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Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, December 9, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1005)

[*English*]

CANADA BUSINESS CORPORATIONS ACT

The House resumed from November 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-25, An Act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act, the Canada Cooperatives Act, the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, and the Competition Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: When the House last took up debate on the question, the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan had seven minutes remaining in his remarks.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are nearing the end of 2016. New Year's Day 2017 falls on a Sunday. The first payday of the new year will be January 2. By around noon on January 3, Canada's top 100 CEOs will, on average, have made as much money as the average full-time employee will earn over the entire year. In 2013, and again in 2014, Canada's top CEOs made an average of \$9 million each. That means that the top CEOs made 184 times as much as the average Canadian worker.

This inequality is not only large, but it is growing. Figures on the top 100 CEOs only go back to 2008 on a comparable basis, but if we look at the top 50 CEOs, an even more elite group, in 1995 they made only 85 times as much as the average worker, so there has been an explosion of executive compensation over the past two decades.

Why should we care if private companies choose to pay their CEOs a lot of money? If we take the 100 top CEOs, each making an average of \$9 million, that is nearly \$1 billion that is not being used to hire other employees, not being invested in machinery and equipment, and not being used for needed research and development. Corporate Canada as a whole would be better off if it could pay CEOs less. However, individual corporate boards feel pressure to keep up with what CEOs of other companies are paid. This leads to a circular logic that justifies ever higher executive compensation.

Even the CEOs themselves do not really benefit from this trend. An extra million dollars does not make a material difference in their standard of living. Really, they are concerned about their relative position compared to other CEOs, so if a CEO gets paid more it increases his or her position on the league tables only by reducing the position of other CEOs. Our economy would be stronger, and even corporate Canada itself would be better off with government regulation to limit CEO compensation.

Bill C-25 includes some minor improvements to corporate governance, but what is missing is the mandatory and binding say on pay provisions that we find in other advanced economies. Currently, Canadian companies can consult shareholders on executive compensation, but they are not bound by the results of those votes. The NDP is going to propose amendments to Bill C-25 to include mandatory and binding say on pay provisions to limit executive compensation.

Beyond the scope of Bill C-25, the federal government can and should also address out-of-control executive compensation through the tax system. I believe in giving credit where it is due, so I want to recognize that this government did modestly increase the top personal income tax rate. However, the government failed to close the loophole that allows half of stock options to be exempt from personal income tax. This stock option loophole delivers the largest benefit to highly paid CEOs and corporate executives, so we need to close that loophole to address executive compensation.

Something else that the federal government could do is to limit the amount of executive compensation that a corporation can deduct in calculating its corporate taxes.

•(1010)

The United States currently limits the amount of CEO compensation that can be deducted in calculating corporate taxes to \$1 million. Unfortunately, this limit is not very effective in the United States because it does not apply to performance-based compensation, such as stock options. However, we could easily apply a limit to all forms of executive compensation and ensure that they cannot be deducted in calculating corporate income taxes.

Government Orders

In conclusion, out-of-control executive compensation is a significant source of worsening inequality, and is a substantial drain on our economy. The Government of Canada can and should address this problem by strengthening corporate governance through Bill C-25, and also by implementing progressive tax reforms.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Regina—Lewvan for his excellent speech.

I would like him to comment further on what he said at the beginning of his speech about how long it takes for a CEO to earn as much money as an average employee in the same company.

We hear a lot about the day when Canadians have earned enough to cover their taxes. If I remember correctly, that is usually in July or August. Too little is being said about this other extremely important indicator. I think it has gotten worse over the years. In the 1970s, the gap between CEO pay and worker pay was much smaller.

I would like to give my colleague an opportunity to talk more about something that I think is important, even though most Canadians are unaware of it.

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

He is right: we make a big deal out of tax freedom day, a day mid-year by which, according to the Fraser Institute, the average Canadian has paid all of his or her taxes. There are a lot of problems with the way this indicator is calculated.

It is important to consider the value of another method, one developed by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which looks at how long it takes corporate executives to earn more than the average worker. It happens very early in the year, around noon on January 3, 2017.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and congratulate my colleague from Regina—Lewvan for his excellent speech.

Income inequality is at the root of our economic problems in society, in my opinion. When the gap between the rich and everyone else becomes that wide, we end up with economic crises and all sorts of social problems. Addressing income inequality should be one of the top priorities of this House.

My colleague talked about a more technical aspect that the public does not seem so familiar with. In the case of capital gains, only half of net gains are taxable, but when it comes to work-related income, one's entire salary is taxable.

Can my colleague put a simple and concrete figure to this? For example, how much does a person earning \$50,000 a year pay in tax? If that amount were a capital gain, how much would the person pay in tax?

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette for his excellent question.

It is true that inequality is a major problem in our society and it spills over into health and crime. Many social problems stem from inequality.

He also mentioned a problem with our tax system, where, unlike other sources of income, only half of capital gains are taxed. This problem is more apparent when we look at how corporate executives are compensated. Often their capital gains are not really investments, but compensation. That money should be taxed in the same way that their employment income is taxed.

[*English*]

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the interesting statements that the member has made about this particular issue. I wonder if he might want to respond to a different group of working people who I know he cheers for, like the Regina, Saskatchewan football team, and many hockey players in the National Hockey League, who are paid more than CEOs. What does he think of those people who make a considerable amount of money more than the CEOs, in their profession?

● (1015)

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, the average of these top 100 CEOs makes \$9 million a year, which is vastly more than the average player for the Saskatchewan Roughriders or in the Canadian Football League generally, so I do not necessarily accept the premise of the question, but I believe that there is a very similar problem with high pay for professional athletes. Part of the solution certainly is to increase the top personal income tax rate as the government has done.

The problem derives from the fact that people are being paid so much they do not really benefit from the additional money, it is all about relative position. We have to pay a hockey player a lot because other hockey players earn a lot, and certainly there are more equitable ways of distributing that money in our society.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to take part in the debate on Bill C-25, an act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act, the Canada Cooperatives Act, the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, and the Competition Act.

It is always very important to review our laws in order to improve them, and to ensure that we make them even more fair and that they will foster gender parity. This bill is a first step in the right direction.

The NDP will support enhancing the diversity of boards of directors and democracy for shareholders.

However, once again the Liberals are not walking the talk. Bill C-25 is an attempt to solve the problems of gender parity. That will not happen if we only do what is being proposed. We are going to have to do more, and I know that the NDP member who sits on this committee will make the amendments needed to improve gender-parity in this area. That is what we are proposing.

This is only the second time in 40 years that the Canadian government has looked at corporate governance issues. As I said, this is no small matter, and it is good to review these things once in a while, so this is a step in the right direction.

Government Orders

The government's stated objective in introducing this legislation was this: the bill proposes changes meant to increase shareholder democracy and participation, support efforts to increase women's participation on corporate boards and senior management, and improve corporate transparency and business certainty while reducing the regulatory burden.

As I was saying, generally speaking, in its current form, the bill will increase shareholders' democratic participation in order to ensure greater understanding and, for instance, require annual elections for corporate directors, ensure that shareholders can vote for individual candidates, and require a majority voting standard, which are all interesting reforms. This is all through the lens of increasing representation of women on corporate boards and in senior management.

This might improve because businesses will have to explain why they do not have any female representation on their boards. That is a step in the right direction. However, everyone will agree that it is just a small step in improving gender equality.

Hundreds of people from Drummond have come to see me to request federal pay equity legislation. Unfortunately, as we know, the Liberal government said that it might wait until 2018 before implementing such a law, when pay equity should already be a *fait accompli* in Canada.

However, that is not yet the case, and unfortunately, the Liberals have put off their commitment to gender equality. That is coming from a government whose Prime Minister claims to be a feminist. It is not enough for the Prime Minister to claim to be a feminist. He and his government also need to take action to show that they are actually committed to gender equality. People have been disappointed in that regard.

This issue is so important that the NDP introduced Bill C-220, an act to amend the Financial Administration Act (balanced representation). The bill's sponsor is the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, who is doing an excellent job of promoting gender equality.

• (1020)

Feminism does not only involve women. All men and women must work together to achieve parity.

As I mentioned earlier, hundreds of citizens in my riding have come to see me to talk about this. They have come to demand more action from the government. I have tabled petitions on their behalf. We are looking for more concrete measures from the government on this issue.

I have spoken about Bill C-220 from my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith. This was tabled in various forms by the NDP in the past, notably by former MP Anne-Marie Day. It is clearly a long-standing commitment on our part. Everyone voted in favour of the bill except the Conservatives. I don't know why, but they were not in agreement.

That bill was aiming for balanced gender representation on the boards of directors of crown corporations. This is an area where the government can take direct action. Unfortunately this has yet to be done. However we continue to move ahead and we will not give up. We hope that this time, in this Parliament, members from all parties

in the House will be able to put partisanship aside so that progress can be made on the issue of gender parity.

The member who spoke before me mentioned another very important issue, that of executive compensation. This bill calls for the introduction of a consultative vote on executive compensation, something the investor and shareholder community has been calling for.

Bill C-25 improves the election process for board of director positions by eliminating the list system and requiring that directors be elected on a majority. Indeed, many stakeholders have asked for more of a say on the compensation for executives. The NDP was very active on CEO compensation. Unfortunately, the government did not consider any of that when drafting this bill, which is very disappointing.

Given the situation of Canada's citizens, the deduction for stock options is a horrible fiscal loophole which must absolutely be eliminated. It serves to give an unfairly high salary to the biggest CEOs, the richest people in our society. These people are taxed on only 50% of these earnings, which is totally unfair, since Canadian citizens doing normal work are taxed on 100% of their wages. This tax loophole exists only for the benefit of CEOs, the richest people in our society. We have to tackle this injustice.

That is why the NDP called for the elimination of the deduction for stock options in its electoral platform. This loophole allows the senior officers of corporations to pay only half the income tax on their compensation paid as stock options, or 50% of the prescribed rate. If a citizen from Drummond were to do that, the Canada Revenue Agency would call him right away and order him to pay his full income tax. Yet for executives this is a legal loophole that exists.

• (1025)

There are certain loopholes that are legal, but are totally unacceptable in our modern society. They are totally unfair, bordering on unethical. Unfortunately, they exist, and they are legal. The government is doing very little, if anything at all, about these tax loopholes. Since it was elected, we have not really seen any strong commitment from this government on closing these unfair loopholes. This is one of the worst examples of what is lacking in this bill.

This is a truly regressive loophole. Over 90% of the benefit goes to 1% of taxpayers, those who earn over \$250,000 a year. Truly, it is a minority of the Canadian population that benefits from this. This deduction is bad for the economy, since it encourages CEOs to inflate stock prices in the short term through buybacks instead of investing in the economy. The government is losing close to \$750 million a year as a result. Stock option deductions are totally unfair and unacceptable.

Government Orders

I have spoken of my fellow citizens who continue to be very active in Drummond. Hundreds have signed a petition to put an end to tax havens. Somewhat like tax loopholes, there are also tax havens the government needs to address. As the House knows, there are many ways to either facilitate the use of tax havens or curb it. Unfortunately, the steps recently taken only serve to facilitate it.

This situation is depriving the state of the funds it needs to carry out its social mission. According to Statistics Canada, tax avoidance is costing the government from \$5 billion to \$8 billion every year.

Fortunately, this phenomenon is now leading to some collective soul-searching. As I was saying, hundreds of my fellow citizens have signed a petition demanding that we take more action in this area. I have joined in by tabling that petition here in the House of Commons to signal the importance of combatting tax havens and tax loopholes.

It is extremely important to do this, because the public purse is being denied hundreds of millions of dollars by tax loopholes and billions of dollars by tax havens. Public services suffer as a result.

One need only consider health. In the next 10 years, there will be \$36 billion in cuts. The cuts were started by the Conservatives; the Liberals had promised to abolish these unfair cuts affecting the most vulnerable in our society, those who have health problems. Unfortunately, the Liberals want to continue on this unfair path. It is totally unacceptable to continue these sorts of cuts.

It is a way of not investing in health, for the funds diverted from the public purse cannot be used for the well-being of the Canadian population.

•(1030)

In the end, the NDP wants the government to take concrete steps to bring about gender parity on Canadian boards of directors. Many researchers interested in gender equality in companies and in politics feel that the “comply or explain” model of disclosure that is found in Bill C-25 in its current form does not appropriately address the issue of gender parity. Therefore, as I was saying earlier, we are going to do everything we can to ensure that amendments are made to improve this situation.

Furthermore, New Democrats want the government to take advantage of the opportunity presented by Bill C-25 to resolve the issue of executive salaries by assigning shareholders a bigger role in the establishment of compensation. That would be a start.

I will conclude by saying that the bill is a step in the right direction. We are going to make amendments to it in committee. I hope that the Liberal and Conservative members of that committee will work in a collegial fashion to improve this bill for the well-being of our citizens. That is very important, and that is why we were elected.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was an excellent speech, and I, in my collegial way, will ask my question.

I am very passionate, as well, about increasing the number of women in corporate positions and on boards, though my party is not in favour of quotas. Having worked in affirmative action in the U.S. when there were quotas, that is not really the right way to put women

in those positions. It is more important to make sure that competency is part of that, and to have aggressive targets moving forward.

I wonder if the member could expand on how he would like to see us take that initiative forward to get more women on corporate boards.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her comment. Indeed, it is very important to work in a collegial fashion, and sometimes to put partisanship aside.

To that end, first of all, our Prime Minister, self-proclaimed feminist, needs to face up to his responsibilities. It is good that he should call himself a feminist, as should all men. They all have a responsibility to help bring about gender equality. However, when the time comes to enforce pay equity legislation, the Prime Minister shirks his responsibilities. That is why I say he should start by facing up to his responsibilities.

There is probably a way to make very reasonable amendments to this pay equity legislation, and I hope that we find a way to work together to that end in committee.

•(1035)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Drummond on his very fine speech.

He spoke of inequalities and of the tax system that favours the wealthy. He spoke of the completely legal use of tax havens by companies, as well as of the compensation of CEOs via stock options.

In the member’s opinion, why is nothing being done to resolve this persistent problem? Why are the elected members of the government party not working to change this situation? In his view, is it because the citizens of their ridings are in favour of the status quo?

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague. I know he works very hard on the issue of the injustice that results from tax havens.

Legislation to put an end to tax havens has been introduced in the House in the past. My constituents have signed hundreds of petitions calling on the government to do whatever it takes to limit the use of tax havens as much as possible, rather than facilitate it.

We saw who voted in the House in favour of a bill to reduce the number of tax havens. Unfortunately, the Liberals are the ones who want this to continue. It is really disappointing. We need to close the stock option loophole. I hope we can amend this bill to do just that.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his speech.

I want to come back to the issue of gender equality. Clearly, we could never disagree with that as a fundamentally good principle. In this case, however, it is time to move beyond the principle and actually do something about it.

Government Orders

When the Liberals were elected in October 2015, after we accepted defeat, I still remained hopeful. The Liberals promised a gender-balanced cabinet, and they kept that promise. However, if you look a little closer, all the major portfolios were given to men. That was an early example of their doublespeak.

One of our NDP colleagues introduced a private member's bill in the House meant to encourage the participation of women in politics and increase the number of women elected to the House of Commons. That bill was rejected.

We talked about tax fairness, but that was pushed back to 2018. Now the Liberals are talking about women's participation in corporate boards. A few years ago, I read a study that showed beyond any doubt that the more women a corporation had on its board, the more successful it was likely to be. There was a direct correlation.

This bill seems to be a step in the right direction, but it offers no guarantee that the government will finally stop talking about all the great things it is going to do and actually do those things. I would hope there is no room for partisanship on this issue, but is it not the opposition parties' role to propose amendments to make sure the Liberals walk the talk?

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Trois-Rivières for his question and his valuable comments.

This bill is a first attempt and a good start. It has some good stuff in it. We need to talk about gender equality. As I said earlier, feminism is not just for women. It is for everyone. There is no point calling oneself a feminist if one does not act accordingly.

I often joke with my wife about how I am a feminist. When she replies that I have a lot of room for improvement, I tell her, "My darling, you are right. I do need to become a better person". The point is that there must be action, not just talk. As my colleague from Trois-Rivières said, pay equity is a good example of that. Why wait until 2018? There is no excuse, just a reason: lack of will.

This bill has room for improvement, and the NDP will be first in line to propose the amendments it needs.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the topic of pay equity. I was working on this file a few years ago before I came to the House of Commons. Quebec has had pay equity legislation for a very long time, and it is enforcing it more and more, even though it took time to get to that point. However, there is no federal legislation in this regard. A committee examined the issue of pay equity and decided to once again postpone dealing with this issue.

