role. We need to emphasize, and I loved the way the member made reference to previous involvements, that our defence industry has provided a sense of strong national security, not only in Canada but around the world in a very tangible way.

Does the member not agree that the current standing committee is more than able to deal with the issue that is being proposed?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, what I would not agree with is that the standing committee as it currently is would be the same. I think the proposed committee would be dramatically different and that is the risk with it. It would tell prospective purchasers that they would be subject to a level of public scrutiny of what they are doing, of what the technical capabilities are of their equipment, and that is going to make them vulnerable. That is a signal we do not want to send. That is a signal that would cause us to lose all those sales.

As I said, I think New Democrats genuinely want to not see a defence industry in Canada, or they might argue that we do not need to engage in exports, that exports of arms are a bad thing, and we should just serve our own market. It is a small country. When I listed those statistics, those sales of manufactured goods in World War II, when I was talking about 800,000 transport vehicles, 50,000 tanks, that supported a strong defence industry. We are not going to be building that in Canada now for Canada's needs. Therefore, if we are only building for Canada's needs, we are not going to be building enough to sustain an industry. Some 60% of our stuff goes into export, so the motion, which would kill the export sector, would kill the entire industry in Canada and kill tens of thousands of jobs.

• (1630)

[Translation]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this motion is not to call into question the fact that Canadian businesses manufacture military equipment for the Canadian army and our NATO allies. It is great if exports have increased.

The problem arises when we export such equipment to countries with poor human rights records. That is why this motion is relevant. That is what the motion is about and I do not think there is any point in veering off topic.

This committee is important because this issue currently falls under the mandate of a number of committees. We need to have one committee devoted exclusively to this issue.

My question for the member is simple: does he not agree that a lot of the work we do as MPs involves examining the government's activities, including Canadian arms sales?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, I would simply put it in another fashion. The member started by speaking of the intention of this motion and this committee. However, one of the things that I think every one of us should do here, as policy makers, is ask, "What are the potential unintended effects?" We all know what the intention is, but what are the potential unintended effects?

One of the things I used to teach my students, when I was teaching at U of T, was that every time they make a policy decision, they need to think about the unintended effects. We all know what we want to do, but what are the things we are going to cause to happen that we do not want to do? If we tax windows, do we end up with houses with really tiny windows? That is what happened in Great Britain many years ago.

*Business of Supply*

We have to think about those unintended effects.

Regardless of the good intentions that might be behind the motion, the actual effects would be to kill that industry by exposing an unacceptable level of risk to the national security of our customers. They simply will not come anymore. They will say, “If that’s part of the process, thank you very much. We’ll buy our armoured vehicles from France. See you later”.

We would not be any further ahead with human rights. We would not be any further ahead with engaging the countries. We would not be able to apply our own tests because we would not even be in the game and, in the process, we would have lost tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of economic productivity, and families across this country would be much worse off.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for York—Simcoe for making a great contribution to the debate, talking about the arms trade business, its contribution to Canada, and the jobs it has created. While that is important, I personally want to speak to the details in the motion, from a more procedural perspective.

I have been sitting here all morning and into the afternoon listening to the Liberals and New Democrats talk about the arms business, arms trade, the Arms Trade Treaty, human rights, completely avoiding talking about the contents of the motion, which is whether the House should have another standing committee to discuss a specific issue that was actually already dealt with by the foreign affairs committee. To their everlasting shame, the Liberals voted down the creation of a subcommittee to deal with this issue, so we would not have to be here for a day debating whether a full standing committee should be established to deal with it.

As I have done before, I want to use a Yiddish proverb. It is good to poke the fire with somebody else’s hands. The New Democrats are poking the Liberal fire on this. Do we need another standing committee to deal with the Arms Trade Treaty and arms trade? I do not think so. I respect the New Democrats’ position. I respect the fact that they believe this is an important enough issue that it is worthy of having its own standing committee of the House to deal with it. I disagree with that intent, so I will be voting against the motion.

Procedurally speaking, having another committee and requiring extra work to be put into it in terms of staff, analysts, translators, clerks, and all the people required to make a committee function, I simply do not believe is necessary. I think it could have been dealt with very easily by a subcommittee that could have started the study immediately. I have heard Liberals saying that eventually, some day in the future perhaps, they will look at this. The committee intends to look at it at some point, so why not start now with a subcommittee?

I have asked different Liberal members several times—by happenstance, one of them was actually a sitting member of the foreign affairs committee—why they voted against it. I did not get an answer, unfortunately. The policy question of whether the arms trade business is going on and what exactly we are doing is all worthy of discussion at the committee level. To address whether there would be sufficient confidentiality, sufficient secrecy, they could hold all of the meetings in camera. The committee could hold them behind closed doors if there is an issue of confidentiality. We have the means to keep information secret.

The careful stewardship of the financial resources of Parliament is important because it is paid for by the taxpayers of Canada. I personally do not believe we need another standing committee. I believe we already have too many standing committees doing work and having debates that could take place in the chamber instead of at the committee level.

Again, it is a question of workload, as I said, taxing the analysts, the clerks, the translators, the scheduling involved, the different members who would be assigned to it. Perhaps they would even start travelling. I know the Liberals are very fond of committees travelling to different parts of the country to see, on the ground, exactly what is going on and maybe a little extra.

**An hon. member:** Or to Saudi Arabia.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, they could travel to Saudi Arabia. That is a very good point. Maybe they will travel to Saudi Arabia to see exactly how it does its arms trade business.

We heard from the members for Thornhill and Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan that the Liberals actually voted down the creation of a subcommittee that would have studied this issue. It would have started immediately. The great thing about subcommittees is that they feed back to the committee level, which could have decided at the end of the day what the next steps were, whether a report should be written, whether the government should take further steps, and make recommendations to the government. That could have been done at that committee level. That is committees’ duty and area of responsibility assigned to them by the House.

It almost feels like something out of a *Yes Minister* episode. I feel as if Sir Humphrey Appleby would be quite proud of the obfuscation and sideshow the Liberals have put on so far, talking about human rights, how important the arms trade business is, and how important all of these jobs are, well-paying middle-class manufacturing jobs. It is something I have heard repeatedly over and over today. It is a complete denial.

What about the pipeline jobs? What about the oil and gas jobs back home where I live in Calgary, Alberta? I never hear anybody on that side say they care about those jobs. Every community in my riding has a Facebook page, where people post things they are selling. Early on in the downturn, they were starting to sell the spare cars they had, the Ski-Doos they had, maybe the RVs they had. Now I am seeing pictures of people selling their engagement rings because they cannot make ends meet. I never hear anything about them. What about their well-paying middle-class jobs in the oil and gas sector?

• (1635)

Where are they on that issue? Where are they debating that? Where are they caring about those people? I never hear that. There is never a mention of an Alberta energy worker. All we hear is this stereotype.

*Business of Supply*

Bernard came here to Parliament Hill in person to plead the case of the energy workers. The guy actually works near Grande Prairie, in the oil patch. He relies on that well-paying middle-class job, but we never hear anything about it. However, that is not so when it comes to the arms business.

My father was a defence contractor for 35 years in this country. He worked at the Sorel shipyards. He was a shipyard worker in Poland, and when he came to Canada, he continued building ships for as long as he possibly could. When the Sorel shipyard was shut down, he became a defence contractor. That was the field he worked in, and so it is a business I know really well. It is a business that gave my dad a great middle-class job.

The Liberals are very defensive on this, but they are defensive for all the wrong reasons. They are defensive because they do not really have a record to defend on jobs, because they have not really created any jobs.

The matter before us is whether to create another standing committee, and that is what we should be debating. Do we need another standing committee of the House to look at an issue?

