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Tuesday, December 10, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of the Privacy Commissioner on the application of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and the Privacy Act for the year 2018-19.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(h), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

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COMMISSIONER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 23(5) of the Auditor General Act, the 2019 fall reports of the interim commissioner of the environment and sustainable development to the House of Commons.

[*English*]

These reports are permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1010)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—PROPOSED SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): moved:

That, in light of the prolonged diplomatic crisis with China, the House appoint a special committee with the mandate to conduct hearings to examine and review all aspects of the Canada–China relationship including, but not limited to, consular, economic, legal, security and diplomatic relations:

- (a) that the committee be composed of 12 members, of which six shall be government members, four shall be from the official opposition, one shall be from the Bloc Québécois and one from the New Democratic Party;
- (b) that changes in the membership of the committee shall be effective immediately after notification by the whip has been filed with the Clerk of the House;
- (c) that membership substitutions be permitted, if required, in the manner provided for in Standing Order 114(2);
- (d) that the members shall be named by their respective whip by depositing with the Clerk of the House the list of their members to serve on the committee no later than January 15, 2020;
- (e) that the Clerk of the House shall convene an organization meeting of the said committee for no later than January 20, 2020;
- (f) that the committee be chaired by a member of the government party;
- (g) that notwithstanding Standing Order 106(2), in addition to the Chair, there be one vice-chair from the official opposition, one vice-chair from the Bloc Québécois and one vice-chair from the New Democratic Party;
- (h) that quorum of the committee be as provided for in Standing Order 118 and that the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including one member of the opposition and one member of the government;
- (i) that the committee be granted all of the powers of a standing committee, as provided in the Standing Orders, as well as the power to travel, accompanied by the necessary staff, inside and outside of Canada;
- (j) that the committee have the power to authorize video and audio broadcasting of any or all of its proceedings; and
- (k) that the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Public Safety, and the Canadian ambassador to China be ordered to appear as witnesses from time to time as the committee sees fit.

The Speaker: Since today is the final allotted day for the supply period ending December 10, 2019, the House will go through the usual procedures to consider and dispose of the supply bill.

In view of recent practices, do hon. members agree that the bill be distributed now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Business of Supply

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, this is a very important debate that our Parliament is seized with today and I want to thank the leader of the Conservative Party and our caucus for bringing this to Parliament. This is an example of how this Parliament can fulfill its function, challenging the government, holding it to account for a record which on foreign affairs is quite weak, but also proposing methods that allow for better resolutions. That is what this opposition day motion and the proposal of a special committee of Parliament on Canada-China relations are all about.

I want to start off with two reflections. The first is that today marks one year since Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig were arrested by Chinese state authorities and detained without charge, and without access to a lawyer or to the rule of law. They were arbitrarily detained as a diplomatic response to a lawful extradition arrest performed by Canada, a rule of law country, on behalf of the U.S. and a decision by a U.S. court. Canada acted with full respect of its rule of law traditions and China's actions have reflected and reminded us that there is no rule of law.

I am sure I speak for all Conservatives, parliamentarians and Canadians in saying that we stand in solidarity with the families of the two Michaels. We want their well-being to be safeguarded and we want to see them return home to Canada as quickly as possible. Today, we will be talking about many facets of the Canada-China relationship with its many challenges and some opportunities. However, we are not going to speak further about the two Michaels, out of respect for that case and the need for a resolution.

What is promising about this motion is the specialized committee that we are proposing. It would be all-party and multidisciplinary, with the ability to look at all aspects of the Canada-China relationship from complex consular cases to national security issues, to trade, to global affairs, within the context of a committee that can go in camera and respect secret and sensitive information. That is probably the best venue to come up with a plan for a swift resolution for the situation of Mr. Spavor and Mr. Kovrig. I hope the government takes that into consideration when they consider voting on our motion later today.

I hope all members of this House realize this could be an opportunity to actually take the politics out of it, but allow us to do our job because Canadians are concerned about the well-being of these citizens. Canadians are well seized with issues related to China, from the South China Sea islands, to Huawei, to the situation with the Uighurs, to Chinese ambitions in the Arctic as a self-declared "near-Arctic state", a new diplomatic term that really did not exist until they created it.

The challenge of the China relationship is the foreign policy challenge that Canada will face over the next generation. This is a perfect opportunity for a specialized committee of parliamentarians to examine it to make sure that Canada gets the balance right.

The second thing I will say at the outset of my remarks is that there are tremendous opportunities in China. However, for those opportunities, many of them business and many of them export-driven, Canada cannot and must not relinquish our unbridled support for the rule of law, for human rights and for standing up for our allies and friends around the world. In many cases, economic opportunities would not be worth it if Canada had to sacrifice the val-

ues that we are respected for and have been respected for since Confederation.