I would like my colleague to elaborate on what impact this will have on Canada's working women. What message does this send about the Liberal government's position on Canada's working women?

• (1040)

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hochelaga for her question. The work that she is doing on gender equality is very important, just as the work she is doing on social housing is essential to ensuring that everyone has fair access to housing.

Getting back to pay equity, sometimes I tell my constituents that the federal government still does not have any pay equity legislation. People are surprised. They do not think that makes any sense. The people of my riding have signed a number of petitions for me to present in the House of Commons. They believe that we need a law now, not 10 years from now. We are supposed to be more proactive than that. We were elected to take action.

I would like to again mention my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith. She introduced Bill C-220, which seeks to amend the Financial Administration Act. The purpose of the bill is to achieve balanced representation in the number of women and men serving as directors on boards of crown corporations. The goal is to proceed gradually but quickly. It is not right that the number of women on these boards is still so low in a society where the percentage of women is higher than that of men.

I would like to again thank the member for Hochelaga for her question. We have to do more to achieve gender equality. We cannot wait until 2018. That is unacceptable.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I will require the full 20 minutes at my disposal, but I did want to comment before the House on some aspects of Bill C-25, which we are discussing.

The first comes up often in conversations, and that is gender parity. We know that there is presently a marked imbalance on corporate boards, in both the private and public sectors. We also know that efforts are being made by the House to try to correct this situation.

We discussed, among other things, Bill C-220 sponsored by my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith, who is building on another bill introduced by my former colleague, Anne-Marie Day, who represented the riding of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles. I believe that this type of bill is necessary as it puts the spotlight on this imbalance, this inequality that can exist.

We are often asked why we are calling for a quota system, a gender parity system. I understand why the question is asked, but it needs to be reworded. It is not about setting aside competency. On the contrary, when we say that competency trumps diversity, we are saying that there are not enough women who have the necessary skills for these positions.

That is not the problem. The problem has more to do with lack of understanding and systemic discrimination against women regarding their ability to manage organizations.

Why do we need a gender parity system and why should we even try to enforce it, while still acknowledging the importance of competency? It is these prejudices and biases that blind us and prevent us from selecting skilled women to fill this type of position.

Government Orders

This morning I was listening to the radio on my way to Parliament. On Radio-Canada, they were talking about how gender parity was imposed on the improv world in Quebec. That might seem like a stretch from what we are talking about, but there is a direct correlation. The Ligue nationale d'improvisation in Quebec had a gender parity system that forced every troupe to have an equal number of women and men.

That measure gave female comedians' amazing but hitherto overlooked talent a platform. In the 1970s and 1980s, there were very few women in the comedy business, and the Ligue nationale d'improvisation played a critical role in raising the profile of female comedians. This morning's guest, Christian Vanasse, shared a list of 15 female comedians who made a name for themselves thanks to the Ligue nationale d'improvisation.

Still, the problem persists. Women are never selected to host galas. Even though they are on the scene and they have star power, gala organizers do not even consider them and always opt for male comedians to host these events.

Even the gender parity system designed to put women's talent in the spotlight in the comedy world will not fix anything without a shift in people's mentality. The same holds true for the field of administration.

Getting back to administration, Bill C-25 falls short because all it does is make companies talk to shareholders about diversity. That is completely out of touch with reality and what public and private administration need right now.

The aspects of Bill C-25 on governance are quite good. The move to eliminate directors being elected as a group is quite positive, as is holding annual elections. Ensuring that directors are elected to boards of directors by majority voting is another positive aspect.

There is another interesting aspect that has not really been debated in the House and that is the elimination of what are called bearer shares. These are shares where the shareholder is not identified on the share certificate. The shares and the vote belong to the stock certificate holder. The share is not necessarily registered in the name of the shareholder, the owner of the stock.

● (1045)

This measure, which is being somewhat overlooked in our debates, will allow for greater transparency with regard to governance and administration.

Aside from gender parity on boards of directors and within company management, the bill falls short in other aspects. Let us not forget that the changes we have before us come out of a three-year consultation that began in 2013. One aspect that has been discussed many times is not only the gap in compensation between shareholders and corporate executives, but also the fact that shareholders still cannot vote on and approve executive compensation at shareholder meetings. This is important because compensation is taken from the company's revenue and profits and therefore the returns that the shareholders can expect.

I think that is a major shortfall of this bill. That is why we are voting in favour of the bill at second reading but proposing amendments. If the bill is not improved, then voting in favour of it at

second reading does not guarantee that we will be voting in favour of it at third reading.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

[*English*]

I listened with care when the member talked about trying to get more women on boards. I was on the pay equity committee, and we talked about how there was already legislation in place in some provinces. It would be so easy to take a look at that. I do not understand why it takes so long to get legislation in place at the federal level.

Similarly, we had an initiative in status of women, and had a list of women who would be suitable for corporate boards, so nobody could ever say they could not find them. I am not sure why it is taking so long. Could the member comment on that?

● (1050)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that very relevant question. The governments have been very slow. I do not want to point fingers at either the current government, the previous Conservative government, or even the Liberal government before that. Ever since the struggle for pay equity began, successive governments have stood in the way.

I remember very well when Nycole Turmel, the former member for Hull-Aylmer, even had to go court over this when she headed the Public Service Alliance of Canada. That is what it took. She had to take the matter to court and jump through all the legal hoops just to get the government to accept a principle as basic as pay equity, in other words, women's right to earn the same as men for the same work. Not only did she have to go to court, but the government challenged it every step of the way. This was about the Public Service Alliance of Canada, but there was also of the issue of male and female postal workers and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

We now have a government that promised to respect pay equity, although it is putting it off as long as possible, until two or three years from now. If the government really took this issue seriously, it could be resolved, just as it has been in several provinces. This government could definitely be taking this matter a little more seriously.

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have talked a fair bit about inequality between men and women in the workplace and on corporate boards, but I wonder if my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques could also speak a bit about another aspect of Bill C-25, which is inequality between CEOs and their employees. What type of negative consequences does that growing inequality have for our society and what kinds of policies could the government implement to address it?

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, which certainly gets people talking.

During his speech, he mentioned the annual study conducted by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which determines at what point corporate CEOs have earned the annual income or average annual salary of one of their employees. The Fraser Institute likes to talk about tax freedom, which generally occurs in July or August. However, it does not take into account all of the benefits people get in return for paying taxes, because there are benefits. Such organizations often ignore that fact.

When CEOs are able to earn an average employee's salary by January 3 at noon, that is a problem not only in terms of equity but also in terms of respect for the labour force, which is extremely important to a company's profitability. Profitability is what leads to increased earnings for CEOs. However, it is also important for our society as a whole because people who earn the average salary in a company will spend a greater share of their income than the CEO. They will be able to save less because they need more of their income for everyday living expenses. They therefore contribute a lot of money to the economy.

Meanwhile, CEOs either save their money, spend it on luxury goods, or invest it abroad, which is much less beneficial to the economy. We are talking about huge amounts of money that are being invested this way.

I therefore believe that there is work to be done to close the gap between the salaries of CEOs and employees and bring it down to a more reasonable level.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, who is our finance critic, for his very enlightening comments. The question I would like to ask him concerns an example from Quebec, but one that could probably occur in many provinces.

What are the reasons for Quebec's success in this equity process? The Liberal government has 40 MPs from Quebec, and some have important portfolios in cabinet. Why has Quebec's success or that of other provinces not served as a catalyst to make this government take action more quickly than what it is proposing?

• (1055)

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières for his question, to which I do not have an answer right now. I would like to hear what government members have to say.

It is not as though this were a partisan issue. Pay equity is a straightforward issue. A woman must earn the same as a man for work of equal value, which is currently not the case. By refusing to acknowledge pay equity for at least another two or even three years, especially in the public service, they are perpetuating an illegitimate, unethical, and unfair situation. Everyone in the House recognizes that.

In light of the number of statements and motions in the House denouncing pay equity, it makes no sense that we must wait two to three years to correct this situation, which everyone recognizes as

illegitimate and unfair. This majority government had promised to fix this problem.

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with Bill C-24, the Prime Minister boasted of having created a gender-balanced cabinet. However, what we have here is pay equity and not equity in terms of responsibilities.

So Bill C-24 was not about feminism, but rather an appearance of feminism, and that is also the impression we get from Bill C-25. We do not believe that the changes it brings are meaningful.

The NDP wants to propose an amendment to verify whether the “comply or explain” approach would really have the expected effects. We are asking for an audit to be done after five years, and we are not sure whether the government will accept that request.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on everything I have just said.

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, these are big questions. I do not think I have time to respond to all of them, but the last one is indeed relevant. The “comply or explain” or “trying to shame” approach is to try and ensure that corporate boards be accountable for diversity or lack of diversity.

In passing, I would note another element that is missing from the bill, and that is a definition of diversity. We want more diversity, but how is that word defined? That is a fundamental question that is passed over. However, “comply or explain” is good only in those cases where there are shareholders or a group of militant shareholders who are really interested in issues related to administration, and who attend general meetings. For companies that have few attending shareholders or those with a high percentage of proxy voting, there will not be much impact on this issue.

It is my impression that in many companies, “comply or explain” will unfortunately not be as important as quarterly performance or major future projects for the next five or ten years. On paper, it seems good to have something like this in the bill, but I am not convinced of the impact it will have. In that sense, I concur with my colleague who wants to re-examine this clause in the next five years to assess its effectiveness, if it is adopted as it stands.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

Statements by Members

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee) [English]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is gathering his provincial counterparts today to talk about the environment, even though he just imposed a pipeline on British Columbia and he is thinking about doing the same to Quebec.

He should also be talking about health care, since Quebec does not accept either his cuts or his conditions. He should also be talking about softwood lumber, since Quebec refuses to be included in another provincialist agreement that only benefits western Canada.

He should be talking about Bombardier, which is still being treated with contempt by this government, when the Ontario automotive industry is going to collect hundreds of millions of dollars more. He should be talking about Bill C-29, which makes it possible for Toronto banks to circumvent Quebec's consumer protection laws and cheat consumers.

Simply put, today's theme is federalism at Quebec's expense, federalism that benefits Canada while preventing Quebecers from making social choices that reflect who they are. That will be the theme of these meetings for Quebec, until those meetings are called "international relations".

* * *

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to talk about accessibility. This summer, the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities launched Canada-wide consultations about what an accessible Canada means to people.

The purpose of the consultations is to inform the development of planned new accessibility legislation. Canadians have been sharing their experiences and the challenges they face every day.

I learned from people who participated in the consultations that something as simple as a threshold can be a major obstacle to people with reduced mobility.

I am proud to say that our government is working to make Canada more inclusive and more accessible for all Canadians.

I encourage all members to hold consultations on accessibility in their ridings. They will see for themselves that any improvement, however small, can make a big difference.

BARRIE FOOD BANK

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday I will be hosting my first annual family skate at the Barrie Molson Centre from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. in support of the Barrie Food Bank. Admission is free, and skaters will enjoy complimentary hot chocolate and candy canes. They will be joined by players from the OHL Barrie Colts. Their mascot, Charlie Horse, will also be on the ice for photos with kids of all ages.

About 2,800 people visit the Barrie Food Bank every month, where 70,000 pounds of food are used and 3,500 children are fed. Some of the items Peter Sundborg and his team are looking for at this time include large diapers, jam, peanut butter, flour, canned vegetables, cereal, sugar, and baby formula.

I will also be hosting my Christmas open house on December 16 and will be collecting food for the Innisfil food bank.

I am pleased to do my small part for those less fortunate, and I encourage all Canadians to do their part to help food banks during this holiday season.

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MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, London, Ontario, has been saddened by tragedies in our community as a result of drunk driving. As the holiday season is now under way, it is more important than ever that we keep our friends and loved ones safe.

I would like to personally acknowledge the efforts of the London chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving and its dedicated core of volunteers, who have worked diligently for many years to keep our roads safe for everyone. These incredible volunteers are continuously educating the public and supporting local victims and survivors. They participate at RIDE checkpoints, make classroom presentations, and support national programs, such as the school assembly program and project red ribbon.

I encourage everyone to call their local police stations if they see any suspicious drivers. I would also like to remind Canadians that keeping our roads safe also means that they should not be reporting RIDE checkpoints on any social media channels. Together we can all make sure our loved ones get home safe over the holidays.

* * *

OIL PIPELINES

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister broke his promise and betrayed British Columbians by approving the Kinder Morgan pipeline. In doing so, he has given the company control of a 150-metre-wide strip of land from Edmonton to Burnaby. He has empowered Kinder Morgan to use section 73 of the National Energy Board Act, which allows the company to expropriate public land, private land, land from churches, land from schools, municipal land, and even land from first nations' traditional territories and reserve land without consent or social licence.

Statements by Members

To add insult to injury, the natural resources minister said he would use the army to help expropriate land and ram this pipeline through our province.

I tabled this week Motion No. 107, which calls on the government not to use military or paramilitary force to help ram this pipeline through our beautiful province. I have been fighting against this pipeline since 2011. My party is against it. What I am calling for is for the Liberals on that side of the House to stand with us and choose British Columbia—

• (1105)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Willowdale.

* * *

GENOCIDE

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 68 years ago today, the United Nations officially adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. To honour this momentous occasion, I ask all members of this esteemed House to join me today to mark the second annual International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime.

As chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity, I know that all members of this House share an overwhelming passion for human rights, human security, and human dignity and take great pride in the leadership Canada has always demonstrated in advancing social justice around the globe.

* * *

ST. THOMAS FOOD BANK

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am so honoured to rise in the house today to spotlight one of my incredible constituents. Reese Russell has proven that we are never too young to make a difference. Reese, who is a grade three student at Forest Park Public School, wants to help those who are homeless have a merry Christmas. She was inspired after seeing a homeless man near the Tim Hortons drive-through in St. Thomas. Reese decided she was going to make a difference and started a local campaign to help 10 people within our community. Her classmates, as well as community members, jumped on board, and to date they have prepared over 100 packages to help those in need. She posted a video on her mom's Facebook page that has received over 18,000 views. Local businesses and media are also jumping on board and welcoming donations.

Reese wants everyone in St. Thomas to have a merry Christmas, especially those who are homeless during the holidays. Reese is an inspiration to me and to our great community.

I wish everyone a merry Christmas, especially Reese, who has an incredible heart and love for others.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS PAGES

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the tireless work of the pages does not go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated. Each year, hundreds of young Canadians apply for the

opportunity and the privilege of being House of Commons pages, yet I would argue that the privilege is ours.

Today I rise to recognize and congratulate a young woman from my riding who was selected as one of only 40 pages in the House of Commons this year, Emma Wells, who is a graduate of the French immersion program at the Holy Heart of Mary High School in St. John's and is currently studying political science and public administration at the University of Ottawa.

As MPs, we rely on the talented work of pages like Emma to help ensure that our House proceedings run efficiently and smoothly. To all the prospective 2017-18 pages who applied this week, I wish them the best of luck. I ask all MPs to rise and join me and Emma's family in congratulating all of our House of Commons pages on their success and in wishing them success in their future studies.

* * *

[Translation]

HAUT-RICHELIEU CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Jean Rioux (Saint-Jean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Haut-Richelieu chamber of commerce and industry was named Quebec's chamber of commerce of the year during the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec's annual gala.

The chamber of commerce has been exceptionally active in pursuing its vision and marshalling the support of its members, more than 630 merchants and industrialists, from start-ups to big corporations.

The organization created a youth wing and an industrial committee and organized a number of strategic events, including in the agricultural sector, all of which helped raise its profile.

I would like to congratulate the Haut-Richelieu chamber of commerce and industry on winning this award thanks to the hard work of its employees and its leadership. This recognition speaks to the excellent work the organization is doing to boost economic vitality in the riding of Saint-Jean.

* * *

[English]

GATE 3:16 OUTREACH CENTRE

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Ho, ho, ho, Mr. Speaker. As we quickly move through the month of December, I want to take this opportunity to say merry Christmas.

Oshawa is already in the Christmas spirit. This year, thousands of people enjoyed Santa's Parade of Lights, and on December 21, I will welcome friends and colleagues to my office, located at 57 Simcoe Street South, Unit 2B, for my annual Christmas open house and food drive. Bring a non-perishable food item and come down and enjoy the food, drink, and Christmas cheer.