As I have told the New Democrats I have talked to, informally and in debate, I just do not believe that this committee is necessary. However, I do think that the Liberals made a mistake at the committee level, and they should have accepted the creation of a subcommittee, which was the proper area to have this. It is where they should have had this policy to debate, and they could have called witnesses. They could have called for specialists in the field to come to the committee to explain to them what to do, what type of human rights restrictions there were, and what type of issues should be studied further. That could be done, again, at the committee level.

There are several parts of the motion that I agree with, that Conservatives in general have mentioned that they agree with; and Canadians, I think, would agree too. The motion mentions that we expect a high standard from the government to continue to protect human rights abroad, which is fine. I agree with that.

There is a lot of good wording in the motion; it is just the standing committee concept that I think is wholly unnecessary. Again, we support establishing and maintaining international standards that would prevent arms transfers fuelling conflicts and supporting organized crime or, worse, terrorism. These are all concepts with which we, in principle, agree. The question is on the correct procedure. Where should we be having the discussions?

I think it is really unfortunate, because this could have been avoided if the Liberal members on that committee had just said yes to the subcommittee. We could have started this study right then.

Any member here could have sent a letter to the chair of that subcommittee and asked it to look at certain issues, and then suggested the witnesses. I have done it before. I have sent letters to chairs of committees suggesting areas of study. I have done it, and sometimes I have constituents who email me or send me letters to say they think something is a policy issue. I am not a full member of a committee, but I will still write to the committee chair to say that a constituent believes that a certain issue is worthy of study and I would like that taken under consideration.

Those are all worthy procedural, mechanical ways of doing the business of Parliament, of getting the ball rolling and getting studies undertaken.

It has been mentioned a few times before that there are end-user contracts. This is something with which I have a little bit of familiarity. Again, my father used to deal with defence contractors and was a defence contractor himself. However, we could have studied that. We could have actually asked if end-user contracts are appropriate. Do they work; do they function in all instances; should they be beefed up; should they be abandoned in favour of another model or mechanism to control how certain equipment is used by different countries, by our allies, by those who are maybe reselling them on a secondary market?

The member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie is correct that there is a need for Canadians, through Parliament, to oversee current and future arms sales. However, the foreign affairs committee already has the authority, as has been mentioned, to look at these issues. The Liberals have said this too, and it is a point that I do agree with.

However, the Liberals on that committee should have been the ones to say yes to a study and give it to a subcommittee of its members to look into it. That is where they could have done it. I am not of the view of establishing an entirely new committee.

I sat on the pay equity committee. I contributed to that debate and had fulsome discussions on it. However, I just do not think that a new committee devoted solely to a single, specific issue is a wise use of the resources of Parliament. I think it unnecessary to have a single-issue committee. I would much rather see it dealt with in a committee like foreign affairs with a subcommittee. I believe that is the best way to do it.

• (1640)

I will be voting against the motion, just on the principle of having a standing committee. It is admirable that they are trying to push the issue to have greater transparency on it.

I see my time has run out. I will yield to the chair.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I repeat, the issue of arms exports goes far beyond the mandate of any one of the existing committees of the House. It could fall under the foreign affairs and international development committee, the defence committee, the trade committee, the industry committee, the labour committee, or the human rights committee. An in-depth study of these issues is important.

His main argument has to do with parliamentary resources. We know that the main resources needed for a committee to operate are human resources. We need to pay clerks and analysts. He is proposing that a subcommittee be formed instead. My question is very simple: will that subcommittee operate without a clerk or an analyst?

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

All the committees and the subcommittees work with clerks. However, we know that standing committees use far more resources in terms of time, money, and organization than subcommittees. I have seen members of subcommittees hold informal meetings on several occasions. The clerk in charge of the committee does not always have to be there and neither does the chief analyst.

In any event, again, I find that we could make better use of Parliament's resources than forming another standing committee. That is what subcommittees are for.

• (1645)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things I appreciated today was that at the very least the Conservatives have recognized, as we have in government, the importance of the defence industry as a whole. Close to 20,000 jobs for the hard-working middle class are directly related to the defence industry. We understand the importance of that industry.

I was a bit baffled when the member referred to pipelines and oil industry. I am from the Prairies, and I can assure members that we in the Liberal caucus, and indeed our Prime Minister, have been fighting for that industry. In fact, in 10 years, the former Conservative government could not even get one inch of a pipeline to tidewater. That is something that people on the Prairies will not forget.

The difference seems to be that the NDP want to have a special committee and the Conservatives want a subcommittee of the foreign affairs committee. Does the member not recognize that the foreign affairs committee already has that within itself? It is already created. The committee has already said that it is going to study the issue. Is he not confident that his own members can deal with it at that level? Why not allow the foreign affairs committee to deal with it as a full committee, and after it has done its consultations and so forth, if it then decides to recommend a subcommittee that would be more ongoing, then maybe consider it? Why does the member not have confidence in his own colleagues on the foreign affairs committee?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, I believe there was a motion put forward in that committee to create a subcommittee. He should ask his colleagues why they voted against it. That matter was solved there.

Talking about jobs, what about Air Canada jobs? We saw a bill earlier in the session that will probably cost Air Canada jobs Winnipeg. Is that not right?

Speaking about the Liberal record on jobs, what about the lack of business confidence it is causing people back in Alberta. Countless business people keep calling my office to say that they are not sure if they are going to stay open for another two, four, or six months, because they are not sure where the government is going with its \$30 billion deficit, the higher taxes coming down, including higher payroll taxes and a new carbon tax. That is exactly what people don't want in Alberta, a provincial carbon tax, a federal carbon tax, higher

payroll taxes, a \$30-billion deficit, and \$100 billion in the first term of this government. There is nothing for Alberta energy workers except debt and bankruptcy. The Liberals have nothing to speak to in terms of their record on jobs.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

I am honoured to rise in the House to speak to our motion calling for transparency from the current government. This motion is rooted in our deep concern and that of many Canadians when it comes to our country's arms exports.

I would like to thank my colleague, the member of Parliament for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, for her work on this front and her broader work on human rights.

We rise in the House every day to speak about issues of great importance. Before us is literally an issue of life and death and our role as a country on this front. While today's motion focuses on the need to strike a committee calling for greater transparency of our arms exports, we in the NDP are proud to stand up against a regressive warmongering agenda that we see continued by the current government.

First, I will provide some background. As it stands today, Canada is now the second-largest arms dealer in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and China are among the top 10 destinations for Canadian military goods. This is according to the Department of Global Affairs' report from 2015. We are of course aware of the fact that reports over the past year have also indicated that Canadian sales of military-related equipment have increased to countries with poor human rights records.

Saudi Arabia, according to Freedom House, is one of the worst of the worsts when it comes to human rights. We know that Canada agreed to a \$15-billion deal for light armoured vehicles between Saudi Arabia and Canada's General Dynamics. This is the largest arms trade deal in Canadian history. We also know that our arms sales to China have soared to \$48 million. Reports have also indicated that Canadian-made weaponry has been used in the Saudi Arabian-led war in Yemen, where over 6,000 people have been killed and one of the world's worst humanitarian situations continues to deteriorate.

*Business of Supply*

Cesar Jaramillo from Project Ploughshares told us that Canadians should be worried. He talked about how Canada addressed the UN Security Council and highlighted the importance of protecting civilians in conflict zones. He noted that it is civilians who are most often at risk as a result of arms dealings, in particular with regions engulfed in conflict and notorious for their poor human rights records. Mr. Jaramillo, like many others from the not-for-profit sector and others who are interested in peace, has indicated that Canada's actions simply do not reflect the kind of rhetoric we have heard.