All governments in the modern era, going back to that of the Prime Minister's father, have tried to balance the need to engage trade, do business and help develop parts of China, alongside the need to push on human rights, democratic reform, rule of law and a higher standard in global affairs, so there is a tremendous opportunity.

• (1015)

I am frustrated that in recent years the Communist Party of China seems to be stepping back from its path of engagement as a serious law-abiding world power.

Years ago, before my election to Parliament, I spoke at a business luncheon in Toronto. The law firm I was at, like many exporting companies in Canada, saw the tremendous growth potential in China, the second-largest economy, with growth rates in the double digits in recent decades. I introduced the ambassador to China at the time, who was speaking to a Toronto business audience. I used a Chinese proverb: One generation plants the trees, the next generation enjoys the shade.

The hard work going into the early development of modern China was started by Pierre Trudeau and continued through all prime ministers, and goes back to iconic Canadians like Norman Bethune and hundreds of missionaries and other Canadian citizens who engage with China. These relationships have planted the trees. We have done the hard work. We should be enjoying the shade now. That proverb ended up being the ambassador's favourite expression, because it gets to the heart of diplomacy: We do the hard work so that future generations can benefit.

Canada has been a leading partner in China's development from its being a truly developing country into the world's second-largest economy, a global power. We have been at the forefront with Dr. Bethune and have been there to help with agricultural practices. We have been there with our CANDU technology to provide greenhouse gas emission-free power through nuclear generating stations in a country that is too reliant on coal. We have been there to trade. We have seen pandas come; we have seen trade missions go. We have tremendous companies in financial services, agriculture and transportation, leading companies like Manulife, Bombardier, Agrium and others that have done billions of dollars of business with China in the last decades. We should be very thankful for that but should also be very cautious.

In recent years, particularly in light of the 19th national congress, China has been stepping back from serious engagement on the world stage. The Communist Party has been exerting its influence through all levels of Chinese life, including through state-owned enterprises and their global effort. We have seen the belt and road initiative, making countries beholden and in debt to China for infrastructure and other projects.

We have to be cautious with the turn that China has taken in the last 10 years. Rather than this generation walking in the shade of the trees that were planted in the past, we are now almost lost in the woods on how best to handle this important relationship without sacrificing Canadian values.

Why are we bringing forward this debate on our first opposition motion? It is because we have had serious concerns with the Prime Minister's ability to govern in Canada's national interest on the world stage. All Canadians now have no confidence in the Prime Minister when he goes abroad.

We used to bemoan the fact that Canada was never talked about on the world stage. Now we cannot see a late-night talk show or *Saturday Night Live* without seeing our Prime Minister being lampooned for his actions on the world stage, gaffes that hurt Canada's national interest. At the NATO meetings, the Prime Minister mocked the U.S. President, the very person we need to help us apply pressure for the release of our citizens in China.

● (1020)

This is at a time when NATO is being questioned by the President of France and the U.S. President. Canada could play its traditional role as a linchpin, as Winston Churchill described us, between Europe and North America. We are a G7 nation, we are a NATO nation, we are a NORAD nation and we are a Five Eyes nation. Canada is never the biggest, but we have those relationships that normally we could use to influence our national interest, the freedom and liberty of others and the interests of the Western alliance. That has eroded. Canada is now seen in a way that is probably best represented by the Prime Minister's state visit to India, where he put photographs, his brand and the Liberal Party's fortunes ahead of Canada's national interest.

With respect to China, our concerns have been grounded in the very earliest actions of the government. I am hoping many of the new Liberal members of Parliament listen, because their role now in caucus is to ask questions. They should be just as worried as Conservatives are when it comes to China.

Former Canadian ambassador to China, David Mulroney, has called the Prime Minister's approach to China naive, and I would agree. I will not make much of the comment he made before the election that he had admiration for the basic dictatorship. I am not sure if it was a joke or if that is just how it was received, because it was such a ridiculous answer.

However, the influence of a very pro-Beijing element in the Prime Minister's core team was evidenced right in the earliest days. The Liberal transition team in 2015 was led by the president of the Canada China Business Council. He is now sitting in the Senate at the appointment of the Prime Minister.

Business of Supply

In May of 2016, the first year of the Liberal government, the Prime Minister was revealed to have been in some cash-for-access fundraisers with major figures, oligarch-level people with close ties to the Chinese state. I remember my friend from Red Deer—Lacombe brought up the point in the House, with great delivery, that not only were the Liberal Party coffers being filled, but a \$200,000 donation was made to the Trudeau Foundation by a wealthy business person connected to the Chinese state. In fact, money was put aside for a statue of Pierre Trudeau. These were the earliest days.