This year, Gate 3:16 will be the recipient of the generous food donations that Santa's helpers will bring to the event. Gate 3:16 is an institution in Oshawa that has helped thousands of those in need. During the Christmas season, the need is even greater.

Statements by Members

We have all had a busy year, and I recognize the hard work members have done for their constituents and Canadians alike. I want to wish you, Mr. Speaker, all of fellow parliamentarians, their staff, and House officers a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

* * *

• (1110)

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, December 10 is Human Rights Day, a day when we are reminded to stand up for someone's rights and commemorate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

On December 10, Canada and the world will also mark the end of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. These 16 days remind us of each and every woman and girl who has ever been a victim of violence. We can take action now and throughout the year to eliminate gender-based violence. By working together, we can build a healthy, inclusive society, where all women and girls are treated as equals and gender-based violence is ended once and for all. Let us all stand against gender-based violence. Actions matter.

* * *

**GOVERNOR GENERAL'S MERITORIOUS SERVICE
MEDAL**

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Becca Viau, a visionary, a feminist, an artist, an activist, an innovator, and a mom.

Becca works tirelessly for and with the artistic community on P.E.I. She has been named to receive the Meritorious Service medal for rejuvenating contemporary arts on Prince Edward Island. Her work as a champion of the arts speaks to her love for her community. Her dedication led to her joining forces with the right hon. Kim Campbell and the now Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs when she participated in "A Bold Vision", an experiment to imagine a Canada designed by 23 women in 2014, as opposed to 23 men in 1864. A force within our community, she ably represented P.E.I. at that table.

I extend warm congratulations to Becca and look forward to being at Rideau Hall in the new year when she receives this prestigious and well-deserved honour.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, businesses that ignore disabled customers and employees are missing a global market of 1.3 billion people, a population bigger than any country on earth. That is Rich Donovan's message, and he would know. Cerebral palsy has not stopped him from becoming a dad, an MBA grad from Columbia Business School, and a Merrill Lynch portfolio manager. He also founded Lime Connect, which places disabled people in good-paying jobs at Google, PepsiCo, Bank of America, IBM, TD, and many others. Now Rich's index fund is investing in companies that outperform in the disability market. This fall, Rich became one of *U Can 2* magazine's top 50 most influential disabled people, along with the likes of Michael J. Fox.

It takes creativity and relentlessness to overcome disabilities. Rich has turned these qualities into profit through the free enterprise system. In doing so, he empowers people like him to earn better lives and inspires all of us to overcome any obstacle.

* * *

INNOVATION

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Ottawa's knowledge-based sector, we have over 1,700 technology companies with over 68,000 employees. We have Invest Ottawa, the economic development agency of the city of Ottawa, which has the goal of making Ottawa the most innovative city in Canada.

We also have a new innovation centre, with a \$15-million investment from both the City of Ottawa and the Ontario provincial government. The previous federal government did not provide any funding. However, this year, we announced \$8 million in support, which will increase the technical and business capabilities available to companies through this innovation centre.

To realize our economic development objectives and create quality jobs, it is necessary for all three levels of government, federal, provincial, and municipal, to coordinate and collaborate with each other.

* * *

[Translation]

ANDRÉANE BENOIT

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to congratulate Andréane Benoit, a farmer back home who recently won the 2016 Prix de la relève agricole, or the young farmers' award, presented by the National Assembly of Quebec.

For 12 years now, this young farmer has been operating Ferme avicole A. Benoit, in Sainte-Brigitte-des-Saults. She has also been operating a dairy farm for the past year. During my summer tour of the municipalities in Drummond, I had the opportunity to meet Andréane and her family. I could see that for the Benoit family, farming is in their blood.

Andréane is the fifth generation of Benois in farming. As a woman in a male-dominated field, Andréane Benoit has worked hard and is an example among so many of our successful entrepreneurs who make a region like Greater Drummondville shine.

Again, congratulations Andréane Benoit, winner of the 2016 Prix de la relève agricole.

Oral Questions

•(1115)

*[English]***CP HOLIDAY TRAIN**

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the CP holiday train is in Airdrie, Alberta, and heading through the Rockies toward my home town of Kamloops.

For 17 years this has been a wonderful family tradition. Regardless of the weather, this beautifully decorated train is greeted by enthusiastic crowds, who enjoy the music, the hot chocolate, the fire pits, and the spirit of the season.

The holiday train is also one of the most important Christmas fundraisers for the local Kamloops food bank, which helps those in our community who need a little extra at this time of year. Over the years throughout North America, the train has collected more than \$12 million and 3.9 million pounds of food.

I thank Canadian Pacific. This program brings out the best in our community year after year and represents the true meaning of Christmas.

* * *

WARREN ALLMAND

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the 1990s I was policy vice-president of the Young Liberals of Canada and we proposed what turned out to be a controversial policy resolution to the national convention.

Many MPs approached us hoping that we might be convinced to withdraw our proposal, but one MP encouraged us. That was Warren Allmand. He said that we should never be afraid of challenging the status quo and fighting for fundamental human rights. That was what Warren did his entire life.

For 32 years, he was MP for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, NDG, and he held numerous cabinet positions. He then served as head of the International Centre for Human Rights and returned to public life as a Montreal city councillor.

Whether it was heading the fight to abolish the death penalty, reminding everyone of the importance of respecting minority language rights, or just supporting his residents who wanted a stop sign at the corner, Warren fought for his principles and his constituents his entire life.

I know all members will join me in extending condolences to his wife Rose, his children, and the entire NDG community.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[English]***ETHICS**

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Commissioner of Lobbying has launched an investigation into the Liberal cash for access fundraising practice,

and the Ethics Commissioner has confirmed that her office is looking into these matters as well.

Although the Prime Minister had promised to set a higher bar for openness and transparency, he and his government continue to hide the details about these fundraisers from Canadians. If the Prime Minister is so committed to openness and accountability, why does he refuse to make the details of these events public?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate very clearly to the House that we do indeed have some of the strictest rules around fundraising of any level of government, and our party respects those rules.

The Chief Electoral Officer has stated that Canada's political financing laws are the "most advanced and constrained and transparent" in the world. We have been following the process. No rules or laws have been broken, and as such, no conflict of interest exists.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals again did not answer the question. It was a very simple question.

The Liberals claim they are following the rules. They claim they are open and transparent. However, they refuse to publicly disclose, for example, the dates and locations of these shady Liberal fundraisers.

If the Liberals have nothing to hide and they are indeed following all the rules, why are they now hiding the details of their cash for access fundraisers from the public?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the best thing I can do when a member repeats a question is to repeat the answer and assure the member that in fact we do have some of the strictest rules around fundraising of any level of government. Our party respects and follows those rules.

I will refer to the Chief Electoral Officer, who stated, when referring to Canada's financial laws, that we have some of "the most advanced and constrained and transparent" laws in the world.

We are following the rules and the laws. There is no conflict of interest. It is as simple as that.

* * *

•(1120)

TAXATION

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nobody is buying their repeat, repeat, repeat lines. It is beginning to look very foolish for all the Liberals on that side of the House.

Over 30,000 full-time jobs have been lost, and the finance minister's own department is saying that things are only going to get worse. Yet today the Prime Minister is threatening Canadians with a punitive and ineffective carbon tax, putting even more jobs at risk and leading to the biggest increase in the cost of doing business in a generation.

Why does the Prime Minister insist on further hurting Canadian jobs and putting Canadian businesses at a competitive disadvantage?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, later today the Prime Minister will be meeting with the premiers. This will be the third time that such a meeting has taken place. That is refreshing for Canada, because for many years there were no meetings at all.

As some of Canada's largest employers have pointed out, putting a price on carbon pollution is not political; it is just good business. It will give Canada an edge in building a clean growth economy, and make Canadian businesses more innovative and competitive. That is why nearly 30 Canadian employers have come out strongly in support of a price on carbon pollution. They know that pricing pollution will bring new jobs—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the situation is serious. Canada has lost 30,500 full-time jobs in one year. What is the Liberal government's game plan? It wants to impose more taxes on Canadian workers. It is increasing contributions to pension funds. It is inventing a tax on health and dental insurance benefits and a tax on carbon. Meanwhile, the U.S. president-elect is going to slash taxes.

Why does the government want to further tax Canadian workers?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent.

He usually has a good memory, and he must remember that we are the government and that the first thing we did was cut taxes for Canada's middle class. Nine million Canadians are paying less taxes.

Moreover, confident nations invest in their economy and their people. That is exactly what we are doing. Our plan is to spur economic growth and create jobs, which the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent knows very well.

The government will continue to work for Canada's middle class.

* * *

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do recall that 65% of Canadians have not seen any changes to their taxes under the Liberal government. Those that benefit the most from the government's measures are people who earn between \$140,000 and \$200,000 a year, so I do not want to be lectured about the middle class.

I have a good memory. In 2014, the Supreme Court said that the Consumer Protection Act was under provincial jurisdiction, not federal. Unfortunately, we are headed for disaster with Bill C-29 because it has a direct impact on consumer rights. That does not make any sense. The only thing the government is going to accomplish with this bill is to give thousands of dollars to lawyers, knowing that it will lose the case.

Why is the government prepared to lose millions and even hundreds of millions of dollars on a lost cause?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, rather than listening to overheated rhetoric, allow me to tell you what we are going to do.

We are going to continue working with consumer groups, stakeholders, and the provinces and territories to develop regulations and enforce the law. We are going to delay the implementation of some provisions of division 5 of the bill so that the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce can examine this important issue more closely.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over a year ago, the Prime Minister signed the Paris agreement, even though his targets for fighting climate change are the same as Stephen Harper's.

Today, that same Prime Minister will be meeting with his provincial counterparts to come up with a plan.

We want to know whether the government intends to put forward a real plan that will enable us to keep the promises we made when we ratified the Paris agreement—or will he settle for Stephen Harper's approach and take the credit for the provinces' work?

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the Prime Minister will be meeting with the premiers today to talk about this very important subject, which is a refreshing change for Canadian federalism. We will all wait and be very optimistic about the results of that meeting.

The member also knows that we are committed to working with the provinces and territories to implement carbon pollution pricing as a central component of the pan-Canadian framework.

Canadians know that we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions to grow our economy in a sustainable way.

● (1125)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, so we get rhetoric and Stephen Harper's targets. It is not very impressive.

The Prime Minister is expected to announce a national climate change plan after meeting with Canada's first ministers, but today it was reported that the deal will not be unanimous and may require Ottawa to buy costly carbon credits from other countries to meet its 2030 targets.

The Liberal emission targets are already too weak to meet our Paris accord obligations. Are we really going to pay other countries to do the work the government has failed to do?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows this is an unprecedented conversation between the federal government and the provinces. We have taken international leadership. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change led in Paris. We have signed the agreement; unfortunately, not all members chose to sign the agreement. We understand very well that this government will lead the world in its commitment to clean technologies and greenhouse gas emissions while we sustainably develop our energy infrastructure.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, world-leading rhetoric, perhaps.

Speaking of Stephen Harper's targets, the Minister of Health set the end of the year as a deadline to finalize a new health accord, but all she has done so far is adopt Harper's cuts to provincial funding.

According to Newfoundland's health minister, the talks on the health accord have "gone silent".

All provinces have confirmed that the Liberals' cuts to the health escalator will hurt Canada's health care services.

Will the Prime Minister honour his election promise to negotiate fairly, stop unilaterally dictating funding, and negotiate a health care accord that improve services for all Canadians?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. There will be no cuts to health care.

Canadians are proud of our publicly funded universal health care system. It ensures that no Canadian has to make a choice between economic well-being and their health.

The Minister of Health met with her provincial and territorial counterparts in October. Next year, the Canada health transfer will grow by more than a billion dollars, to over \$37 billion.

We will continue to work with them on how we can create a health care system that meets the needs of Canadians for years to come.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking on the deadline for a new health care agreement, but we still have no news.

The provinces agree that the government's choice to maintain transfer payment cuts will hurt our health care system.

Philippe Couillard made it clear that Quebec would not agree to any conditions because the federal government has no right to impose conditions on the provinces for health care.

Will the Prime Minister keep his promise and negotiate with the provinces in good faith, or will he just do whatever he wants?

[*English*]

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to a

collaborative approach to health care. Next year, the Canada health transfer will grow by over a billion dollars, to over \$37 billion.

The Minister of Health met with her provincial and territorial counterparts in October. We will continue to work with them on creating a health care system that Canadians can be proud of.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one is being fooled by the Liberals repeating these tired old talking points.

Canadians are sick and tired of seeing the Prime Minister and his ministers blatantly break ethical rules by attending these cash for access fundraisers. No one should have preferential access to the government simply because they made a large political donation.

Are the Liberals that oblivious to the fact that they are breaking ethical rules by asking and making Canadians pay \$1,500 to have the ear of the Prime Minister, or do they think they are smarter than every other Canadian and will simply get away with it?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if I may, I will just repeat what I said earlier in question period. We do have some of the strictest rules around fundraising of any level of government, and our party respects those rules.

The Chief Electoral Officer has stated that Canada's political financing laws are the most advanced, constrained, and transparent in the world. With regard to ticketed fundraising events, the Chief Electoral Officer has confirmed that every party in every campaign does them.

● (1130)

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand the Prime Minister loves to quote the rule book, but knowing the rules and actually following the rules are two different things. We know the Prime Minister has been lobbied by people who can afford his company.

It has become clear: Liberal fundraisers are opportunities to lobby the Liberal cabinet. Access to the Prime Minister in exchange for donations violates the Prime Minister's own ethics rules, and possibly the law.

When will the Prime Minister stop this dishonourable practice?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will continue to repeat. We have some of the strictest rules around fundraising of any level of government, and our party respects those rules.

Oral Questions

The Chief Electoral Officer stated that Canada's political financing laws are the most advanced, constrained, and transparent in the world. In regard to ticketed fundraising events, the Chief Electoral Officer confirmed that every party in every campaign does them.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to give the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons a chance to repeat himself yet again.

For weeks now, the Liberals have been claiming that their fundraising activities involving privileged access benefiting the Liberal Party of Canada, not the needs of the state, are held in compliance with the rules. The state and the Liberal Party are two completely separate things.

Will the Liberals pull their heads out of the sand and admit that their activities are unethical, that they are undermining Canadians' trust in our democracy, and that they do not comply with the rules that the Prime Minister himself put in place?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat. We have some of the strictest rules around fundraising of any level of government, and our party respects those rules.

The Chief Electoral Officer stated that Canada's political financing laws are the most advanced and constrained and transparent in the world. In regard to ticketed fundraising events, the Chief Electoral Officers has confirmed that every party in every campaign does them. There is no conflict of interest.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, have you thought about everything you could buy with \$1,500 this time of year?

People could pay their bills, buy something that they really need, put it into savings, take care of their family, or donate food for those less fortunate. Oh, I almost forgot. People can also buy privileged access to the Prime Minister to avoid waiting in line like everyone else.

Will the Prime Minister admit that he discussed government affairs with those who attended a \$1,500 fundraising event, yes or no?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reinforce to members that we have some of the strictest rules around fundraising of any level of government, and our party respects those rules.

The Chief Electoral Officer stated that Canada's political financing laws are the most advanced and constrained and transparent in the world. In regard to ticketed fundraising events, the Chief Electoral Officer has confirmed that every party and every campaign does them.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's open and accountable rules are nothing but a farce.

Right now, before cabinet, there is a potential takeover of a Canadian business. The Chinese official behind the takeover lobbied the Prime Minister on November 7 at one of these cash for access events. Seriously.

I will remind the deputy House leader that this is not about election financing rules. This is about the rules set up by the Prime Minister.

Will the Prime Minister stop this unethical shakedown, and instead start acting in the best interest of Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how I can be any clearer. I again say, we have some of the strictest rules around fundraising of any level of government, and our party respects those rules.

The Chief Electoral Officer stated that Canada's political financing laws are the most advanced and constrained and transparent in the world. In regard to ticketed fundraising events, the Chief Electoral Officer said and confirmed that every party and every campaign does them.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is also the self-appointed minister of youth. As both, he is to be an example of honour, moral integrity, and honesty to our youth. It is part of the job, whether he likes it or not.

How would the Prime Minister explain this to young Canadians, after writing his own set of ethical rules for himself and his ministers regarding cash for access that say there should be no preferential access or appearance of preferential treatment to people and organizations, when he does not live up to them himself? What is the minister of youth teaching young Canadians when he says one thing and does another?

•(1135)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been in this House for 16 years, and I can say with great confidence that there has never been a greater champion for youth in the House, no greater champion for youth as a prime minister, than the current Prime Minister and the initiatives he has taken, not just now, but going forward as well.