Peggy Mason, who once served as Canada's United Nations ambassador for disarmament, has said, “[I]t’s hard to justify Canadian weapons exports to any Mideast country”. She noted, “It has been a bedrock principle of Canadian export...policy...that Canadian arms exports would not contravene international law including UN arms embargoes, [and] would not contribute to undermine international peace and security”. Once again, the rhetoric of the current government does not match its actions.

Canadians do not agree with the current government's ramping up of support for arms deals like the ones I have referred to. In fact, polls show that most Canadians disapprove of arms deals with human rights abusers. Now it is true that the deal with Saudi Arabia was signed under the previous government. However, we know that the current government has not changed that approach. So much for the slogan of real change.

As we have seen in the House today, there is no question that the discussion around arms exports involves a very important discussion of jobs. This is a key point because Canadians are facing increasing unemployment. Our unemployment rate has crept up to 7%. Our job growth is essentially flat. Compared to 12 months ago, the economy has added just 77,400 jobs. During this time, 35,700 full-time jobs have been lost. Those 113,000 jobs that have been added are part-time positions. It is clear that the ongoing trend of full-time jobs being replaced by part-time employment is a cause for major concern amongst Canadians.

● (1650)

Now, when we talk about unemployment, I do not have to look past my own home of northern Manitoba to see that grim reality. In addition to the many first nations that experience extremely high rates of unemployment, we know from the experience of this last summer that it has been a difficult time for our region in terms of jobs, with the closure of the port of Churchill, the announcement of the closing of the mill in The Pas, the dismantling of the East Side Road Authority, and the insecurity that surrounds our value-added jobs associated with mining.

The reality of rising unemployment is grim. It is grim where I am. It is increasingly grim across the country. It is particularly grim when you apply a generational lens. My generation, the millennial generation, is facing an increasingly difficult reality when it comes to jobs. In fact, the unemployment rate amongst young workers in Canada is double the national rate, at over 13%. A growing number of young workers are in temporary work. Many are calling this an emerging crisis.

I am proud of our NDP initiative to hear from millennials about the rise of precarious work, the rise of contract work, the rise of

temporary work, jobs that have no benefits and no pensions. What I hear time and time again from young people across our country, from Halifax to Vancouver, from Whitehorse to Toronto, is that they want access to good jobs.

Where is the federal government when it comes to the discussion of good jobs? My answer is that I am not really sure. There has been no leadership when it comes to creating a robust, sustainable job creation strategy across our country. Instead, it has been a policy of inaction, misdirection, and, frankly, the threat of future job losses.

In regions like mine, the federal government is sitting by while people in industry after industry lose their jobs. In places like B.C., we saw the federal government approving the Petronas LNG deal, running roughshod over first nations' rights, and failing to invest in the green economy, in sustainable green jobs.

All the while, the government has been looking to ratify the TPP, a trade deal that will further erode good jobs in our country to the tune of at least 35,000 jobs. This is not the sign of a government that is looking out for Canadian workers and their jobs. To say that somehow arms deals and arms exports will save us is simply not the case.

The second point is one of values. The Prime Minister and his government have made it clear that they want to turn a new page when it comes to values. Granted, we had 10 years of a government that practised the worst kind of fear-based politics, a politics of division. Many Canadians sought a positive, progressive vision in the last election. Many believed in the slogan of real change put forward by the government.

Since that election, we have seen the Prime Minister speak of his feminism and the importance of a feminist approach. Sadly, the government's support of such arms deals is neither real change nor a reflection of feminist politics. It is not feminist to sell arms to countries that have appalling human rights records, to states that regularly abuse the rights of women. It is not feminist to sell arms to countries that execute people because they are gay or members of the LGBTQ community. Many women and men across Canada want to see the government live up to the values it espouses.

Ultimately, the government ran on a platform of increased transparency and accountability, and that is exactly what the motion aims to do. In an area as important as manufacturing and the export of arms, this motion is critical. It is about doing what is right. It is about truly standing up for human rights and feminist politics. It is about standing up with a vision for good Canadian jobs. It is about standing up for good Canadian values.

● (1655)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are two issues in the motion that I want to quickly address. One is the Saudi Arabia agreement. It is interesting that during the last election, the NDP, and its leader in particular, had no problem whatsoever talking about the value of these jobs, which the member seems to want to criticize. He indicated that “You don't cancel a commercial accord retroactively, it's just not done”.

*Business of Supply*

The New Democratic member for London—Fanshawe was even stronger. She said, “So yes, he is very aware”, referring to their leader, “and that’s why he was very clear in the debate that we would honour the contract, we don’t renege on contracts. It’s a signed contract and we will honour that contract”.

My question for the member is very specific. Has the NDP changed its position with regard to Saudi Arabia? It seems that this is the case, and while the member is answering that question, could she tell me whether there are other standing committees the NDP would like to create beyond this one?

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, it strikes me that the Liberal member, along with many Liberal members, loves to live in the past of the last federal election. If he had continued to read news that has come up based on this exact discussion, he would know that the NDP has been very clear and has called for the suspension of that deal and for looking into exactly how these arms are being used. Obviously we have all been made aware of very disturbing information about the way these arms are being used in the conflict in Yemen.

I appreciate that the Liberals cannot always handle the facts and certainly like to use very positive-sounding rhetoric, but the government is continuing the policies of the previous government when it comes to arms exports. This is something that increasingly Canadians find to be unacceptable. We are asking for real leadership on something as fundamental as transparency.

• (1700)

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I know that this issue is important to her. I especially appreciated her comments on the issue of Canadian values at the end of her speech.

I would like to come back to the comments on an open and transparent government. Given the number of challenges surrounding the issue of arms sales and the need for constant monitoring of what is being done exactly, I would ask my colleague if she understands why the Liberals, who claim to be open and transparent, are refusing to create a special committee to address these issues on an ongoing basis.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to sincerely thank my colleague for her efforts on this issue and for fighting for human rights day after day.

The issue is why the Liberals are refusing to support this motion. It really is a fundamental issue. We wonder why the federal government is opposing transparency and accountability. Those are the values that the Liberals championed during the election. They bring them up in the House of Commons.

Yes, this debate in the House is about an issue that is very important and very serious. We are proposing that a committee be created to ensure transparency and respect for human rights. We really are wondering why the Liberals are refusing to create this committee. I am certain that Canadians are increasingly wondering about that, given what this government is doing.

[English]

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start my remarks based on my personal experience working in zones of conflict, where the important question was often where the arms hitting that conflict were coming from, arms that made the job of human rights observers more difficult and more dangerous, and arms that made the job of humanitarian aid workers greater as each day passed and more dangerous as each day passed.

For me, effective control of arms exports is not just a theoretical question.

There was the arming of the pro-Indonesian militias in East Timor, in 1999, when I was there as co-chair of the human rights observer mission for the UN referendum, and we saw the murder of more than 1,500 people after the vote for independence. Where did those arms come from? It is a question that has never really been answered.

There was Ambon, where I worked in 2000 and 2001 for the international migration commission, trying to do peace-building work between Christians and Muslims, where outside interests were clearly fuelling the conflict with both arms of a sophisticated nature and explosives.

There was the Taliban in Afghanistan, where I worked in 2000, who have continued, over a decade, to be armed by murky sources.

Finally, there were the rebels in Muslim Mindanao, where I worked in 2010 as an election observer and where people were killed at the poll I was observing.

We have seen, in Muslim Mindanao, rebel groups using kidnapping and beheading as a tactic, not just to win their conflict, but much more specifically, to raise money to purchase arms illegally on the world market.

Therefore, it is harder for me to dismiss the concern about what happens to arms exports when they leave Canada, when we know people who have actually died as a result of the uncontrolled arms trade.