He has invested \$330 million into the youth employment strategy and \$1.5 billion in youth grants. He has established an expert panel to develop innovative new ways to grow jobs for young people. There is no greater champion for youth in the House than our Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again the indigenous community has been excluded from the main discussion of provincial premiers on climate change. This blatant lack of respect flies in the face of the Prime Minister's promise to establish a new relationship with indigenous peoples. They are directly affected by climate change.

Why have they not been invited to participate fully in the meetings on such a crucial issue?

[English]

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows, as all Canadians do, including indigenous Canadians, that there is no relationship more important to us than that with indigenous people in this country. That is why we recognize and we respect the rights of indigenous people, and their knowledge and expertise on vital subjects like climate change and its impacts. These are the reasons why the Prime Minister today is meeting with first nations, Inuit, and Métis leaders in Canada, to seek their input and to ensure that we have that full nation-to-nation relationship.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member is so right. Our self-proclaimed feminist Prime Minister promised a nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous people, particularly women. But approving pipelines without consent is not a nation-to-nation relationship.

We see the same unwillingness today. The Native Women's Association of Canada asked repeatedly to be included in today's first ministers' meeting, and the Prime Minister refused. Is this how the Prime Minister treats his most important relationship?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very clear that we have the utmost respect and our relationship with indigenous people is very important to us. That is why the Prime Minister is at the table with the three leaders of indigenous governments in this country today. That is why we continue to seek their input, seek their advice, and work in partnership with them, something that has not occurred in our country in the past.

It is something we are very proud of and will continue to build on in the future.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the small businesses in Haldimand—Norfolk are hurting. They are already facing some of the highest hydro rates in North America, forcing many to close up shop or move to the U.S. According to the Liberals, that is okay, because they believe that imposing a job-killing carbon tax and spending billions on hot air credits will magically solve the problem.

How can the Liberals justify imposing a carbon tax on job creators when our sky-high hydro rates are already driving them to the U.S.?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that the first thing this government did for Canadian small businesses and Canadian families was to reduce taxes for nine million Canadians.

Furthermore, as a confident government, we invested in Canadian families; we invested in the Canadian middle class. I went from Moncton to Yellowknife, and I can tell the House that small businesses want an economy that is working for the middle class., because when the middle class is doing well, all small businesses in the country are going to do well.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a generation ago, Pierre Trudeau's national energy program drove oil rigs and the jobs that went with them out of Alberta. Today, Alberta has dropped 18 ranks, into the bottom half of energy investment destinations in the world. Unemployment is at a 25-year high and rising, and the Liberals are making it worse by forcing a carbon tax on all Canadians and spending billions on hot air credits.

Why is the Prime Minister helping Premier Notley kill jobs in Alberta with carbon taxes and bad policy?

● (1140)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have approved three pipelines, and the approval of these pipelines will lead to at least 24,000 jobs being created in Canada. Many of those jobs will be for Albertans.

We understand that the downturn in commodity prices has taken its toll on families in Alberta. That is why we believe that approval of these pipelines, and one in particular, will enable us to expand our export markets, which is in the interests of Alberta and all of Canada. This will be good for the citizens of Alberta and all of us.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, hard-working Canadians are already struggling to get by, many living paycheque to paycheque. The Liberals response is to impose a job-killing carbon tax, which will make these families choose between putting food on the table or heating their homes. The Liberals have neglected and refused to stand up for hard-working Canadians just trying to live, eat, and stay warm.

Why are the Liberals imposing a disastrous carbon tax on Canadian families who are already struggling to survive?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, across the country, various jurisdictions are responding to the climate change reality in their own way. The variety extends from a carbon tax in British Columbia to the plan in Alberta, and cap and trade in Ontario and Quebec.

The Prime Minister is now meeting with the premiers, which is such a refreshing change for this country. We have confidence that that co-operation will lead to a better and cleaner Canada.

Oral Questions

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my GTA riding, I constantly hear from families, seniors, and businesses about how difficult it is to make ends meet with the high cost of hydro. In Ontario, the Liberals implemented their green energy plan. Electricity rates skyrocketed to the highest in North America. It was such a disaster that Premier Wynne was forced to apologize. Now, the Prime Minister is copying the same plan.

Why are the Liberals shutting down Canadian businesses and putting families out of work?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, we are making significant investments to create job opportunities, particularly in Markham where the member is from.

There will be a thousand engineering jobs created by GM Canada. Why? According to the executive vice-president of global product development, “We selected Canada for this expansion because of its clear capacity for innovation, proven talent and strong ecosystem of great universities, startups and innovative suppliers.”

That is how we are bringing investments into Canada, creating jobs across the country and in the riding that the member opposite represents.

* * *

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before the election campaign, the Liberal Party leader signed a petition in favour of the construction of a rail bypass for Lac-Mégantic. As he is a responsible person, I imagine that he took the time to read the petition before signing it.

Today, after a year in power, the government has extended the deadline instead of providing a meaningful response to alleviate Lac-Mégantic's distress.

My question is very simple: when will the Prime Minister honour his word and give back Lac-Mégantic's peace of mind?

[English]

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts continue to be with the families of victims of the tragic July 2013 events in Lac-Mégantic. Our government is committed to improving rail safety, and we stand by the people of Lac-Mégantic.

The minister had the honour of meeting with citizens of the area to hear their thoughts and concerns. Furthermore, he was grateful to have Denis Lauzon, the fire chief of Lac-Mégantic, with him as he announced transportation 2013, a plan that will noticeably accelerate the review of the Railway Safety Act in order to further improve railway safety.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with Canada's 150th anniversary just around the corner, the federal

government is going to great lengths to advertise the major events. Unfortunately, when the Parks Canada website was launched, it was riddled with French errors. That sloppiness must be corrected immediately.

When will the Minister of Canadian Heritage go and see her cabinet colleagues to knock some sense into them and make them comply with the Official Languages Act once and for all? Why is she not more upset about this?

• (1145)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recognize my hon. colleague's work on these issues.

It is clear that our government can always do better on our commitment to official languages. We are going to work closely with Parks Canada. The Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change will deal with this problem.

It is also important to note all the progress that we have made when it comes to official languages, including the appointment of a bilingual judge to the Supreme Court and a court challenges program. We are here, we are serious about official languages, and we will continue on that path.

* * *

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Status of Women announced that Viola Desmond would be the first woman to appear on one of our banknotes.

Could the Minister of Status of Women please update the House as to the process that was undertaken to make this excellent selection?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was truly a historic day. Viola Desmond will be the first Canadian woman on a banknote. Viola's story reminds us that big change can start with small moments of dignity, bravery, and speaking truth to power. We thank the Bank of Canada and the advisory council for their rigorous search and selection process. I am confident that this is just one of many opportunities we will have to celebrate the role of women in our history and our future.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' new health and dental tax will hurt Canada's most vulnerable. People with serious diseases and pre-existing conditions are worried. In Quebec, about one in five policyholders lost their coverage when this was implemented, with only one in 10 securing their own coverage afterward. Why do the Liberals keep attacking Canada's most vulnerable?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member that we are the government that is working for those in need in this country, and the Conservatives have voted against every measure we put forth to help the middle class and those who need it.

Let me tell the member what we are doing. We are in process of reviewing our tax system as a whole, because we are the government of tax fairness. We are not looking at any one particular measure. No decision has been made, but he can rest assured that at every step of the way we will continue to improve tax fairness in this country, make our tax code efficient, and make sure that we always protect the middle class in this country.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the issue of federal immigration detainees at the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay is extremely concerning. This provincial maximum security institution was to be used as a temporary holding facility but now officers are dealing with challenges far beyond their scope. To make matters worse, the CBSA is providing extremely limited support. These detainees need to be moved to a federal facility that is properly set up to deal with their unique needs. When will the public safety minister take action and move these detainees?

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Picard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the perfect opportunity to remind the member that we already announced, last June, a \$138-million investment to upgrade immigration detention centres. In addition to the upgrades, we are going to find other alternatives, because we believe that these detention centres should be a last resort. We have begun moving forward on that.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a year ago the indigenous affairs minister threw 38 first nations a pass, and they did not want to share their financial information. In doing so, it threw members into the dark. Their concerns have continued to grow, and they are starting to mobilize. What does the minister have to say to Karen McCarthy, who stated to the CBC, "The system does not protect the rights of band membership"?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the system does not protect the rights of a lot of indigenous members and business on reserve as well. That is why our government and everyone involved wants increased transparency and accountability, including first nations. We want to be able to achieve this through fully working together in partnership to ensure that we have a solution to this that is not going to be top down, like the former government had implemented, but will be one that is developed working together in partnership to ensure that first nations' fiscal transparency is open, accountable, and works for first nations.

• (1150)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals talk about being concerned about transparency. They and the minister just spent three days at AFN meetings. The word "transparency" and how we can be accountable to the membership did not come up once.

According to Karen McCarthy:

And the system where we file grievances and allegations to INAC [Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada] — it doesn't really go anywhere.

Further, we heard from Charmaine Stick:

They (INAC and AFN) need to help us. We need help instead of taking our own leadership to court.

It has been over a year now. They have done nothing. When will the minister put actions to those words and show these women some respect?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing the member is exactly right about is that the minister, myself, and the staff in INAC have spent the entire week meeting with first nations governments from all across the country on a variety of issues, day in and day out, that are important to them.

We have talked about the financial transparency act. We have made it known, over and over again, that where there are any complaints, any allegations, as a department, they are being investigated, they are being looked upon very seriously. Where forensic audits have been required, they have been—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is considering privatizing our airports, yet Canadians already pay among the highest travel fees in the world, and provincial tourism ministers agree. They do not want Canada's airports privatized.

Oral Questions

Canada ranks number one for airport infrastructure, so why would the Liberals try to get private investment in this area? Is it because they want their friends in big business to reap the profits, or simply because they do not care about middle-class Canadians paying more for air travel?

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to mention that our government is obviously committed to getting Canadian products to global markets.

Canada is a trading nation, and being competitive on a global scale requires world-class infrastructure. That is why, to support this, we are investing \$10.1 billion over 11 years, as announced in the fall economic statement. We will make strategic investments in trade and transportation projects that build stronger and more efficient transportation corridors to international markets and help Canadian businesses to compete, grow, and create more jobs for Canada's middle class.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over the years, countless plant closures have affected the economy in Montreal East. After the Shell refinery and Mabe Canada appliance plant, now the Mr. Christie's factory is closing in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve.

Within the next year 454 more good jobs will be lost in my riding. I met with the plant managers and we talked about solutions, but they were clear: the decision is final.

Does the minister have a plan to ensure the survival and creation of good jobs in Montreal East?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

[English]

I understand the concerns raised by the member, and that is why we are making significant investments through DEC, the regional development agency in Quebec, which is focusing on job opportunities in that region.

I would like to highlight that we actually made an investment in maintaining and creating 1,000 jobs in Mirabel, in the aerospace sector. We also invested \$54 million in space, \$54 million in aerospace, \$108 million in total, looking at those areas. We are also focusing in those regions to make sure that we help diversify the economy and help small businesses. We will continue to make sure that we make investments that create jobs.

* * *

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the petition in favour of a rail bypass in Lac-Mégantic was signed by a very important public figure, the Prime Minister himself.

The people of Lac-Mégantic did not have to pay \$1,500 to get that signature because the Liberal leader was not the Prime Minister at the time.

Can the Prime Minister send a clear signal to the people of Lac-Mégantic today and commit to building the rail bypass that will finally allow the locals the heal?

Can the Prime Minister prove that a free signature is worth as much as a \$1,500 meeting?

[English]

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, our government is committed to improved rail safety, and we stand by the people of Lac-Mégantic. I repeat that our thoughts are with the victims of this tragedy.

The member should note that the final results of the city-led study have not been released. We are still awaiting the technical details. Therefore, we would like to see the results before rendering a final decision, but we are conscious that the citizens of Lac-Mégantic would like a rail bypass.

* * *

● (1155)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Coast Guard employees in my riding have not been paid, as a result of the Phoenix pay fiasco. Single mothers have not been paid in multiple pay cycles and may lose their homes, and some workers are owed \$20,000 in pay.

It is Christmas, and the Liberals have made promise after promise about fixing this system. I approached the minister last week on these specific problems. Yet, she has done absolutely nothing; she has not even contacted them.

Will the minister finally ensure that everyone owed money gets it in time to actually enjoy Christmas?

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the problems with the pay system are unacceptable. This government is doing a number of things to mitigate the problems, and we are focused clearly on improving the pay system. Resolving these cases is our top priority.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, public servants affected by the Liberal Phoenix pay fiasco are maxing out their credit cards to make ends meet. With Christmas weeks away, they are wondering if there will be anything left to put under their trees. These are real people, not just case numbers.

When will the minister devote the same energy to fixing her mess as she does to blaming others for it?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the public service pay problems are totally unacceptable. I know how unbearable the situation has been.

It is important that we do things properly. I assure my colleagues that we are working hard to fix the pay problems. Clearing up the backlog of cases is our priority.

* * *

[English]

SCIENCE

Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government values the role of science and the ongoing contributions that our scientists make to our environment, our economy, and our communities. Can the Parliamentary Secretary for Science update this House on what the government is doing to support innovation and research?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Kelowna—Lake Country and our government know science is the foundation of a strong, healthy, and prosperous society. That is why we are committed to supporting cutting-edge genomics research.

Just yesterday, the Minister of Science announced an investment of \$32 million to support the latest recipients of Genome Canada's large-scale applied research projects competition. This investment will help renew our traditional industries like forestry, fisheries, and mining, and will increase Canada's global competitiveness, our economic growth, and our social well-being.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal announcement to expedite the phasing-out of coal-powered electricity has created panic in my riding. For over 10,000 residents, mainly in Coronach and Estevan, this announcement is a death knell. There will be no jobs, which will cause mass exodus; property values will plummet; and the trickle-down effect will devastate families.

When will the Liberals stop pretending to care about southeast Saskatchewan, and actually start creating jobs?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows that putting a price on carbon pollution is a priority, not just for this government but for governments all across Canada. There are a variety of ways in which governments have chosen to do that, running the range from a carbon tax in British Columbia to the cap-and-trade system in Ontario and Quebec. We also know that the Prime Minister is meeting with indigenous leaders today and with premiers from the provinces, which is a refreshing change to the way this country does its business.

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week the Senate transportation and communication committee released an interim report on the safe transportation of crude oil. The report makes seven recommendations, and calls on the

Minister of Natural Resources to modernize the National Energy Board by broadening the board's mandate to ensure effective communication with stakeholders and improve consultation with indigenous people.

Can the Minister of Natural Resources update the House as to the progress our government has made on this important campaign commitment?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the members of the Senate committee for their report and recommendations on this important file.

I have appointed a panel of distinguished Canadians to look at ways that we can create the best energy regulator in the world and ensure that Canadians feel confident that their views on energy projects have been heard. The panel will be reporting back to me by May 15, 2017. Addressing concerns head-on and building a process that is more inclusive and transparent, our energy regulator will make decisions that will carry the confidence of Canadians.

* * *

● (1200)

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Competition Bureau of Canada has clearly raised red flags for the Liberal government concerning the new infrastructure program. Of the 40 members of Quebec who, like us, heard the extensive testimony that came out of the Charbonneau Commission, how is it that nobody realized that this kind of all-you-can-eat buffet is dangerous and opens the door to collusion?

Will the Prime Minister take action or is he really waiting for Canadians to call for an inquiry?

Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear: we will ensure that our investments uphold the principles we hold dear, namely transparency, value for money and fairness. We expect our partners to ensure that their procurement processes are fair and transparent and provide Canadians with the best value for their tax dollars.

Our programs are subject to regular review, including independent audits by the auditor general.

It is Canadians' tax dollars that we are investing, and we will invest them responsibly for the benefit of all Canadians.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, around the world we are seeing that institutional bilingualism results in the assimilation of minority languages. This is what censuses in Canada have been showing for 40 years. What is the federal government doing? It is on a promotional tour in support of institutional bilingualism. They are strengthening English in Quebec while sprinkling a few services in French here and there in the rest of Canada.

Routine Proceedings

Does the minister realize that, as is, the federal policy on institutional bilingualism is the grave of the French language in North America?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for giving me this opportunity to talk about the government's dedication to official bilingualism and linguistic duality.

The social contract we have in our country is based on the founding peoples, anglophones and francophones. We have built a pluralistic country on this foundation, and we are in the midst of reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

We will promote English in Quebec, and we will promote French outside Quebec. That is who we are as Canadians.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the premiers of Quebec and the provinces will be discussing health transfers. We know what the Liberals' position is. What they are doing is cutting transfers, just like the Conservatives decided to do, with the conditions demanded by the NDP, the worst of both worlds.

Cutting transfers is an attack on patient services. Imposing conditions amounts to taking them hostage. With this meeting a few hours from now, will the Prime Minister finally admit that health is the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec and restore funding with no strings attached? I would be thrilled with a simple yes to my question.

[*English*]

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said previously in the House, there will be no cuts to health care. Our government is committed to a collaborative approach to health care. Next year, the Canada health transfer will grow by more than a billion dollars to over \$37 billion.

The Minister of Health met with her provincial and territorial counterparts in October. We will continue to work with them in creating a health care system that meets the needs of all Canadians, including in Quebec.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has finally admitted that it is embarrassing to let the banks get around Quebec law to rip off consumers. Finally! By splitting Bill C-29, the government is admitting that the part that amends the Bank Act is problematic.

Why will they not simply withdraw it?

Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are always listening to Canadians and to consumers.

As I have often said in the House, the Marcotte decision called on us to clarify the consumer protection framework with respect to

financial institutions. That is exactly what we did. We took that opportunity to modernize it and provide a regulatory framework that is consumer-friendly.

I would remind my colleague that at each step in the process to amend the legislation, we kept in mind the best interests of consumers. This is what we announced this morning, and we will continue to do so.

* * *

●(1205)

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Lancaster Sound represents one of the most pristine and richest wildlife areas in the world. Its addition to Canada's national marine conservation areas is long overdue.

Last year, the minister received a detailed report from the Qikiqtani Inuit Association. The report outlined recommendations for larger conservation boundaries based on community consultations and Inuit traditional knowledge. Will the minister ensure Inuit traditional knowledge is included in the plan, and when can we expect it to be finalized?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question. Our government is committed to a national marine conservation area in Lancaster Sound. It will contribute significantly to our government's domestic and international commitments to conservation. We announced funding for the marine conservation area in Lancaster Sound in budget 2016.

Inuit traditional knowledge has been a major component of the feasibility assessment for the marine conservation area. I can also assure the member that Inuit traditional knowledge will be an important part of interim management planning, with the first formal management plan to be completed within five years of the establishment of the conservation area.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security concerning Bill C-22, an act to establish the national security and intelligence committee of parliamentarians and to make consequential amendments to certain acts.

[English]

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

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Neil Ellis (Bay of Quinte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, entitled “Reaching Out: Improving Service Delivery to Canadian Veterans”.

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

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PETITIONS

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to submit a petition requesting that the government help preserve local telecommunications.

Dozens of residents of New Brunswick Southwest have signed a petition that asks the government to enable community-operated media centres to ensure the survival of community television. It calls for the availability of local media in small towns and neighbourhoods that are not served by private or public media.

The petitioners also call upon the government to ensure that Canadians have access to multimedia platforms, media skills training and content distribution capacity in the digital economy.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to provide this petition signed by so many people in Elgin—Middlesex—London.

The petitioners request that the government and parliamentarians ensure that there is a referendum following any changes to the electoral system.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition signed by over 130 Mission Gardens residents just last weekend alone. I had the honour of going out with petitioners, and they want some fairness from CN.

Many have lived in the area for 30 years and never had a problem with the main line in their backyard, but CN has made unilateral changes to its operations and have essentially turned their neighbourhood into a marshalling yard.

The petitioners would like the Minister of Transport to intervene and ensure CN is not able to do this.

● (1210)

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present a petition signed by some of my constituents in Willowdale and, indeed, by other Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

The petitioners request that our government modernize our laws regarding blasphemous libel, the repeal of section 296 of the Canadian Criminal Code. Section 296 was first introduced in 1892, largely on the basis of British common law. Under this outlawed law, it has been eight decades since the last conviction under section 296, and 35 years since the last charge of blasphemous libel was laid.

Blasphemous libel serves no purpose in Canadian law or modern day society, and very likely contravenes section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects freedom of expression. Furthermore, blasphemy laws have been abused around the globe to suppress minorities and stifle inconvenient speech. Repealing Canada's blasphemy law would demonstrate, at home and abroad, Canada's commitment to the value of free speech for all.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following question will be answered today: No. 577.

[Text]

Question No. 577—**Mr. Mark Warawa:**

With regard to the “Open and Accountable Government” guidelines for Ministers which was released on November 27, 2015, by the Prime Minister: (a) what is the job title of the employee in the Privy Council Office (PCO) who is responsible for investigating possible breaches of the guidelines; (b) what is the process by which the Prime Minister's Office would refer an alleged breach of the guidelines to the PCO; (c) since November 4, 2015, how many alleged breaches has the Prime Minister referred to the PCO for investigation; (d) what are the details of each referral in (c), including, (i) date of referral, (ii) title of Ministers or Exempt Staff involved in alleged breach, (iii) summary of allegation; and (e) has the PCO recommended any possible sanctions regarding any of the breaches referred to in (c), and if so, what were the recommendations, and did the Prime Minister implement the recommendations?

Routine Proceedings

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a) and (b), the role of the Privy Council Office, PCO, is to provide professional, non-partisan advice and support to the Prime Minister, to ministers within the Prime Minister's portfolio, and to the cabinet decision-making process. "Open and Accountable Government" serves as guidance set out by the Prime Minister for ministers and exempt staff. The Prime Minister expects all ministers and exempt staff to meet these expectations. Officials in PCO support each prime minister by providing guidance for their ministries. PCO officials may also support the Prime Minister in providing advice on how such guidance can be interpreted or applied, and how it relates to other documents or legal instruments, such as the Conflict of Interest Act and the Lobbying Act. PCO officials further support the Prime Minister with respect to Governor-in-Council appointment processes for senior government officials.

With regard to (c), (d), and (e), since November 4, 2015, no alleged "breaches" of "Open and Accountable Government" have been referred to PCO for investigation. PCO is not an investigatory body, but rather provides professional, non-partisan advice and support to the Prime Minister and the cabinet decision-making process.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that if a revised response to Question No. 550, originally tabled on December 2, 2016, and the government's response to Questions Nos. 575, 576, and 578 to 580 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 550—Mr. Jamie Schmale:

With regard to personal styling and coaching, since November 4, 2015, broken down by department, agency, and crown corporation: (a) how much has the government spent on (i) makeup, (ii) makeup artists, (iii) hair products, (iv) hair stylists, (v) any stylists not covered by (ii) or (iv), (vi) personal coaching, (vii) media coaching, (viii) any other coaching not covered by (vi) or (vii); (b) what is the breakdown of each expenditure including (i) date of purchase or contract, (ii) duration of contract, if applicable, (iii) amount of contract, (iv) amount spent, (v) contract file number, (vi) vendor name; and (c) which of the expenditures referred to in (b) were for a Minister or Ministerial exempt staff?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 575—Hon. Pierre Poilievre:

With regard to a federal carbon tax or price on carbon: (a) what analysis has been conducted in 2015-2016 by the federal government with regard to the impact on family household budgets; (b) what analysis has been conducted in 2015-2016 by Employment and Social Development Canada with regard to the impact on persons and families falling below the low-income cut-off; (c) how much will the annual cost of the basket of goods in the Market Basket Measure (MBM) increase as a result of a \$50-a-tonne price on carbon; (d) when fully implemented, how much will the \$50-a-tonne price on carbon increase food prices for the average family of four, in each province of Canada; (e) how much will a \$50-a-tonne carbon tax increase electricity costs, in percentage terms, in each province of Canada; (f) has the government calculated the average financial impact of the carbon tax on people living below the

low-income cut-off line and if so, what is that average monetary impact on the average family of four living below the low-income cut-off line; (g) how many individuals will fall beneath the low-income cut-off line as a result of a \$50-a-tonne price on carbon; (h) did the Department of Finance conduct an analysis regarding the impact of a \$50-a-tonne price on carbon on low-income families and if so, what were its conclusions; (i) did the Department of Finance conduct an analysis regarding the impact of a \$50-a-tonne price on carbon on the distribution of wealth and income in Canada and if so, what were its conclusions; and (j) by how much does the government estimate a \$50-a-tonne price on carbon will reduce carbon emissions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 576—Mr. Nathan Cullen:

With regard to the Minister of Democratic Institutions' national tour on electoral reform: (a) what was the cost, including venue rentals, audio-visual, advertising, accommodations, travel, and per diems for the Minister and staff; (b) how many people attended each event, by location; (c) how many attendees supported adopting a proportional voting system; and (d) how many attendees supported holding a referendum on electoral reform?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 578—Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to interactions between the government and Google Inc.: (a) what are the details of any requests, demands, orders, or directives the government has provided to Google Inc. including, (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) summary, (vi) file number; (b) for each instance referred to in (a), did Google Inc. comply; (c) what are the details of any requests Google Inc. has made to the government, including the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) summary, (vi) file number; and (d) are any measures in place to ensure that Ministerial Exempt Staff who were previously employed by Google Inc. are not lobbied by, or involved in any decisions concerning Google Inc.?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 579—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to travel taken by Ministers and their exempt staff to Medicine Hat, Alberta, between September 18, 2016, and October 24, 2016: (a) what are the details of all trips taken, including (i) the dates, (ii) the amount spent, (iii) the breakdown of expenses, (iv) the details of any official meetings or government business conducted on the trips; and (b) what are the details of any briefing documents or dockets prepared in relation to the trips, including the (i) date, (ii) title or subject matter, (iii) department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 580—Mr. Larry Maguire:

With regard to the government's participation in the Global Progress 2016 forum held in Montreal on September 14 and 15, 2016: (a) what is the total of all costs associated with the government's involvement in the forum; and (b) what is the itemized breakdown of all costs associated with the government's involvement in the forum?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT

The House resumed from December 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to implement the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union and its Member States and to provide for certain other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-30, an act to implement the comprehensive economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union, or CETA, as it is often referred to. This landmark agreement is the result of years of hard work and I welcome the opportunity to help bring into force the deal that we as a government struck.

I congratulate the trade minister for signing and prioritizing this agreement. I do wish she would do the same for the TPP. I wish I could tell her that all the travelling and absences from her family will get easier, but, unfortunately, I cannot. However, I am sure they understand, as I do, that the work being done is to benefit their future and the future of all Canadians.

I also thank her parliamentary secretary for the work he has done on this file and for his participation at trade committee.

CETA was part of the most ambitious trade agenda Canada has ever seen. The Liberals call it the gold standard, which, of course, includes the trans-Pacific partnership. Our previous Conservative government under the leadership of the Right Hon. Stephen Harper; the former Minister of International Trade; and my colleague, the member for Abbotsford, were able to negotiate free trade agreements with 46 different countries.

Of course, none of that would have been possible without the tremendous work done by our country's world-class negotiators, and in the case of CETA, Steve Verheul and his team, who spearheaded negotiations with the European Union. The amazing results they were able to achieve on Canada's behalf, at times in strenuous situations, and the personal sacrifices they made to get the job done deserve a tremendous amount of respect and gratitude.

The truth is, the work they do is never complete. Even when agreements are concluded, the boots are always on the ground, helping exporters here at home, or Canadian businesses that have expanded abroad, to integrate deeper into global supply chains. They are the first to arrive and always the last to depart, carrying and leaving traces of Canada along each stop.

As members of Parliament, we honour their work not just by reading their names into *Hansard*, but by implementing the agreements they lost sleep over, ensuring that the deals they fought for, at the expense of countless days, weeks, and months away from their families, are realized.

To our negotiators, trade agreements are more than just tariff lines and clauses on a piece of paper. To them these agreements are a living contribution to ensuring that Canada remains prosperous and

Government Orders

become a part of their DNA and, in turn, a part of our history and success as a long-time trading nation.

What does that success look like in terms of CETA? It looks like a full elimination of duties on all non-agricultural goods going into a market of over 500 million people. It looks like the elimination of almost 94% of agricultural tariffs when we export our goods into an almost \$20 trillion economy.

• (1215)

CETA is projected to bring a 20% boost in bilateral trade and a \$12 billion annual increase in Canada's economy. Put in another way, this is the economic equivalent of adding \$1,000 to the average Canadian family's income or almost 80,000 new jobs to the Canadian economy. That will almost make up what the Liberal government has lost this past year so far.

The Canada–EU trade agreement is our country's biggest bilateral trade initiative since NAFTA. Let us just hope that our Prime Minister is not as eager to reopen CETA after it has been ratified.

CETA is unique in many ways, but the way that sticks out is how involved the provinces and territories were. Never before have the provinces and territories been part of international trade negotiations at such a grand level. The Europeans were hesitant at first, fearful that aboriginal concerns would slow down negotiations. The fact is, the opposite was true. Because of the level of provincial and territorial involvement, we were able to conclude the agreement back in 2014 as one voice with everyone on board. It turns out that the same could not be said for the EU, as we saw in Belgium with Wallonia. Part of that problem, of course, was the trade minister's incessant need to placate every irritant of every faction she could find, all for the sake of branding the agreement as Liberal and progressive.

In the end, when we do the side-by-side comparison of CETA, between the 2014 version that we concluded as the previous government and the current progressive version, we find that the so-called progressive changes the Liberals made were all rejected out of the gate by the EU Council and its member states. That means the agreement that we have before us, when it comes into effect, will be essentially what we concluded back in 2014, with the glaring exception now of any arbitration process for the ISDS claims. Our party strongly supports the international initiatives that will generate increased economic activity, drive prosperity, and create jobs as well as foster greater co-operation between our democratic allies.

The Canada–EU agreement emphasizes the importance of secure access to international markets through a rules-based trading system. It also would allow us to establish deeper trading relationships beyond North America. The same can be said for the trans-Pacific partnership, or TPP. But why would that be important and why would we look beyond North America? Well, it is important as part of the ambitious trade agenda I mentioned earlier.

Government Orders

As we know, Canadian exports to the U.S. account for about 75% of the total exports. This of course has its benefits, but we have to diversify our trade portfolio the same as anyone would diversify a stock portfolio. If we rely strictly on the U.S. market, as we have done for years, when the U.S. has a problem we face the same problem.

CETA, on the other hand, is a very aged market, a very mature market. The Pacific Rim of the TPP takes into account a growing or emerging middle class that we would have access to. So between the two, we would have access to 80% of the global GDP. It is very important that we have both agreements in place.

Yet, that is exactly what is happening as six nations press ahead with the TPP agreement, leaving Canada behind. At this point, we can and must change our position.

● (1220)

In addition to weakening Canada's position by prematurely putting NAFTA on the table before the new U.S. President has even been sworn in, there is the government's continued indecision and Liberal foot-dragging.

The general provision of the enactment sets out rules of interpretation and specifies that no recourse may be taken on the basis of sections 9 to 14, or any other—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, the time has expired.

I do encourage hon. members, in the course of their remarks, to give a glance in the direction of the Speaker from time to time. We will do our best to give some clues as to the time remaining and so on.

We'll go to questions and comments now.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

This comes up every time we talk about an important trade deal. We understand how significant this agreement is. When the three main parties talk about these things, people always say that the NDP is dogmatic about trade and always takes the same stance.

However, I would like to point out to my colleague and the rest of the House that, as far as I can remember, or at least since the 1980s, the Conservatives and the Liberals have never voted against a trade agreement. We, in contrast, have voted in favour of some trade agreements and against others.

That makes us the only party to take a responsible stance and to actually take a close look at what is in these trade agreements. When it comes right down to it, a trade agreement is a contract.

I would like to know if my colleague agrees that a trade agreement is also a contract and that one must examine its provisions before deciding whether to support or oppose it.

● (1225)

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Speaker, we have been looking into these things over the years.

This agreement was first concluded back in 2014. Overall, if we look at it, for a trading county, this is a good agreement. As members know, we only have 36 million people living in this country. We have to trade with other countries. CETA is a key position for Canada's economic situation, as 75% of our trade is done with the U.S. alone. We need more trading partners. This is why it is important for us, for all Canadians, to work on this file. We must trade with others. We hope that many other CETAs will come to the table.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear what else my colleague has to say. I do not think he said everything he wanted to say, so I would like to hear the rest.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Speaker, basically what we are saying in the speech is that at the end of the day, a trade is a trade is a trade. We must trade.

With a smaller population in this country, we have to trade. We have to go as far as we can, in exporting our crude oil from Alberta, our beef, any other goods or farm stuff. We have to take it to the market. We need a free market where we can trade freely, without any tariffs or anything else.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when this agreement was negotiated, the United Kingdom was still part of the European Union. Nearly 50% of our trade is with the United Kingdom, so the negotiators had that in mind.