I do not want to be misunderstood. I am not making a pacifist argument here about the need to do away with all arms. Arms are needed for defence, and there is nothing wrong with arms exports that are done in an open, transparent, and responsible manner. That is exactly what the proposal we have before us would help us do.

The motion to create an arms export review committee would enhance Canada’s international reputation, but it would also enhance our own ability to make sure that our impact in the world is a positive one and that it is not inadvertently, or through lack of care, contributing to the conflicts around the world, which end up producing not just death and destruction locally but waves of refugees around the world.



*Business of Supply*

Why have such a committee? I have heard arguments today from the Conservatives about how we need a subcommittee rather than a committee, so they are going to vote against this. It seems, with all respect, a very specious argument. A subcommittee is staffed in the same way a committee is staffed, and the only thing that is really different is that normally we have fewer members on a subcommittee. It is not really an argument about the substance of what we are talking about today.

I have heard many arguments from the other side about the foreign affairs committee. First of all, men who do not sit on the committee have explained to the one woman who sits on the committee that it is already doing this work, when it is clearly not, or that the committee could somehow do this work.

I would submit, with respect, that the foreign affairs committee has a fairly large task already. The foreign affairs committee is responsible for Canada's foreign relations with the entire world, so it does not have the time available on its agenda to do more than a one-off study, at most.

What this does, saying that the foreign affairs committee could do this work, is miss the positive example of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom, where a very focused committee of the U.K. Commons is able to provide much more detailed scrutiny of arms exports and to do so over the long term and not just as a snapshot picture. It is a committee that has developed expertise and is therefore very valuable to the members of Parliament in the British House of Commons in allowing them to take responsibility for the arms that leave their shores.

As I say, the U.K. demonstrates the value of that focused committee with ongoing oversight over arms exports, as opposed to simply saying that the foreign affairs committee could look at this.

Yet another argument that was put forward by the Liberals earlier today was that they do not have to have a special committee to look at arms exports, because they will be introducing legislation to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, and we can talk about this then. I would submit that it is exactly the opposite.

• (1705)

If we are going to join the Arms Trade Treaty soon, as the Liberals keep telling us, and I believe that is a good thing, then what better place to make sure we are observing our obligations under that treaty than having an arms export review committee. It proves to me exactly the opposite of the arguments that I have been hearing in the House.

There has always been a need for such a committee but that need has increased recently. Canada's arms exports have doubled over the past 10 years. That means we have an increased responsibility to make sure that what is happening with those arms exports is legal and that the end-users are responsible end-users. We have seen a shift in our arms exports. Where most of our exports used to go to NATO countries and other allies, we have now become the second-largest arms dealer in the Middle East of all places.

I have a particular concern about our arms dealings with Saudi Arabia and I express those concerns on two grounds. Of course the obvious is the Saudis' own appalling human rights record and the very strong evidence now before us that Saudi arms have been and

will likely continue to be used against its own civilians. Remember, this is a country where there are severe restrictions on the rights of women and where a gay man like me is subject to the death penalty.

In addition to the Saudis' own appalling human rights record, the Saudis have a record of exporting not just their extremist version of Islam but also arms that have been initially sold to them. These arms are mysteriously showing up in other conflicts and in particular there is disturbing evidence about the flow of arms through Saudi Arabia into the conflict in Yemen. Why have we become, as Canadians, one of the largest suppliers of arms to a country with this kind of appalling record?

I have particular concerns about the Saudi LAV vehicle deal. The Conservatives signed the deal and the Liberals signed the export permits, and yes, during the election the NDP said it thought we should keep the contract. The new evidence on the flow of weapons from Saudi Arabia to Yemen came out after the election campaign and the NDP has called for the suspension of this deal.

We also have additional evidence, which I find disturbing, that has not been really extensively covered here in the House. We have not really heard from the government on it. However, it is evidence that it is not just a private contract between a company and Saudi Arabia but the Canadian Armed Forces is actually engaged in assisting with trials of these vehicles and in training on the use of the vehicles. The other side likes to tell us it is just a business deal and we have to keep the contract, but it appears that it may be much more than that.

What about the workers? I hear "what about the workers" extensively from both the Conservatives and Liberals. I will try to stave off my sense of irony on hearing about the workers from parties that voted against anti-scab legislation.

If we are talking about the LAV vehicles, for instance, why not use those same facilities and those same companies to rebuild our own military vehicles? The example I use is that someone said to me that it was great the Canadian military brought heritage trucks to their parade, and I was able to reply that those are the only trucks we have and they are not museum specimens. The average age of vehicles in the Canadian military is over 40 years old, so if we are worried about workers in those factories and what we could do with those skills, I would submit we could put them to work building trucks for the Canadian military instead of building trucks for a human rights abuser and a country that may use them against its own citizens or pass them on to other conflicts.

*Private Members' Business*

I want to thank the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie for her great work on the foreign affairs committee in general and in particular on today's motion. I see something interesting in the motion. There is a great deal of research about peace and conflict resolution that shows that when women get involved in peace and conflict resolution, we achieve more success and quite often through very practical measures that reduce the negative impacts of conflict.

I see today's very motion as that, an example of a woman New Democrat from Laurier—Sainte-Marie who has stood up and said, here is something we can do to make the world a better place. Is that not what it should mean to say that Canada is back, that we are going to put ourselves to work, sign the Arms Trade Treaty, and monitor our exports to make sure they do not contribute to human rights abuses and that they do not contribute to further conflict around the world?

• (1710)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, throughout this debate we have learned a lot with respect to the New Democratic Party's position on the defence industry. It is an industry that we in the government appreciate and will ensure remains healthy. Its contributions to Canada's middle class are second to no other.

This is the second time the NDP has put forward a motion to establish a stand-alone standing committee. The Liberal government acknowledged that its first recommendation for a committee on pay equity was great. We advanced it and moved it forward. However, we disagree with this motion. We believe that the foreign affairs committee can deal with this.

Are there any other standing committees the NDP is thinking it would like to share with the House or are those the only two that we can anticipate?

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot resist saying that I find that a hysterical reaction to what we are proposing. If there is an issue of concern, I will support creating a standing committee to deal with that issue of concern. I see no reason why we cannot have committees dealing with things that this Parliament wants to deal with in detail.

When we had the Special Committee on Pay Equity, it was not a standing committee. Rather, it was a special committee charged with doing a task. To me, the difference is that, in terms of pay equity, the government could get busy and solve that problem. The responsibility for examining arms exports is an ongoing responsibility of the House of Commons. That is why a standing committee would be the right vehicle to do this.

• (1715)

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, October 4, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I believe if you were to seek it, you would find the consent of the House to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH

The House resumed from May 20 consideration of the motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** When the House last took up debate on the motion, the hon. member for Scarborough Centre had seven minutes remaining in the time for her remarks. We will go to that now.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Scarborough Centre.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Motion No. 24 to recognize every January in Canada as Tamil heritage month. I will resume where I left off back in May.

Tamil Canadians are making a difference in all walks of Canadian life. They are the business owners who are creating jobs, the teachers who are helping guide our children into adulthood, the doctors and nurses who care for us when we are sick, the athletes whose exploits we follow with excitement on the cricket pitch, and the politicians who represent all of us at city councils, in the provincial legislatures, and I am proud to say here in the House. Members such as the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge Park are making a difference for all Canadians every day, and are doing us all proud.

The Tamil diaspora in Canada is estimated to be more than 300,000 people. The population has grown quickly from fewer than 150 in 1983. Theirs is a community that has faced tremendous challenges, and like so many others, have come to Canada as a land of opportunity and new beginnings. Like my family, and the families of so many of our fellow citizens, they came to Canada for the opportunity to build a better life for the next generation, their children and grandchildren, to live in peace and safety with their neighbours, and to work hard to provide for their families.

We are proud to have welcomed them to Canada. Canada has always been an open and welcoming country. We are welcoming Syrian refugees to Canada today. I hope that in 30 years we can look back and see that the Syrians we have welcomed into the Canadian family have made as important and meaningful a contribution to Canada as have our Tamil brothers and sisters.

It is time. Canadians owe much to the contributions of the Tamil community to our economic and social prosperity. I am proud to stand with my friend, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge Park, in support of making next January, and every January, Tamil heritage month.

*Nandri.*

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today in support of the motion put forward by my colleague, the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park, to recognize the contributions the Tamil Canadians have made to Canadian society by declaring the month January every year as the Tamil heritage month.

The motion also calls for the recognition of the richness of the Tamil language and the culture, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Tamil heritage for future generations.

As all members know, every January Tamils celebrate Thai Pongal, the harvest festival, when all over the world, the sun is being thanked for providing the energy for a wonderful harvest. In Canada we do something similar outside Tamil communities. I of course am referring to Thanksgiving coming up next weekend.

I am proud to stand with my Conservative caucus colleagues in support of Tamil Canadians, just like the former Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney did in the 1980s, when under his leadership, Tamil resettlement commenced in 1983.

Over 300,000 Tamils since then were resettled in Canada, and our society is very enriched because of it. One example of Tamil hard work is the *Uthayan* newspaper in Scarborough, which is turning 21 years of publication this fall. I wish it many more years to come.

I have been dealing with the Tamil community in Canada and abroad for over a decade now as the parliament secretary for the minister of foreign affairs. I have first-hand knowledge of the struggle and the challenges they have had to deal with whether settling in Canada or recovering after the tsunami that ravaged Sri Lanka in 2005. I visited Sri Lanka with Prime Minister Martin and the late Jack Layton.

I remain impressed with the dedication and commitment of those involved in the reconstruction of the community affected by this natural disaster. Our DART did an exemplary job during this crisis.

I have also learned first hand of the Tamil spirit of engagement when it came to the transitional needs of internally displaced people, having visited one such camp in Vavuniya in 2009.

In November 2013, I represented former prime minister Stephen Harper at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Again, I took the opportunity to forcefully express my government's demand that Tamil rights be upheld by Sri Lankan authorities. During this visit, I laid a wreath at the northern outpost of Elephant Pass in memory of all civilians who died from Sri Lanka's 30-year-long ethnic conflict. I also met the northern province chief minister and listened to his concerns on rehabilitation and rebuilding efforts by the Tamil people.

*Private Members' Business*

I have witnessed how close the Canadian Tamil connection has been for over 10 years during which I have been directly involved with this community.

The Canadian government, indifferent of its political colours, has been a friend to the Tamil people for over 30 years. This has been the case both during the plight of the Tamil refugees coming to Canada as well as for those who remained in Sri Lanka, to whom the Canadian government offered assistance with reconstruction and reconciliation to enable Sri Lankans to live in freedom and security.

Canada has been a faithful partner to the Tamil people abroad in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and promotion of democracy. At home, Canada's ethnocultural mosaic has been enriched with the accomplishment of the Tamil Canadians who have called Canada home from coast to coast to coast.

I would like to thank my colleague across the aisle for the important initiative. I look forward to celebrating the first Tamil heritage month in a little while.

● (1720)

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the majority of Tamil people coming to Canada to make it home have arrived since 1983, Tamil people first began arriving here as early as 1948. Through these decades, the rich history and heritage of Tamil people have been a great contribution to Canada. Motion No. 24 asks the government to have these contributions and Tamil-Canadians' rich cultural heritage recognized by declaring January of every year Tamil heritage month.

I stand in the House today to voice my support for the motion. I am pleased that the Liberal member from Scarborough—Rouge Park has tabled the motion. This was something that the NDP previously brought to the House in 2013 through private member's Bill C-471, an act to designate the month of January Tamil heritage month. Unfortunately, the bill died on the Order Paper following first reading. Therefore, I am pleased that the member opposite is taking up this cause and building upon that work.

January is the perfect month to recognize Tamil heritage, as one of the most important events, the Thai Pongal, the Tamil monsoon celebration, takes place in the middle of that month. This festival dates back at least a thousand years. It is just one aspect of the deep cultural heritage that Tamil Canadians have brought to Canada. The Thai Pongal festival is named so because it takes place on the first day of the month, Thai, in the Tamil calendar. This normally falls between the 12th and 15th of January. Pongal refers to the staple dish of the celebration, a sweet, rice-based dish, which I have seen compared to rice pudding.

Thai Pongal is a festival that can be celebrated by one and all, and it is known for its inclusiveness. It is a celebration akin to a thanksgiving for a successful harvest. One of the great aspects of Thai Pongal is the sharing of the pongal. Even though households all make their own, in the spirit of unity and inclusiveness, the pongal is meant to be shared. After the family meal, it will be shared among neighbours, friends, and other relatives.

*Private Members' Business*

It is not just a celebration that the Tamil Canadians are well known for. The Tamil language, literature, and art are also great examples of the depth of the culture and heritage of Tamil peoples. The Tamil language is the oldest spoken in India, and Tamil literature is the oldest known literature in India. While Tamil literature is considered to have begun in the first century CE, some inscriptions have been found it dating as far back as the third century BCE. In 2004, India declared Tamil a classical language because it met the criteria of being ancient, having an independent tradition, and possessing a considerable body of ancient literature.

When speaking of rich cultural heritages, it would simply be impossible to leave the Tamil people unmentioned. For more than 75 years now, Tamil Canadians have brought this incredible heritage to Canada, both on the economic and socio-cultural levels.

The NDP has long recognized these contributions and is proud to officially recognize the importance of Tamil heritage in Canada. This motion will see the federal government catch up to other jurisdictions, such as the provincial Government of Ontario, and the municipal governments of Toronto and Ottawa. Following the NDP bill from 2013 in the House, those jurisdictions adopted motions of their own, formally recognizing the heritage and contributions of Tamil Canadians during the month of January.

Today, Canada is home to hundreds of thousands of Tamil Canadians. In 2011, Statistics Canada found that nearly 147,000 Canadians identified Tamil as their mother tongue. Due to the large global Tamil diaspora population, the accuracy of this figure is challenged by some community organizations and experts. Those groups point to a population more in the range of 200,000 in the city of Toronto alone. Whatever the final tally, there is no doubt that many, many Tamil people have come to Canada to make it their home, to raise their families, and to contribute to the rich fabric of Canadian society.

● (1725)

The Tamil population is a noteworthy example of how Canada is made stronger through its cultural diversity as the community continues to grow and thrive here. I have just a few examples of the contributions Tamil Canadians have made to our country. I would like to point out three individuals.

The first is Shyam Selvadurai. He is a well-known, award-winning novelist who came to Canada with his family when he was 19. He is just one of many well-known Canadian authors with a Tamil background.

The second is Dr. Elagu Elagupillai. After obtaining his Ph.D. in nuclear physics from the University of Toronto, he travelled the world as a scholar and tenured professor in Malaysia and Zambia before returning to the University of Toronto. He has contributed immensely to Canada through his work at the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, as well as being the Canadian expert at the International Atomic Energy Agency.

My third example is Logan Kanapathi. Mr. Kanapathi is the first person of Tamil heritage elected to government in Canada. In 2006, he became part of our history when he became the first Tamil Canadian to be elected to public office when he won a seat as a city councillor in Markham, Ontario.