I am wondering whether the member is as worried as we are about the fact that the United Kingdom is no longer part of that agreement.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely correct. When this agreement was negotiated, it was negotiated with the U.K. in the situation. Unfortunately, things happened.

I strongly suggest that the Liberal government negotiate separately with the United Kingdom. Again, we need more and more trading partners. I know where the concerns of the member are coming from, but, on our side, we favour more trade with the entire world, including the United Kingdom.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I took note of your comment just a few minutes ago about time. I must admit that I am not normally someone who backs down from a challenge, but what is being proposed here this morning is utterly impossible. We are supposed to try to summarize, comment on, and analyze a treaty as comprehensive as the one in Bill C-30 in just 10 minutes.

Instead I will try to shed some light on a few aspects of this treaty that I see as particularly important and that will allow everyone listening to this debate, especially the people of Trois-Rivières who have placed their trust in me, to understand the situation I find myself in and my position on this treaty.

All too often, and this is perhaps the first point I want to make, people try to portray the NDP as a party that is reluctant to sign free trade agreements, but that is not the case. What is true, however, is that we never make any decisions about an agreement without reading it. It took quite a while for the texts of the treaty to become available. Even as we speak, not all clauses of the treaty have been finalized.

I commend the Walloons who distinctively said they would go a step further, but reserve the right to go back and say no thank you if at the end of the process their questions and aspirations have not been satisfied.

I wonder why there is such urgency in Quebec and Canada. We have more than a few weeks to ratify this agreement. We are already hearing in Quebec, partly through the leader of the official opposition, that ratifying this agreement is out of the question if it does not include meaningful compensation for Quebec's dairy industry. I will come back to that.

Of course, he is not the Premier of Quebec, but between now and the end of the ratification process, a lot can change, not only in Quebec, but also in many provinces across Canada and in many of the countries directly affected by this free trade agreement.

I heard the Minister of International Trade and many of her colleagues say that they wonder who the NDP might sign a treaty with, if not with the European Union.

In response, I would like to turn the tables and ask this: if we cannot sign the best agreement possible with the European Union, a treaty that will be a building block, a model, and that will pave the way to the signing of all the other agreements that will follow, or that fixes agreements previously signed, with whom can we make the best possible agreement?

That is why we are so insistent that our suggested improvements be heard and advanced by the government to ensure that everyone will benefit.

It will be very evident, in the two or three points that I hope I have the time to develop, what the impact will be for Quebecers and Canadians. I am talking about monetary implications.

Take Quebec's dairy producers, for example. I am using an example I am very familiar with. That said, the same applies to

fisheries, which will or could encounter exactly the same kinds of problems.

Members will recall that during the election campaign, when candidates across Quebec were meeting with the Union des producteurs agricoles or directly with farmers to discuss their problems, everyone was carefully listening. Everyone had committed to a certain number of things.

The Quebec dairy industry is based on the family farm model, a model we would like to keep. Let me be clear. When we talk about the family farm model, we are not talking about a small business. These are multi-million dollar businesses. These people have a lot of responsibility and a significant financial burden. Signing a treaty that does not guarantee reasonable accommodation, at the very least, places a great burden on their shoulders and will cause them a great deal of stress.

• (1230)

In the previous Parliament, the Conservative government, which initiated the negotiation of this free trade agreement, promised to provide approximately \$4 billion in compensation for dairy producers, if I remember correctly.

I rarely supported the Conservatives' policies, but if I compare the financial compensation that the Conservative government planned to give the dairy industry to the compensation that is now being proposed by the Liberal government, I have to admit that they are light years away from each other.

The Liberal government is currently proposing to provide dairy producers with \$350 million over five years. The promised compensation has gone from \$4 billion to \$350 million over five years for two programs. The first program is a support and investment program to help modernize dairy operations. The government is now going to invest only \$250 million in this program, rather than \$350 million. However, as I was saying earlier, each farming operation is worth several million dollars.

What does the government expect to accomplish with such a small purse? Many dairy operations in Quebec have already modernized in order to remain competitive and ensure that their products are sold at competitive prices, so what will this program do to support the industry if the free trade agreement is signed? There are serious concerns in that regard.

With regard to the second program, the remaining \$100 million will be invested over four years in dairy processing. That amounts to \$25 million per year. Knowing how many dairy operations are out there and how much they are worth, we can see that this amount is clearly insufficient.

That is not even to mention the diafiltered milk issue, which the Liberals have not yet resolved and which makes the agreement in its current form a disaster for all dairy producers. We need to resolve this problem before we think about signing the agreement.

Government Orders

We also need to address the major impact that the substantial increase in the cost of prescription drugs will have on the pocketbooks of every citizen of this country. We have an ageing population, and as a rule, the statistics show that, unfortunately, that does not necessarily mean that the people living longer are always in good health. Consequently, the portion of our collective budget that we have to allocate to prescription drugs, as to hospital care, is a variable we have to take into account.

To the extent that there is a considerable increase in the price of prescription drugs, since we would be protecting drug patents longer through this agreement and it would take two or three years longer before companies could manufacture equivalent generics, each level of government will have to pay more for prescription drugs.

In Quebec, for example, where the entire population has access to pharmacare, there are still some who do not have the means to buy their medications, even if they only have to pay the prescription fee, and who have to consider slashing their grocery budget. That is another problem we will have to resolve.

• (1235)

There is a third problem that I will barely have time to touch upon, given the signal I am getting from the Speaker. Perhaps I will return to it if there are any questions. I am talking about investor-state disputes. To summarize very simply, corporations currently have such great influence on free trade agreements that they can sue governments that have made decisions which they claim would limit their ability to do business. One can well imagine all the problems that ensue.

I will be pleased to respond to questions from my colleagues.

• (1240)

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke of compensation for dairy producers.

The formula proposed by the former Conservative government was \$4.3 billion. That figure is higher than what the Liberals are offering at the moment, but on the downside, it was time limited, so not ideal. That was not the best solution either.

The Liberals are offering far less money, \$350 million rather than \$4.3 billion. What is more, there is a condition attached: the producer has to invest. My colleague was speaking earlier about farms with millions of dollars worth of production. On the other hand, there are also a lot of small family farms, where people are having difficulty making ends meet. They are being asked to make one more investment, one more expenditure, even though their profits are not very high.

What repercussions might this clause have on our small family farms?

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hochelaga for her question and for making up for that extra \$0.3 billion I had forgotten to tack on to the \$4 billion.

During the election campaign, on diafiltered milk alone, we clearly saw that some of these family farms had to sell or go bankrupt, as they could not manage to be cost-effective.

Farms of that size that are faced with such a predicament are obviously not going to be able to make the investments required by the compensation program. The farms that are better off and able to make such investments have already made them, for the most part. Consequently, they too will not benefit from the system.

The Liberals have introduced a very small measure. Let us be clear: \$350 million is a paltry sum considering the size of the problem. Worse still, this measure will be of use to almost no one. It will only serve to give the impression that the Liberal government has something to say in response to questions, knowing perfectly well that its compensation program is totally ineffective.

[*English*]

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we asked a question in question period about the health care escalator being cut by the Liberals, so my question concerns health care costs, in particular the cost of pharmaceuticals.

We know that CETA will increase the cost of pharmaceutical drugs in Canada. I wonder if my colleague would elaborate on what that would mean for his constituents if, for example, seniors and people with long-term needs are forced to pay higher health care costs because of pharmaceuticals and do not have private insurance to cover that or do not get it through their employers. What will it mean for people in his riding who have to pay higher pharmaceutical drug costs?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very pertinent question.

There are two important points to make. For months and years now, we have been talking about health transfers, and we were already talking about them during the previous Conservative government. We always heard the same answers assuring us that there would not be less money. However, we know that if there is not less money, that means the amount transferred is the same, but year after year, the same amount will end up being worth less and less.

The first thing to point out, and this is not in dispute, is that when the health care system was established in Canada, 50% of the funding came from the federal government and 50% from the provinces. Currently, about 20% of health care funding comes from the federal government and is sent to the provinces. If that is not a clear demonstration of a gradual pull-out by the various federal governments, I wonder what is.

Government Orders

Regarding the system in Quebec, everyone is covered by a drug plan. Of course, for the first prescriptions of the year patients practically pay full price until they reach the guaranteed threshold; after that there is a kind of user fee. It is x dollars per prescription. Even with this low cost, since it is supported by the community through a drug plan, there are still people in my riding and around Quebec who have to make a choice, or at least ask themselves the question. Can they afford to renew their prescription this week, or instead will they have to go without groceries or transportation, which is often public transit?

The impact is direct and affects everyone.

● (1245)

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my NDP colleagues and I have many concerns about Bill C-30, An Act to implement the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union and its Member States and to provide for certain other measures.

Since the beginning of negotiations with the European Union to conclude a trade agreement, I have had the impression, like many of my colleagues, that things are being hidden from us. A few years ago, on the occasion of a trip with the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, the Canadian delegation, of which I was a member, had the opportunity to discuss this agreement, which was then in the negotiation stage, with certain European parliamentarians, who were very clearly much better informed than we were.

It seems that the Conservative government of the time wanted to reveal absolutely nothing to its parliamentarians, even to the members of its own party. However, the Conservative and Liberal members quickly decided to accept this agreement without even knowing its details. For the New Democratic party, the fact that Canada intends to open its trade borders to Europe is too important for us to contemplate it lightly. That is precisely what the government is asking us to do.

Even though the NDP is in favour of strengthening our trade relations with the European Union, major concerns persist and many questions remain unanswered regarding the proposed agreement. For one, the government is asking us as parliamentarians to ratify an agreement even though certain European states have clearly indicated that the investor-state clauses will have to be amended or removed before the agreement is ratified.

We all remember that last October the regional government of Wallonia prevented Belgium, and hence the European Parliament, from signing the agreement, and then agreed to sign on the condition that it retain its right to refuse to consent to its ratification if its conditions are not met. So we are being asked to ratify the draft of an agreement which is not even final yet, and to disregard the concerns raised on the other side of the Atlantic, even though, at the same time, certain concerns are also being raised in Canada.

We are not going to give the government a blank cheque to finalize the last details of the agreement without being able to examine it in greater detail before it is implemented.

To add to the absurdity of all of this, I would like to remind my colleagues that 42% of Canada's exports to the European Union go to the United Kingdom. In fact, the concessions Canada made when

negotiating this agreement were based on the assumption that the United Kingdom would be a full party to the agreement. However, the Liberal government failed to reassess the net benefits of an agreement with Europe without this major trading partner of Canada's, which could withdraw following Brexit.

Also, and I would like to talk a little in greater detail on this point, we are being asked to approve an agreement that creates a major breach in supply management and puts many farmers, particularly dairy farmers, in insecurity.

Supply management strikes a market balance. It allows dairy producers to collectively negotiate prices and plan total milk production in order to meet consumer demand. Unlike what is happening around the world, Canadian dairy producers can sell the product of their hard labour at stable prices, which are not subject to market fluctuations. This ensures that Canada's dairy industry is one of the only self-sufficient agricultural industries that do not depend on government subsidies to survive.

Opening another breach in supply management will mean fewer and fewer guarantees for many products in terms of income stability, and this is particularly true in the case of family dairy farms.

The Conservatives had promised a \$4.3-billion compensation package to supply-managed farmers who will be affected by the Canada-Europe agreement and the trans-Pacific partnership.

The Liberal government, for its part, decided to create a \$350-million fund for dairy farmers. According to the Dairy Farmers of Canada, that amount is not nearly enough to compensate the industry considering the losses it will suffer under the agreement with Europe:

CETA will result in an expropriation of up to 2% of Canadian milk production; representing 17,700 tonnes of cheese that will no longer be produced in Canada. This is equivalent to the entire yearly production of the province of Nova Scotia, and will cost Canadian dairy farmers up to \$116 million a year in perpetual lost revenues.

In other words, the funds announced are not nearly enough to make up for the losses that Canadian dairy farmers are going to suffer under this free trade agreement.

● (1250)

It is important at this time to talk about the situation facing the smallest dairy producers and family farms, which are on the verge of extinction.

I met with Viateur Soucy in June during a protest here, in front of Parliament, calling on the government to protect supply management and farming. The protestors were worried about diafiltered milk coming into the country and the impact of the trans-Pacific partnership and the agreement with Europe on dairy farms.

At 73, he drove his tractor to Ottawa with dairy producers from across Quebec and other regions of Canada. In Nouvelle, in the beautiful Chaleur Bay area of the Gaspé, the Soucys have been running a family farm for three generations. When Viateur, the eldest son of Ovide Soucy, took over his father's farm with one of his brothers in the seventies, he decided to turn it into a dairy operation, because he saw it as an opportunity to provide his family with a stable income.

Government Orders

History has proven Mr. Soucy right up to now. Significant investments were made in modernizing the farm, the herd, machinery, new fields to feed the herd, and especially in production quotas, which, as we all know, are far from being allocated.

As long as the integrity of the supply management system was maintained, he was guaranteed an income. Mr. Soucy had an opportunity that most farmers do not, that of being able to keep his business in the family. Obviously, it is always easier to find someone to take over if they can be convinced that they will have a stable income if they put in the work, and of course on a farm, that means a lot of work. Mr. Soucy was lucky enough that one of his sons, Mikaël, took over the farm in 2004.

Today, Mikaël is the one who is dealing with the stress brought on by the decisions of this government and the previous government. When we spoke to Mikaël, he was not very happy with the government's decisions. We asked him what he thought of the compensation announced by the Liberals. Unfortunately, I cannot quote exactly what he said here because he was really unhappy.

Basically, he said that the revenue that farmers would lose because of this agreement would seriously impede their cash flow and that asking producers to invest and go further into debt was not a logical solution. He also asked us to ask the government a question. I will quote him here. He said, "I would like to know how long the government is going to string me along. Do I need to sell now or should I wait until my farm is no longer worth anything and I go bankrupt?"

That gives us some idea about his state of mind. Having a stable income is one thing, but once he has paid his overhead and his employee, that is, when he can manage to find one, he does not have much left to pay himself. If his income gets cut even further, what will be left for him? No wonder he is stressed and frustrated.

There are fewer and fewer family farms in Canada. It would be great if we could protect them. The problem is that if we allow a breach in supply management and compensate producers for their losses, this decision could be overturned by a change in government.

Given the number of promises broken by this government, you have to wonder whether someone might wake up one morning and say that the government has changed its mind and is going to withdraw this compensation. Who knows, maybe a lobbyist will pay \$1,500 for access to a minister and ask for the whole thing to be cancelled.

If we uphold the integrity of supply management, we avoid all these possible outcomes. When it comes to this agreement, there are still too many unanswered questions and potentially negative impacts on the economy and on Canadians for the New Democratic Party to approve it and support its implementation without amendments.

Maude Barlow, National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians, said, "Given the process could take another five years in Europe, what's the rush here other than another photo op? There needs to be a fuller public consultation process on CETA, just as the government has done with the trans-Pacific partnership."

What is the big rush?

The Minister of International Trade often says, when talking about softwood lumber, that she wants an agreement, but not just any agreement. Well, that sums up quite well the NDP's position on the Canada-Europe comprehensive and economic trade agreement. We want a good agreement, but not just any agreement.

• (1255)

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree with one of the things my colleague pointed out. Although it is important to have trade deals, it is of absolutely no use if they are not kept up or if we cannot resolve the disputes associated with them. The government has had over a year on softwood lumber and has accomplished nothing. As well, we have seen nothing on diafiltered milk.

If the government cannot even keep to the agreements we have, I have the same concern that if we were to enter into this European deal and there were disputes, that it would do nothing. Could the member comment on that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, talking about such disputes between governments is one thing, but how the Liberal government will resolve them is another. As my colleague pointed out, we are seeing it with softwood lumber. It is not easy. The government has been in negotiations for quite some time and nothing is happening. It has been in negotiations with Europe for quite a while, and nothing is happening. As I said earlier, Canadian members of Parliament did not know what was going on. That is a huge problem.

The member also mentioned disputes. I would like to answer another question about investor-state disputes. For example, chapter 11 of NAFTA gives rights to multinational corporations without requiring anything of them. On the other side of things, it imposes obligations on states that have no rights. For instance, Canada loses its rights to protect the environment if a multinational wants to take it to court. This has already happened in Quebec with shale gas, for example.

This is a huge problem that needs to be fixed before the agreement is signed.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a further concern is that Newfoundland and Labrador could expect major losses in fish processing. Is the member concerned that the government has yet to explain how it will compensate Newfoundland and Labrador on these losses?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, we have talked about compensation for dairy farmers, but we have not said anything about the fishery. There are several members across the way from the maritime provinces, where the fishery is very important, but nothing is being done.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: There are 32 members.

Government Orders

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: I am told there are 32 members, Mr. Speaker. These members should stand up and protect their constituents, people who are likely to lose jobs. People in the maritime provinces already have to leave home to work in other provinces, but this will be even worse. If there is no compensation, it will be total chaos.

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, could my colleague from Hochelaga perhaps elaborate on the negative effects that the comprehensive economic and trade agreement could have on pharmaceuticals and the cost of prescription drugs in Canada?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, with respect to that, it is very clear: there will be an increase in the cost of drugs.

A few years ago I met with one of my constituents living in government-subsidized housing. What the government paid him only covered his rent and just enough for food. He did not even have any money for subway tickets so he could try to find work or take a trip downtown. This gentleman needed prescription drugs. If he could not afford to take the subway, he could not afford prescription drugs either. Many seniors are forced to cut their pills in half because they cannot bear the full monthly cost of drugs.

This agreement hurts people in general. Many seniors are on medication and many seniors live under the poverty line, especially older women. This agreement will hurt women seniors. We need to fix this as well before signing the agreement.

• (1300)

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, trade between Canada and Europe is already free. There are very view tariffs between Canada and the European Union, which raises the question of why we need this comprehensive economic and trade agreement. However, if we are to evaluate it as a trade agreement, then a logical starting point is to look at the current pattern of trade between Canada and the European Union.

In 2015, Canada exported \$38 billion of merchandise to the EU and imported \$61 billion of merchandise from the European Union. That meant a trade deficit of \$23 billion. This imbalance means that if CETA functions as advertised and increases two-way trade, it will also aggravate our trade deficit. For example, a 10% increase in bilateral trade would increase our exports by \$4 billion and would increase our imports by \$6 billion. That would make our trade deficit with the European Union \$2 billion higher, a subtraction from output and employment in Canada.

The economic models that were used to argue for CETA simply assume balanced trade and full employment, but we know that those assumptions are unrealistic in the real world. Furthermore, these models do not take into account, and indeed the government has made no effort to take into the account, the consequences of Brexit. The United Kingdom was the only major European economy with which Canada ran a trade surplus.

In 2015, we exported \$16 billion to the U.K. and imported \$9 billion from the U.K. Of course, the United Kingdom is no longer part of the European Union. Therefore, if we look just at the

remaining EU countries, we find that Canada exported only \$22 billion of merchandise to them, but imported \$52 billion. What this means is that taking the United Kingdom out of the equation, we imported more than twice as much as we exported to the rest of the European Union. Indeed, with those countries, we suffered a trade deficit of \$30 billion.

In this new scenario without the U.K., a 10% increase in bilateral trade would boost Canada's exports by only \$2 billion and would increase our imports by \$5 billion. That would make our trade deficit with what remains of the EU \$3 billion higher, an even larger subtraction from Canadian output and employment.

In terms of trade flows, it is not at all clear that this agreement could deliver a benefit to Canada. Even if we imagine that CETA does boost Canadian output and employment, we should remember that it will also make it easier for European companies to bring in temporary foreign workers. There is absolutely no reason to expect that any potential increase in employment would actually benefit Canadian workers.

Another major problem with CETA is that, as I suggested at the start of my speech, it is not really about trade. In fact, one of the negative consequences of this deal would be to extend the duration of patents on pharmaceuticals. Now this is the opposite of free trade. Extending patents is actually more restrictive of trade and it would have the consequence of driving up the price of pharmaceuticals for provincial health insurance plans as well as for individual Canadians.

Perhaps the most controversial element of CETA is the investor-state provision. In order to try to get the deal through, the government did water down these provisions somewhat, but the question we need to ask is why there is any need for investor-state provisions in CETA. Do Canadian investors not have confidence in the European court system? Do European investors not have confidence in the Canadian judicial process?

• (1305)

Of course, investor-state provisions have their origin in the North American Free Trade Agreement. Canadian and American investors had doubts about the Mexican judicial system. Those doubts may have been well founded, but what is important to note is that since NAFTA came into effect, its investor-state provisions have not been used principally against Mexico. They have been used principally against Canada, against our country.

I think it is worth reviewing some of the NAFTA chapter 11 cases that have been brought against Canada. If we go back to the 1990s, there was the famous Ethyl case, in which an American corporation sued Canada for trying to ban a gasoline additive, MMT, that was already banned in the United States. Ultimately, the Government of Canada gave in on this. It had to pull the regulation and also pay the company \$13 million U.S.

Government Orders

There was the more recent case of AbitibiBowater, which had received rights to water in Newfoundland and Labrador to operate pulp and paper mills. When the company closed the last of those mills, the provincial government tried to retake those water rights. AbitibiBowater sued Newfoundland under NAFTA. How could it do that? AbitibiBowater is a Canadian company. It simply registered itself in the United States so that it was then able to avail itself of NAFTA's chapter 11 to sue our Canadian government.

In the end, the federal government paid AbitibiBowater \$130 million to resolve the case, essentially to compensate it for the loss of water rights that it was not even using.

The most recent case I will mention is Lone Pine Resources. This is an Alberta oil and gas company that registered itself in Delaware and is suing Canada under NAFTA over the Province of Quebec's ban on fracking. It is claiming \$250 million in compensation.

We see that in all of these cases, and there are many other examples, what is happening is that a foreign company is using the investor-state provisions to challenge a democratic law, regulation, or public policy that might arguably impinge on some opportunity to generate future profits.

However, the full extent of the damage cannot really be captured by specific cases, because for every case where there is actually a dispute under NAFTA, there are many other cases where the government has decided not to go ahead with a new regulation or not to strengthen a public safety standard for fear of one of these investor-state challenges, so these investor-state provisions also have a chilling effect on public policy in our country.

We have had all these problems with investor states in NAFTA. We do not have any problems or any real objections to the European judicial system, so why would we try to put investor-state provisions in the Canada-European Union trade agreement? It just does not make sense.

It remains possible that the European Union will not be able to fully ratify the deal for this reason. However, I think the point we should be considering is why Canada would want to impose more of these investor-state provisions on ourselves.

To wrap up, there is absolutely no case for CETA as a trade deal. If we look at it in terms of trade flows, it really would not be advantageous to Canada. Furthermore, the agreement has a number of other negative provisions, such as temporary foreign workers, such as extended pharmaceutical patents, such as investor-state disputes that have nothing to do with trade. That is why the NDP is opposing this bill.

● (1310)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously investor-state resolution processes are important, although it should be noted that if a country does treat foreign nationals in a way that is arbitrary, it can either use the resolution process or it can go to a court. It is important to recognize that here in Canada, we treat everyone equally and unfairly, and it is only when a government, whether it be provincial, local, or federal, treats a foreign company differently than it would a Canadian company.

Does the member say that we should actually treat foreign nationals less fairly than we do other Canadians? Or, should everyone operating in Canada be given the same rights to work under and to follow good laws? That is my question.

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, I would start by pointing out that in a couple of cases I mentioned, it was Canadian companies that were reconfiguring themselves as foreign corporations in order to use the investor-state provisions. However, this is not really about discriminatory treatment. This is about public policies, laws, and regulations costing a company that happens to be foreign, or that is able to characterize itself as foreign, some kind of future profit opportunity.

The Canadian court system would certainly uphold the rights of foreign investors, and I think the European court system would uphold the rights of Canadian investors. What we do not need is to create a special tribunal process that gives special privileges to foreign investors.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoyed my colleague's speech. I think he has a very in-depth knowledge of not just this trade deal, but of many other trade deals. That is the kind of discussion we need here in the House, to hear the pros and cons of both sides that are well informed.

I had two things that struck me while the member was speaking that I would perhaps like him to comment on, if he cares to.

The first would be that, to me, it seems that when this deal was starting to be negotiated, Britain was in the EU. It was pre-Brexit. It was also before the election of Donald Trump as the president. It seems the world has kind of moved on from where we were when we were first negotiating this trade deal.

I wonder if perhaps by signing this deal, the Liberals are committing us to the past. The Conservatives certainly negotiated this deal under a different global setting. The Liberals kind of picked it up and are taking credit for it, but I wonder if they could have done a better deal, looking more at what is coming down the pipe. Trade with Europe is too important to get wrong.

I am wondering if my colleague could perhaps comment on the Brexit side of things, how the world has changed, and how Canada might suffer if we sign this agreement.

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is certainly correct that past Conservative and Liberal governments have taken the attitude that they should just sign any and all free trade agreements, without much regard for whether they are good deals, and without much regard for the actual provisions of those agreements. That is one of the ways we have been in trouble with things like investor-state provisions.

Government Orders

My colleague is also correct to note that there has been a shift away from this logic of free trade all the time and at all costs. There is a sort of re-evaluation of corporate globalization and what it means for working people. Rather than rushing ahead with this deal, I do think it would make sense for Canada to re-evaluate our position as well, and to re-evaluate our position in this changed world.

Certainly in terms of Brexit, as I pointed out in my speech, it removes from the European Union the one major economy with which we were running a trade surplus. The trade imbalance that Canada will suffer with what is left of the European Union is even worse, and the potential negative consequences of getting this deal wrong are even more dire.

My colleague has added some very good reasons to vote against Bill C-30.

• (1315)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members know, this side of the House is strongly in favour of CETA because trade means more growth, and more growth means more jobs, which is what this government is all about. We are thrilled to be signing this progressive trade agreement with our European partners. Our Minister of International Trade has worked so long and hard on this and, as a number of speakers have already mentioned, the other side of the House also put in a considerable effort on this trade agreement. It will deliver tangible growth and opportunities for our middle class. CETA will also provide a strong foundation for Canada and the EU to demonstrate leadership on an inclusive, progressive approach to global trade.

I would like to end by moving the following motion. I move:

That this question be now put.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is incredible what we are debating.

In my speech, I just spoke about the problems we had. I was saying that we wanted an agreement, but as the minister on the other side of the House says, not just any agreement. We were told that we would be allowed to speak for as long as we wanted on this very important agreement for us, and then the government decides to stop debate.

I would like to know why it was decided to suddenly stop debate, when we are not even sure that the agreement will be signed five years from now. What is the huge rush?

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, CETA has been a long time in coming. There has, in fact, been 10 years of discussion on this signature agreement between the European Union and Canada. It provides great benefits for both the European community and our country. It is going to be a very good thing for jobs and growth in our country.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is very disappointing. The Conservatives very much support trade deals and recognize how important they are. In fact, we were the party that actually negotiated and got this trade deal done.

It is unbelievable that the Liberals are squandering away the goodwill and the trust that had been established. It really begs the question of how much disrespect do they think this Parliament, this House, will be able to endure when they create this kind of poisonous atmosphere?

I am very disappointed in this. I really do not know what they are trying to accomplish, except to try to bully and push everything through that they can.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, this does not end debate.

I would really go back to my main point. This is a very good deal for Canada. Our international trade minister has worked so very hard on this over the last year. The previous government did not get it done, but our government is getting it done.

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am truly stunned and even shocked by the government's attitude.

We are not debating a small inconsequential bill, but an economic agreement with Europe, which is extremely important. The NDP considers this economic agreement to be very important. We have questions and concerns we want to raise because we want a good agreement.

I began a tour of my riding to meet with all the stakeholders in agriculture, including the Union des producteurs agricoles in my area and cheese factories like Fromagerie Saint-Guillaume. I will also be meeting with representatives of Fromagerie de Notre-Dame-du-Bon-Conseil and Fromagerie Lemaire in Drummondville. These people are terribly worried, because they will be hit hard.

What is the government's response to their concerns? It is going to shut down debate. That is truly a shame, and I am very shocked—not personally, but because the people I represent are shocked. People are saying that they are terribly concerned about the future of the dairy and cheese industries, and that the government's actions are totally unacceptable, an insult to all the people who are fighting and who get up every morning to work.

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I would just say what I have already said, that this is a very good agreement for our country, a very good agreement for the European Union, a very good signal to the world that we are not going to huddle into a protectionist shell but are free traders in this country.

I would congratulate our international trade minister for working so hard. It looked pretty dark there for a while, but our minister pulled it out of the fire. She was over in Europe doing great work on behalf of Canada. We are proud of her and this government.

Government Orders

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed again that the government is trying to shut off debate on the bill, and the only reason I heard from the other side was that they are tired. I do not think that is what we are paid \$170,000 a year to do, to stand up and say that we are tired and we do not want to debate important things like trade deals. It is shameful. It also shows the contempt the Liberals are showing for this House.

I want to put the bill in a bit of context, given what we have just seen here. When we check how many bills have been put through this House since the great Liberals came to power, there are 10. There are only 10 bills that have gained royal assent. Five of them have been money bills, so they have to pass. One of them was ordered by the court, which was the assisted dying bill. If we think about the amount of work the government has actually put forward in this place, it has been minimal, yet we are still seeing the Liberals move to closure, to cut off debate, and to say that they are too tired to debate these things, but where is the work we are supposed to be doing?

If I look back to the previous Parliament in which I was privileged enough to sit, the Conservatives were in power at that point. I really disagreed very strongly with a lot of what the Conservatives did, but at least they were organized. At least the cabinet knew what it was doing. I would stand up and disagree, vote against and argue. I of course argued against the many closures that were put in place, but at least Prime Minister Harper knew what he was doing. Now what I see on the other side—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, credit where credit is due. Compare this administration versus that administration. Here we have 10 bills through Parliament with royal assent. We have a stacking of the Senate that has happened and it is supposed to be easy for the Liberals to pass bills through, yet they are too incompetent to get it done and seem very confused.

When we look at things like the democratic reform bill, which the Liberals promised would take place before Christmas and we would have all these reforms, what have we seen? We have seen really nothing. We have mass confusion about what the government thinks about what electoral formula should be used. We have a Minister of Democratic Institutions who apologizes day after day for screwing up, and then she comes back in here and does the same thing.

We have disingenuous answers from the other side when it comes to question period. If I have to hear the stock answers one more time from the House leader about cash for access, I think I will hang myself, because we do not have—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. We are sick of this, and for what? For 10 bills, six of which did not have a chance of failing, really. This is very disappointing and here we are moving into debate on a bill that we cannot afford to get wrong.

When I was paying compliments to the Conservatives earlier about at least having a competent administration, I do not agree with them on CETA. I was open to it. In the last Parliament I was open to

it because it is very important to get our trade deals with Europe right. They are too important to get wrong. I do find it quite rich for the Liberals to take credit for the Conservatives' work because—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, that is what this place is for, to call it as it is. Being in the official opposition in the last Parliament and not being there this Parliament, I think that what we can do in this place is to tell Canadians what is going on here. That has been a great role of the NDP in the past, to try to explain things to Canadians in an honest way. These two parties we can hardly tell apart, so it is up to us to explain.

This is disappointing. There is a difference also between these two parties, I have to say, in how they put their bills forward. In the last Parliament it was closure, ram it through, stack the Senate, and get it passed. I did not agree with it, but at least they knew what they were doing, and at least it was genuine in the sense that Prime Minister Harper and his cabinet would tell people what would happen, ram it down our throats, and then it was done. We could fight against it but at least we knew it was coming

On this side of the House, what we get is endless fake consultation. There is a wonderful article that was written in the late sixties about consultation. I remember a great mentor of mine, Professor Patrick Smith, was the first one to bring it to my attention. Really, there are different forms of consultation that can take place around bills or any kind of government business.

● (1325)

We can inform people about things. We can have a back-and-forth consultation. We can empower people. However, the worst thing the government can do is to manipulate people, to give them fake information, to make them think they are participating in something by having have them fill out little cards and mail them back in, or to complete cheesy online surveys, and then say that people have been consulted and then just go ahead with what it was planning to do anyway. The worst kind of participation is what the current government does; it is called therapy. What the Liberals are trying to do is to tell Canadians that they misunderstand, that their thinking is wrong and that it will cure them of their bad ideas. That is what is happening on their side of the House.

Private Members' Business

I would be remiss if I did not come back to things like pipelines. The Liberals promised throughout the election that there would be a brand new consultation process, with a very strict and thorough science and evidence-based review process to replace the one that was basically ruined by the Conservatives. They did not do that. Instead, they okayed pipelines based on the previous regime. Then they told Canadians they were wrong to be mad about it, they were wrong to tell first nations that not having consent was okay, and that they were wrong to think that consent was necessary. However, that is exactly what the other side is doing. Why? It is in order to get 10 bills through Parliament, six of which would not fail.