Those are just three examples of the contributions that Tamil Canadians have made to our country, like so many groups coming to Canada, looking for a home that would allow them to thrive. Thankfully, many are able to find that in Canada and we all benefit. Whether it is the novel that we cannot put down, the local city councillor who listens to the concerns of the community, or a nuclear physicist ensuring that Canadian nuclear power plants are safe, the contributions of Tamil Canadians highlight not only their rich backgrounds but the strength of Canadian diversity.

Declaring January Tamil heritage month is another step the government can take to reaffirm the acknowledgement that Canada is strengthened by diversity. Promoting Tamil heritage month would not only show Tamil Canadians that their many social, cultural, and economic contributions are valued, but would provide Canadians from all walks of life a greater opportunity to learn about and experience the rich, vibrant, cultural background and history of Tamil Canadians.

It is my pleasure to stand in the House today to support this motion.

● (1730)

**Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to have the opportunity in the House today to support Motion No. 24, introduced by my colleague and friend, the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park, which seeks to have the House recognize the Tamil community's contributions to Canada and to establish January as Tamil heritage month all across our great nation.

Being the representative of the second most diverse riding in Canada, a riding that is home to five Sikh gurdwaras, four Hindu temples, three mosques, and two churches, I and the people of Brampton East and all Canadians across our country understand the importance of cultural diversity.

The Tamil Canadian community is one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada, and it contributes an unparalleled and immeasurable amount to our country and to my home riding of Brampton East. From the Brampton Tamil Seniors Association, which recently celebrated its third anniversary, to the Brampton Tamil Association, which hosts the annual Eelam Pavilion at the Carabram multicultural festival, Tamil Canadian community leaders and volunteers dedicate countless hours to enriching the already-vibrant community of Brampton, for Tamil and non-Tamil residents alike.

I would like to take a moment to speak about the Brampton Tamil Seniors Association. This group serves 200 active seniors in Brampton, and consistently meets on Mondays at a local community centre to bring activities to seniors who are in isolation or face disability issues. Seniors have the opportunity to mingle, build a support network, and learn computer skills, among other things, which are all essential for seniors in our community. It is contributing to the local community by helping provide the very basic services these seniors require, in a context that is relevant to their community.

The leadership of the community is to be commended. It is for this reason, among others, that in Brampton, every January since 2014 has been proclaimed Tamil heritage month. Celebrating and embracing cultural diversity is vital for the city of Brampton.

As many in this House know, January is an important month for Tamil Canadians. During this time, Thai Pongal, the Tamil harvest festival, and other Tamil artistic and cultural events take place throughout the month. Thai Pongal is a celebration to give thanks to the sun for providing the energy for a bountiful harvest. It is a value that is so essentially Canadian, simply because it is deeply ingrained in every culture that makes up our great nation.

Much like many Canadians, the Tamil people came to our country after facing horrific experiences in their own country. They deeply understand the value and importance of freedom and justice, and they stand firm with our Canadian identity and our Canadian values. They advocate for human rights, freedom, tolerance, and generosity.

Many arrived in Canada as refugees decades ago, and now are proudly part of the Canadian fabric. The community's success can be attributed to hard-working individuals who value post-secondary education and fiscal responsibility.

It is remarkable that, within a relatively short span of time, Tamil Canadians have established themselves in Canada. Empowered by their high level of literacy, education, and professional competency in all walks of life, they have planted deep roots in Canada and are flourishing from entrepreneurship, in business establishments, and as doctors, lawyers, and engineers. They are represented as lawyers from Osgoode Hall, like the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park, and members of Parliament where the first Tamil Canadian was elected to this House last session. In this current session our good friend the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park serves alongside us.

On a personal note, when I was in high school in Brampton, I stuck out because of my turban and my identity. Even though I grew up in a city where diversity was the norm, I always shied away from celebrating who I was. Some of my Tamil friends felt that they could not celebrate their heritage. In the last 10 to 15 years, we have come a long way in our society. We have come a long way in our city and in our province, where Tamil heritage month is celebrated on such a grand scale every January.

• (1735)

I look forward to having this motion passed and January being declared Tamil heritage month, so people across the country, from coast to coast to coast, can celebrate the Tamil heritage and Thai Pongal. Canadians of all walks of life, no matter where they come from, no matter what they believe in, will be able to celebrate with their Tamil brothers and sisters in the joyous occasion of Tamil heritage month every January.

In essence, the success story of Tamil Canadians is just another Canadian success story. I encourage all my hon. colleagues to support this motion.

**Mr. Garnett Genus (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak in favour of Motion No. 24, which states:

*Private Members' Business*

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the contributions that Tamil-Canadians have made to Canadian society, the richness of the Tamil language and culture, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon Tamil heritage for future generations by declaring January, every year, Tamil Heritage Month.

I want to congratulate my friend for Scarborough—Rouge Park for bringing the motion forward. I have had the pleasure of working with him on the scrutiny of regulations committee. I am sure he finds its work as interesting and engaging as I do.

Whenever we discuss motions like this, I sometimes get these questions from people. Why do we need another commemorative month? Why is it important for us to spend time and energy on this discussion? What does this discussion accomplish?

At the outset, it is important to answer those questions and underline that what the motion calls for fundamentally is recognition without instituting specific policy changes. There is no cost associated with the motion, and it does not create a civic holiday, for example.

Points of cultural recognition like this require the action of Parliament, but they do not really involve us necessarily or at least oblige us to take specific subsequent action.

Some might ask what the purpose is of these kinds of steps. Despite not necessitating subsequent formal action by government, I think all of us in the House agree that these kinds of points of recognition are still very important. So much of our politics in the fullest sense of the term, of our life together, is shaped by our understanding of our identities, not simply by material considerations or choices. The kinds of communities that we form, and often the political choices we make, are shaped by a deep sense of who we are individually and collectively.

Canada is a country in which, at least historically, we have aspired to a shared common civic national identity, complemented by a multiplicity of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identities. There is unity and diversity, and both the unity and diversities are important.

Further, acts of political recognition of the contributions of minority communities are essential to helping us preserve our unity in the context of diversity. People from minority communities benefit from expressions of cultural recognition and appreciation from majoritarian institutions like Parliament. These acts of recognition help ensure a fuller sense of national unity.

Therefore, when we as a chamber undertake acts of specific recognition like this, we certainly are recognizing Canada's diversity, but we are also enhancing unity by showing Tamil Canadians our firm commitment to recognizing their distinct cultural identity and their contributions to Canada. Through that recognition, we help to ensure that all Canadians feel fully included.

We are also, of course, inviting Canadians who are not of Tamil origin to become more aware of Tamil culture, the contributions of Tamil Canadians, and maybe to reach out and learn and experience some of the richness in Tamil culture.

*Private Members' Business*

We often hear Canadian multiculturalism described in a way that suggests it is a modern, politically spawned phenomenon. However, multiculturalism is not a product of government policy. It is a concept that our relatively new country drew on by learning from and observing the experiences of other societies through the vast swath of history.

To start with, in fact, as my colleague for Scarborough—Rouge Park specifically mentioned in his original speech, multiculturalism is indigenous to Canada. Canada has always had a plurality of languages and peoples living here since time immemorial.

However, Canada also draws into its understanding of multiculturalism from the experience of various immigrant communities to Canada, and from Indian immigrants to Canada in particular. Canada has a large and growing South Asian community, which happens to include my wife and in-laws.

Immigrants to Canada from India bring with them the experience of another multilingual, multi-religious, multicultural democracy. They have been doing multiculturalism for much longer than Canada has.

Multiculturalism, though enhanced by acts of state recognition like this, fundamentally stands on ground created by individuals, families, communities, and by civil society as a whole.