The incompetence that we are seeing from the Liberals is astounding, and I think it is showing in CETA. This bill is too important to get wrong. I think the Conservatives got it wrong. I said that in the last Parliament and I'll say it in this Parliament. We can debate that. However, the Liberals are not doing us justice and allowing us to stand up to have a full debate so they can answer our questions honestly without talking points. I think that is a problem.

I am happy to answer questions and give my suggestions as to how we might move forward in the new year.

The Deputy Speaker: It does not look like we will have any time for questions and comments at this particular time. However, the hon. member for Burnaby South will have five minutes for questions and comments when the House next returns to debate on the question.

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

•(1330)

[*English*]

GERMAN HERITAGE MONTH

The House resumed from November 21 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House today to speak to Motion No. 73, declaring every October as German heritage month. The historic connection of German people to Canada is an integral part of our societal fabric and has helped make us the greatest country in the world.

Germans are known for many great things. They are known for their excellent cuisine, for having produced some of the greatest musical masterpieces of all time, and their language is intricately linked to many others, with many other languages borrowing from German. They are cultured people who gave us Bach, the Christmas tree, and blue jeans. Yes, Levi Strauss is from Germany. There are many communities in our country with significant German populations from various parts of Europe. The contribution of German people in Canada has been remarkable.

I would like to take the opportunity to speak about the various tenets of German culture that I think we can all appreciate. Here I

will mention their delicious cuisine and drink. The Germans are known for their excellent culinary contributions, which indeed have been noted around the world. One of the greatest delicacies is sausage with sauerkraut. What a delicious meal. It seems as though the bitterness of the sauerkraut provides the perfect balance to the taste of the sausage. A delicious and tasty German treat is strudel. In Canada, that one has really caught on. It seems as though just about every bakery in Canada has some strudel on the shelf.

What about the delicious German beer? The famous German beer purity law states that only water, hops, and barley can be used in the production of beer for it to be recognized as authentic and true German beer. One really has to see the beer halls in Munich to appreciate the whole beer-drinking culture of Germany. The oompahpah music also goes along with that great culture. If one were to go back to Heidelberg now, Henry VIII's cousin built the largest beer barrel in the world. It still exists.

Another great culinary delight passed on to us by Germans is chocolate. There was once a character on a popular animated television program that referred to Germany as the land of chocolate. Indeed, one certainly thinks of delicious chocolate when thinking of Germany.

From a musical point of view, some of the greatest baroque and classical composers in history were German. One need only think of Bach, Mozart, and Handel to realize that the German contribution to musical culture and history is perhaps one of their most important contributions. The music of these wonderful artists is still heard across the world today and this, to me, is a testament to their impact on music as we know it.

There is also the German contribution to technology, which is ever present in the automobile world. When we think of Volkswagen, Mercedes, Porsche, and the technological benefits they have brought to the motor vehicle industry, that, in my estimation, is one of the great contributions to the auto industry.

Other technology, such as the chip cards or smart cards that are used today, was a German contribution to our modern digital society. Germans invented the first working helicopter and the first gasoline automobile engine.

There have been a multitude of discoveries in health and science. Aspirin comes to mind. We can thank a couple of German scientists for that. Then there was the discovery of the debilitating Alzheimer's disease by a German doctor and scientist.

There have been a multitude of scientific contributions to things like space exploration. There have been discoveries in the world of physics and mathematics. Think about radiology. Every time people go to the doctor's office and get requisitions for x-rays, Germans provided us with that life-changing technological advance.

Kindergarten was created by a German educator in the midst of the industrial revolution, at a time when many children in continental Europe suffered and toiled greatly. Kindergarten was an innovative and unique way to get young kids off on the right foot, which ran contrary to the prevailing attitude at the time.

Private Members' Business

The contribution of Germans to humanity is very large and great, and I am happy we are able to recognize these great contributions today.

With all of those things in mind, the main reason we are here today is to talk about deeming October of every year German heritage month in Canada. Why is October so special to the German people? It started back in 1810 when Crown Prince Ludwig married Princess Therese in Munich. The whole city was invited, and it was a big party. There was lots of beer and delicious food, two important tenets of German society in that period, and there were horse races to celebrate the occasion.

A year later, the horse races and other events were launched and the Oktoberfest tradition has continued every year since then. Naturally, it has also spread to countries with significant populations of German heritage, much like Canada.

• (1335)

In Canada, the big Oktoberfest event of the year is always the Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest celebration. As I understand, it is the second-largest in the world after the real deal in Munich. That is what we call a real party.

I have never been to the Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, but it is a big bash. Sometimes it can draw up to a million partygoers in any given year. There are many Oktoberfests held throughout the country.

The history of the area is interesting. Kitchener was once known as Berlin, because the German population was so high there.

German immigration to the Prairie provinces began in earnest after World War I. The numbers tended to be much higher than what occurred before the war began, for various reasons. Also, the United States had turned off the taps in that same period of immigration from Germany and other places, so Canada had overnight become a more sought-after destination for those who considered leaving Europe for the new world.

In the first days of Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, a concentrated effort was made to encourage German settlers to come to western Canada. The Government of Canada felt that because the Germans were renowned as good agriculture producers, highly efficient in growing the economy in the communities in which they lived, they would be suited to populating that part of the world. In fact, Macdonald hired Winnipeg politician and businessman, William Hespeler, to serve as an immigration agent in Germany, where he would try to woo immigrants to come to the new world, settle down, and make their lives here.

In that period, many German immigrants were coming from Russia. Many were Mennonites, who had been given special status in the Russian steppe, only to have them eroded by the Tsar. They had essentially, as one author put it, made the steppe livable with their blood, sweat, and tears. This led to many of them leaving rather quickly, which was understandable.

German communities have been present in Canada for centuries now. They were some of the early settlers, before many other groups decided to make Canada their home. For instance, the first recorded German who bought land here was in 1664. Then there was a flock

of German Protestant families who settled in Halifax in the 1750s and became full-fledged members of society in the Maritimes. They eventually ended up down river, in Lunenburg, which they settled in. It is now one of the most prominent historical communities of Nova Scotia and Canada.

The American Revolution then drove a number of German Americans to flee the fighting in the United States. Naturally, Canada was a safe haven for German Americans, especially those who considered themselves to be loyal to the British crown.

Germans continued to come to Canada. There was a brief interlude during the First and Second World Wars, but the post-war period saw a high number of skilled German immigrants coming to Canada and becoming an integral part of society in their newfound home.

There are German communities and cities with German-speaking people across Canada as well. In my own province of Alberta, there is a proud history of German settlement. Many Germans settled in Alberta in the late 1940s and 1950s to escape the carnage and poor economic conditions in Europe. The welcoming nature of Albertans and a desire to look toward the future helped these new Canadians survive and thrive.

In my part of the world, Germans have left their mark, and continue to contribute to the fabric of our towns and cities across Alberta and western Canada. There are places like Beiseker in my constituency, for example, that was settled by a number of German-American settlers. Thomas Beiseker himself, the fellow who the town is named after, was of German descent. A large portion of the settlers in Beiseker and the village of Acme were in fact German-speaking Mennonites. In many parts parts of my constituency, there are very specific German communities of Hutterites.

I believe there are many compelling reasons to celebrate German history and heritage. It has had such an impact on our communities, provinces, and territories, and Canada as a whole.

Here is a stunning statistic. I read that by Confederation, the Germans had made up 70% of the non-British or French population in this country. That goes to show how important this ethnic group is to our national fabric and to our history. There are more than three million Canadians of German origin, nearly one out of every 10 Canadians.

I am happy to speak to this private member's motion. I thank my honourable colleague across the way for presenting it. It is my hope that all members will support this very worthwhile initiative.

I wish all of my colleagues a very merry Christmas, and a healthy and prosperous 2017.

Auf Wiedersehen.

• (1340)

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion to establish German heritage month. This is a great opportunity to recognize the contribution of German Canadians to our society and to celebrate its many cultural traditions.

Saskatchewan's motto is "From Many Peoples Strength". German Canadians have played an important part in building Saskatchewan through many of our industries, farms, and cities. Today, Regina is home to more than 60,000 people of German heritage. I am proud to count myself as one of them.

From 1867 to 1914, western Canada became home to millions of immigrant settlers seeking a new life. This immigration boom created new opportunities with many immigrants bringing with them knowledge and experience in agriculture and trades.

To give an example, Saskatchewan's population multiplied by 11 times from 1891 to 1911, including many German settlers. With Saskatchewan's rapid growth during these years, immigrants began to transform the Prairies and establish unique cultural settlements.

The Germans who came to Saskatchewan established two large colonies in the early 1900s. St. Peter's colony comprised 50 townships and had 7,000 people in 1914.

St. Joseph's colony comprised 77 townships, with a population in 1916 of around 11,000. Germans' influence on Saskatchewan's proud history can be seen in the names of towns right across the province.

German bloc settlements include the areas around Strasbourg, Bulyea, Leader, Burstall, Fox Valley, Eatonia, St. Walburg, Paradise Hill, Loon Lake, Goodsoil, Pierceland, Meadow Lake, Edenwold, Windthorst, Lemberg, Qu'appelle, Neudorf, Grayson, Langenburg, Kerrobert, Unity, Luseland, Macklin, Humboldt, Watson, Cudworth, Lampman, Midale, Tribune, Consul, Rockglen, Shaunavon, Swift Current.

Many Germans who migrated to Saskatchewan came from Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. They were motivated by all that Canada had to offer: greater economic opportunity and improved quality of life as well as an escape from oppression and persecution.

This is a proud part of Canada's history and to this day, we are seen as a place of hope and freedom from persecution.

The outbreak of the First World War stopped the great wave of German and Eastern European immigration to Saskatchewan. However, after the war, Germans were again travelling in search of opportunity. Some of them stayed at a boarding house run by my great-grandmother in Regina.

Private Members' Business

In the Second World War, my great uncle served in the Royal Canadian Navy. He was on a corvette that accepted the surrender of a U-boat. When the German crew came off, one of them was a man who had stayed at his family home in the 1930s while looking for work in Regina.

A decade after the Second World War, Regina's German Club was formed in 1955. It opened its current clubhouse in 1968 as a gathering place for the German community in Regina. However, today it welcomes people from all backgrounds to come and experience the culture and cuisine of Germany in the heart of our city. As a member of the German Club for several years, I highly recommend visiting this facility.

The NDP is proud to support multiculturalism and we have a long history of highlighting our country's commitment to cultural diversity. We are pleased to support German heritage month as a way of recognizing German Canadian contributions to our country.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, December 1, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, December 13, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

It being 1:46 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1:46 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Friday, December 9, 2016

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Canada Business Corporations Act

Bill C-25. Second reading	7883
Mr. Weir	7883
Mr. Caron	7884
Mr. Ste-Marie	7884
Mr. Shields	7884
Mr. Choquette	7884
Ms. Gladu	7886
Mr. Ste-Marie	7886
Mr. Aubin	7886
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	7887
Mr. Caron	7887
Ms. Gladu	7888
Mr. Weir	7888
Mr. Aubin	7889
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	7889
(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee).....	7890

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Intergovernmental Relations

Mr. Beaulieu	7890
--------------------	------

Accessibility for Persons with Reduced Mobility

Mr. Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	7890
--	------

Barrie Food Bank

Mr. Brassard	7890
--------------------	------

Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Ms. Young	7890
-----------------	------

Oil Pipelines

Mr. Stewart	7890
-------------------	------

Genocide

Mr. Ehsassi	7891
-------------------	------

St. Thomas Food Bank

Mrs. Vecchio	7891
--------------------	------

House of Commons Pages

Mr. Whalen	7891
------------------	------

Haut-Richelieu Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Mr. Rioux	7891
-----------------	------

Gate 3:16 Outreach Centre

Mr. Carrie	7891
------------------	------

Gender-based Violence

Ms. Ludwig	7892
------------------	------

Governor General's Meritorious Service Medal

Mr. Casey (Charlottetown).....	7892
--------------------------------	------

Persons With Disabilities

Mr. Poilievre	7892
---------------------	------

Innovation

Mr. Arya	7892
----------------	------

Andréane Benoit

Mr. Choquette	7892
---------------------	------

CP Holiday Train

Mrs. McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo).....	7893
--	------

Warren Allmand

Mr. Housefather	7893
-----------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ethics

Ms. Bergen	7893
Mr. Lamoureux	7893
Ms. Bergen	7893
Mr. Lamoureux	7893

Taxation

Ms. Bergen	7893
Mr. Carr	7894
Mr. Deltell	7894
Mr. Champagne	7894

Consumer Protection

Mr. Deltell	7894
Mr. Champagne	7894

The Environment

Ms. Sansoucy	7894
Mr. Carr	7894
Mr. Stewart	7894
Mr. Carr	7895

Health

Mr. Stewart	7895
Ms. Khera	7895
Ms. Sansoucy	7895
Ms. Khera	7895

Ethics

Mr. Barlow	7895
Mr. Lamoureux	7895
Mr. Waugh	7895
Mr. Lamoureux	7895
Mr. Généreux	7896
Mr. Lamoureux	7896
Mr. Gourde	7896
Mr. Lamoureux	7896
Mrs. Vecchio	7896
Mr. Lamoureux	7896
Mr. Brassard	7896
Mr. Cuzner	7896

Indigenous Affairs

Mr. Saganash	7897
Ms. Jones	7897

Ms. Malcolmson	7897
Ms. Jones	7897
Taxation	
Ms. Finley	7897
Mr. Champagne	7897
Mr. Kelly	7897
Mr. Carr	7897
Mr. MacKenzie	7897
Mr. Carr	7897
Mr. Saroya	7898
Mr. Bains	7898
Rail Transportation	
Mr. Aubin	7898
Ms. Young	7898
Official Languages	
Mr. Choquette	7898
Mr. Boissonnault	7898
Status of Women	
Ms. Ratansi	7898
Ms. Hajdu	7898
Taxation	
Mr. Carrie	7899
Mr. Champagne	7899
Public Safety	
Mr. Schmale	7899
Mr. Picard	7899
Indigenous Affairs	
Mrs. McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	7899
Ms. Jones	7899
Mrs. McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	7899
Ms. Jones	7899
Infrastructure	
Mr. Johns	7899
Ms. Young	7900
Employment	
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	7900
Mr. Bains	7900
Rail Transportation	
Mr. Berthold	7900
Ms. Young	7900
Public Services and Procurement	
Ms. Gladu	7900
Ms. Alleslev	7900
Mr. McCauley	7900
Ms. Alleslev	7901
Science	
Mr. Fuhr	7901
Mr. Beech	7901
Natural Resources	
Mr. Kitchen	7901
Mr. Carr	7901
Mr. Sikand	7901
Mr. Carr	7901

Infrastructure	
Mrs. Boucher	7901
Mr. Rodriguez	7901
Official Languages	
Mr. Beaulieu	7901
Mr. Boissonnault	7902
Health	
Ms. Pauzé	7902
Ms. Khera	7902
Consumer Protection	
Mr. Ste-Marie	7902
Mr. Champagne	7902
The Environment	
Mr. Tootoo	7902
Mr. Carr	7902

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lamoureux	7902
Committees of the House	
Public Safety and National Security	
Mr. Oliphant	7903
Veterans Affairs	
Mr. Ellis	7903
Petitions	
Telecommunications	
Ms. Ludwig	7903
Electoral Reform	
Mrs. Vecchio	7903
Canadian National Railway	
Mr. Blaikie	7903
Freedom of Speech	
Mr. Ehsassi	7903
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lamoureux	7903
Questions Passed as Orders for Returns	
Mr. Lamoureux	7904

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement	
Bill C-30. Second reading	7905
Mr. Saroya	7905
Mr. Caron	7906
Mr. Ste-Marie	7906
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	7906
Mr. Aubin	7907
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	7908
Mr. Stewart	7908
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	7909
Ms. Gladu	7910
Mr. Duvall	7910
Mr. Weir	7911
Mr. Weir	7911
Mr. Albas	7912

Mr. Stewart.....	7912
Mr. Duguid.....	7913
Motion.....	7913
Ms. Boutin-Sweet.....	7913
Ms. Bergen.....	7913
Mr. Choquette.....	7913
Mr. Stewart.....	7914

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

German Heritage Month

Motion.....	7915
Mr. Shields.....	7915
Mr. Weir.....	7916
Division on motion deferred.....	7917

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the House of Commons

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