● (1740)

I congratulate Tamil Canadians and all Canadians for the hard work that they do to preserve and strengthen their cultural identity as part of the Canadian whole. Anything that we do or say as acts of cultural recognition as Parliament really pales in comparison to the significance of the more substantive acts of cultural preservation and sharing that ordinary Canadians in every part of this country are involved in every day. Parliament can undertake this act of recognition, and I believe it is important that we do so. However, the substantive work continues to be in the hands of individuals, of families, of communities, and of civil society.

I note this because the Tamil community is a model of both the unity and the diversity that we aspire to here in Canada as a whole. The Tamil community contains a wide variety of different faith traditions. It includes people whose families hail from India or Sri Lanka or from other places. It includes people who are active in and have made significant contributions to all three of our major political parties and probably other ones.

One of the key ties that unites the Tamil community is the beautiful and historic Tamil language, and I know other members have spoken about that today. Tamil is one of the oldest surviving languages in the world. We know of written inscriptions that date back about 2,500 years. The Tamil language is remarkable for its longevity, but also for its continuity over time. I read recently that around the world there are over 300 daily newspapers published in Tamil. It is an old language but also a language that is very much with us today.

I have to say I was surprised that my friend from Brampton East neglected to mention the contribution of Tamil Canadians to sports, though I am always happy to share my knowledge of sports with him. Canadian tennis player, Sonya Jeyaseelan; cricketer, Sanjayan Thuraisingam; ping-pong player, Pradeeban Peter-Paul; and hockey

players, Raman and Velan Nandhakumaran have made us all very proud.

As members can tell, Tamil is not my mother tongue but I am working on it and always interested in learning more.

My colleague noted in his opening speech that we would not be the first government in Canada to recognize Tamil heritage month. This has been recognized by the Province of Ontario, as well, he noted, by a variety of municipalities, including Ajax, Pickering, Brampton, Toronto, Ottawa, York Region, Markham, Stouffville, Oshawa, and Whitby.

I will just conclude by saying that it is so great to be in a country where valuing our diversity is a point of political consensus. We can look around the world and see places where the value of diversity is debated as part of politics. However, we are in a chamber, not perhaps the only one in the world but relatively unique in the world, where this is very clearly a point of consensus, where we all recognize the benefits of diversity and the value that immigration has brought to our country. I think that universal political recognition of the value of diversity acts to strengthen our collective unity in the context of that diversity.

Again, this is a good opportunity to both recognize the contribution of Tamil Canadians but also to invite non-Tamil Canadians to learn more about Tamil culture and to take the opportunity to draw on the richness that this community has brought to this country.

I want to again thank the member for bringing this forward and encourage all members to join me in supporting the motion.

● (1745)

**Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all my colleagues from all the parties for their statements this afternoon. It is definitely a sign of strength for the Tamil community that we can cross party lines and come together on such an important and symbolic issue that affects all Tamil Canadians.

I want to thank my colleagues who spoke not just today but also at the last session on Motion No. 24, which would recognize Tamil Heritage Month every January, for their support and solidarity. Since I last took the floor in May on this topic, I have heard some very personal stories that speak to the history, strength, and resolve of the Tamil Canadian community, and I want to share them.

This July, I visited Sri Lanka after a prolonged period of time, where I personally saw the enormous destruction that took place over a 26-year civil war. It is the country where I was born, yet it is a country in which it is very difficult for Tamils to live in peace, security, and equality, or even call it home. It is a country that is unable to protect the unique Tamil language, culture, people, and land.

My visit gave me a closer look into the ongoing conflict. It confirmed to me that, while the armed conflict is over, the underlying issues for Tamils are far from it.

The foundation for peace on the island must be one based on a robust federal system that respects all minorities, equality, human rights, and strict adherence to the rule of law.

I returned to Canada grateful as always to come back to this country that I call home. Canada gave me and my family refuge in 1983. It is a country that has given an abundance of rights, freedoms, and opportunities for me and my family.

In Canada, the basis of our success or failure is not predetermined by who we are or where we came from. In many ways, the rest of my summer was spent reflecting on this reality.

I had the opportunity to go to St. John's, Newfoundland, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the first boat of Tamil refugees who arrived on our shores in 1986. We celebrated the great people of Admirals Beach, our Coast Guard, Captain Gus and Rom Dalton and their crew, who saved 155 Tamils, and the survivors and their children who made that harrowing journey.

I want to thank the Canadian Tamil Congress for its hard work in organizing this event and celebrating Tamil Canadian history. I also want to thank the great people of Newfoundland for their generous welcome, as always.

I then had the opportunity to attend the second annual Tamil Fest in August of this year. It is the largest street festival in all of Scarborough. The event saw over 175,000 Torontonians celebrate Tamil food, culture, and people.

In September, the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce celebrated its 25th anniversary at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, and I was proud to induct the first ever hall of fame award winner, Thayalan Muthulingam of the CableShoppe.

To see the countless Tamil Canadian business leaders who have succeeded under great adversity was truly inspiring.

It is motivating to see the likes of Dr. Ravi Kugathanan of Digital Specialty Chemicals, who was gleeful with the 23 Ph.D.'s who currently work for him.

• (1750)

[*Translation*]

Last week, I visited a Tamil school in Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Quebec, with my friend, the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard. The young Tamil French Canadians proudly speak three languages: French, English, and Tamil.

[*English*]

With this inspiration over the summer, I stand as a proud member of this community, a community whose contributions to Canada are really just beginning.

We have come a long way both as Canadians and as Tamil Canadians.

*Private Members' Business*

In closing, I want to thank the many individuals and organizations that have worked to make this initiative a reality.

The efforts of my friends, the collective advocacy and contributions of various community leaders, organizations, and all levels of governments across this nation speak to the fact that preserving Tamil heritage in Canada does not begin or end on partisan lines.

It is because of our collective efforts that all Canadians will now be able to celebrate Tamil heritage month every January, from coast to coast to coast.

I want to leave where I started last May by acknowledging that we are on the traditional unceded lands of the Algonquin people. I want to thank our indigenous peoples for sharing their land.

*Nandri, Merci*, thank you, *Meegwetch*.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** 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):** Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 5, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[*Translation*]

It being 5:56 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 5:52 p.m.)





# CONTENTS

Thursday, September 29, 2016

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### Security Intelligence Review Committee

Mr. Picard ..... 5249

### Interparliamentary Delegations

Mr. Nault ..... 5249

### Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Privatization Act

Mr. Trost ..... 5249

Bill C-308. Introduction and first reading ..... 5249  
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) ..... 5249

### Gender Equality Week Act

Mr. Spengemann ..... 5249

Bill C-309. Introduction and first reading ..... 5249  
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) ..... 5249

### Financial Administration Act

Mr. Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia) ..... 5249

Bill C-310. Introduction and first reading ..... 5249  
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) ..... 5250

### Business of the House

Mr. Julian ..... 5250

Motion ..... 5250

(Motion agreed to) ..... 5250

#### Animal Welfare

Mrs. Mendès ..... 5250

#### Palliative Care

Mr. Cuzner ..... 5250

#### Falun Gong

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 5250

### Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 5250

Ms. Laverdière ..... 5260

Ms. Goldsmith-Jones ..... 5260

Mr. Genuis ..... 5260

Mr. Dubé ..... 5262

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 5262

Mr. Dubé ..... 5263

Mr. Ouellette ..... 5264

Ms. Pauzé ..... 5264

Mr. Saganash ..... 5265

Mr. Stewart ..... 5265

Mr. Fragiskatos ..... 5266

Ms. Quach ..... 5266

Mr. Fragiskatos ..... 5267

Mr. Dubé ..... 5268

Mr. Kmiec ..... 5269

Ms. Young ..... 5269

Mr. Stetski ..... 5270

Mr. Kmiec ..... 5271

Mr. Ouellette ..... 5271

Ms. Malcolmson ..... 5271

Mr. Fragiskatos ..... 5273

Mr. Sopuck ..... 5273

Ms. Quach ..... 5274

Mr. Ouellette ..... 5275

Mr. Angus ..... 5275

Mr. Lametti ..... 5276

Mr. Angus ..... 5277

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 5277

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 5278

Ms. Laverdière ..... 5279

Mr. Rankin ..... 5279

Mr. Masse (Windsor West) ..... 5281

Mr. Masse (Windsor West) ..... 5281

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Business of Supply

#### Opposition Motion—Creation of a Standing Committee on Arms Exports Review

Ms. Laverdière ..... 5250

Motion ..... 5251

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 5252

Mr. Genuis ..... 5252

Ms. Pauzé ..... 5252

Ms. Hardcastle ..... 5253

Mr. Vaughan ..... 5254

Ms. Laverdière ..... 5255

Ms. Goldsmith-Jones ..... 5255

Ms. Laverdière ..... 5257

Ms. Kwan ..... 5257

Mr. Genuis ..... 5258

Mrs. Caesar-Chavannes ..... 5258

Mr. Kent ..... 5258

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Health

Ms. Pauzé ..... 5282

### Montreal Expos

Mr. Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs) ..... 5282

### National Seniors Day

Mr. Obhrai ..... 5282

### Elsie Wayne

Mr. Long ..... 5283

### The Environment

Ms. Malcolmson ..... 5283

### Canadian Golf Hall of Fame Inductee

Mr. Maloney ..... 5283

### Richmond—Arthabaska Paralympic Athletes

Mr. Rayes ..... 5283

<b>Canadian Veterans</b>	
Mr. Arya .....	5284
<b>Volunteer Firefighters</b>	
Mrs. Jordan .....	5284
<b>David Alexander William Cook</b>	
Mr. Hoback .....	5284
<b>Canadian Youth Ambassador Program</b>	
Mrs. Caesar-Chavannes .....	5284
<b>Canadian Consular Officers</b>	
Mr. Alghabra .....	5284
<b>Jacques Demers</b>	
Mr. G�n�reux .....	5285
<b>Shimon Peres</b>	
Mr. Mendicino .....	5285
<b>Saint-Lucien Cranberry Festival</b>	
Mr. Choquette .....	5285
<b>National Seniors Day</b>	
Mr. Warawa .....	5285
<b>Prime Minister's Youth Council</b>	
Mr. Schiefke .....	5285

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Ethics</b>	
Ms. Bergen .....	5286
Mr. LeBlanc .....	5286
Ms. Bergen .....	5286
Mr. LeBlanc .....	5286
Ms. Bergen .....	5286
Mr. LeBlanc .....	5286
<b>Health</b>	
Mr. Rayes .....	5286
Mrs. Philpott .....	5286
Mr. Rayes .....	5287
Mrs. Philpott .....	5287
Mr. Davies .....	5287
Mrs. Philpott .....	5287
Mr. Davies .....	5287
Mrs. Philpott .....	5287
Ms. Sansoucy .....	5287
Mrs. Philpott .....	5287
Ms. Sansoucy .....	5287
Mrs. Philpott .....	5287
<b>Ethics</b>	
Mr. Calkins .....	5288
Mr. LeBlanc .....	5288
Mr. Calkins .....	5288
Mr. LeBlanc .....	5288
Mr. Lobb .....	5288
Mr. LeBlanc .....	5288
Mr. Lobb .....	5288
Mr. LeBlanc .....	5288
Mr. Nuttall .....	5288
Mr. LeBlanc .....	5288

Mr. Paul-Hus .....	5289
Mr. LeBlanc .....	5289
<b>The Environment</b>	
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona) .....	5289
Ms. McKenna .....	5289
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Mr. Dub� .....	5289
Mr. Picard .....	5289
<b>Government Expenditures</b>	
Mrs. Vecchio .....	5289
Ms. Chagger .....	5289
Mrs. Vecchio .....	5289
Ms. Chagger .....	5290
Mr. Gourde .....	5290
Ms. Chagger .....	5290
Mr. Gourde .....	5290
Ms. Chagger .....	5290
<b>Labour</b>	
Ms. Trudel .....	5290
Ms. Mihychuk .....	5290
<b>Housing</b>	
Ms. Boutin-Sweet .....	5290
Mr. Duclos .....	5290
Ms. Dzerowicz .....	5290
Mr. Duclos .....	5291
<b>Taxation</b>	
Ms. Raitt .....	5291
Mr. Champagne .....	5291
Ms. Raitt .....	5291
Mr. Champagne .....	5291
<b>Infrastructure</b>	
Ms. Watts .....	5291
Mr. Sohi .....	5291
Ms. Watts .....	5291
Mr. Sohi .....	5291
<b>Democratic Reform</b>	
Mr. MacGregor .....	5291
Mr. Holland .....	5292
<b>The Environment</b>	
Ms. Malcolmson .....	5292
Ms. Young .....	5292
<b>Softwood Lumber</b>	
Mr. Eglinski .....	5292
Mr. Lametti .....	5292
Mr. Hoback .....	5292
Mr. Lametti .....	5292
Mrs. Boucher .....	5292
Mr. Lametti .....	5292
<b>Education</b>	
Mr. Ruimy .....	5293
Ms. Mihychuk .....	5293
<b>Veterans Affairs</b>	
Mr. Clarke .....	5293

Mr. Hehr .....	5293
<b>Aerospace Industry</b>	
Mr. Aubin .....	5293
Mr. Bains .....	5293
<b>Indigenous Affairs</b>	
Mr. O'Regan .....	5293
Ms. Jones .....	5293
<b>Ethics</b>	
Ms. Rempel .....	5294
Mr. LeBlanc .....	5294
<b>Health</b>	
Mr. Thériault .....	5294
Mrs. Philpott .....	5294
Ms. Pauzé .....	5294
Mrs. Philpott .....	5294
<b>Business of the House</b>	
Ms. Bergen .....	5294
Ms. Chagger .....	5294

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

<b>Business of Supply</b>	
<b>Opposition Motion—Creation of a Standing Committee on Arms Exports Review</b>	
Motion .....	5294
Mr. Masse (Windsor West) .....	5294
Mr. Lamoureux .....	5295
Mr. Genuis .....	5295
Ms. Hardcastle .....	5295
Mr. McKay .....	5296
Ms. Sansoucy .....	5297
Mr. Longfield .....	5297
Mr. Genuis .....	5297

Mr. Graham .....	5298
Mr. Choquette .....	5299
Mr. Kmiec .....	5299
Mr. Vandal .....	5299
Ms. Hardcastle .....	5299
Mr. Choquette .....	5299
Mr. Longfield .....	5301
Ms. Sansoucy .....	5301
Mr. MacGregor .....	5301
Mr. Fragiskatos .....	5303
Mr. Genuis .....	5303
Mr. Van Loan .....	5303
Mr. Lamoureux .....	5305
Ms. Sansoucy .....	5305
Mr. Kmiec .....	5306
Ms. Sansoucy .....	5307
Mr. Lamoureux .....	5308
Ms. Ashton .....	5308
Mr. Lamoureux .....	5309
Ms. Laverdière .....	5310
Mr. Garrison .....	5310
Mr. Lamoureux .....	5312
Division deemed demanded and deferred .....	5312

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

<b>TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH</b>	
Mrs. Zahid .....	5312
Mr. Obhrai .....	5313
Ms. Kwan .....	5313
Mr. Grewal .....	5314
Mr. Genuis .....	5315
Mr. Anandasangaree .....	5316
Division on Motion Deferred .....	5317

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