In their first few months of government, the Liberals also reversed a decision that stopped the sale of a technology company to a Chinese-controlled company. In fact, late in the Harper government, the sale of ITF Technologies to O-Net Communications was blocked by the Conservative government on security grounds. There was direct energy research and development that could have been weaponized or militarized, and the sale was stopped in July 2015. Within the first few months of the Liberal government, the Liberals set aside the blocking of that transaction and a few months later approved the sale, with military-related technology, for a Chinese state enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, do you not think our Five Eyes allies noticed that? It was seen as reversing a responsible security decision by the previous Conservative government because of the new Prime Minister's desire to engage with China on a free trade agreement.

It did not end there. The next year, the Liberals approved the sale of Norsat to Hytera, another Chinese-controlled enterprise, leading to outrage from the Pentagon, which had contracts with this Canadian military communications company. In fact, a trade commissioner in the U.S., a Democrat appointed by Obama, said about the sale:

Canada's approval of the sale of Norsat to a Chinese entity raises significant national-security concerns for the United States as the company is a supplier to our military....

Canada may be willing to jeopardize its own security interests to gain favour with China.

He also said that Canada should not put the security of a close ally at risk in the process. This was the commissioner of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, a Democrat appointed by the bromance partner of the Prime Minister, President Obama.

● (1025)

This is not agitating language. These are serious concerns that were brought up to the foreign affairs committee when its members travelled to Washington. Right off the bat we saw the ability to sweep through sales, which likely should have been stopped on security grounds, to curry favour in the relationship.

Business of Supply

There are also a significant number of human rights concerns. I have raised in the House this week that millions of people over the last few months have been protesting on the streets of Hong Kong. The government has been virtually silent on that. There are 300,000 Canadians living there. Seventy-eight years ago this week, Canadians from the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles were fighting in defence of Hong Kong. We lost hundreds in the battle that ended on Christmas Day and lost hundreds more in POW camps in Japan. We therefore not only have our national interest and our citizens, but also our blood, represented in Hong Kong, and the government has been reserved in its comments.

It has also been reserved in its comments on the very disturbing internment and re-education of up to one million Uighurs. This is an area where we must be able to balance our values as a country and the need for us to speak out with the commercial interest.

Under the Prime Minister, all other issues have taken a back seat. In fact, before his state visit there in 2016, the Liberals were pre-positioning for a free trade agreement announcement. It is clear that the commercial interest has been overriding with the Prime Minister and the Liberal government regarding national security issues, the Huawei decision that has never come, our virtual silence on many significant human rights cases and the fact that our Asia-Pacific partners are very worried about the militarization of artificial islands built in the South China Sea. Seventy per cent of global trade passes through those waters. The last Pacific naval visit by one of our frigates was surveilled by China the whole time the frigate was there. China is making efforts to keep Taiwan away from bodies like the World Health Organization, an organization meant to stop contagions from spreading around the world, isolating countries like that. Canada is once again not being as forceful as it should.

Conservatives are asking for this special committee so that Canada can make progress toward having a balanced position on China after four years of no balance under the Prime Minister.

Since we are acknowledging the one-year anniversary of the detention of our citizens, in the last year alone Conservatives recommended a travel advisory. It took the government three months to implement it. Within weeks we asked for the Prime Minister to engage directly. He refused and claimed it was just a regular consular case, when it was not. By the time he and the previous minister tried to engage, they could not get their calls returned. We said there was flexibility within the Extradition Act to move Ms. Meng's trial to a faster jurisdiction. That would have shown, within the rule of law and the act, an expedited process in return for favour to our citizens. The Liberals did not act on that.

The committee called Mr. McCallum to appear in camera. I cannot talk about it, but I wish it had been televised. Members can probably understand why he is no longer the ambassador. He contradicted himself several times and had to resign. We wanted an ambassador appointed immediately and the Liberals waited until the election to appoint Mr. Barton, without consultation with opposition parties. We asked them to withdraw Canada's participation in the Asian Infrastructure Bank. We asked them to immediately bring a WTO challenge with respect to canola and other commodities unfairly impacted by trade. The Liberals waited until two days before an election, a delay of six months. Our allies are not there for us,

because of the current lack of seriousness the Prime Minister has on the world stage.

Let me leave everyone with Mr. McCallum's final comments, which illustrate why we need this committee and need to be serious with China. When he was leaving for the assignment, he said:

When China and Canada have disagreed on something, and this sometimes happens, all three prime ministers I have served have drawn on this friendship to speak respectfully but frankly to their Chinese counterparts. I know this long tradition will continue.

It did not continue. With this special committee it can continue, and we can be serious and have a balanced approach when it comes to China.

• (1030)

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Durham for the concerns he raised, which I think every member of the House has, with respect to the very sensitive, and at times trying, diplomatic relationship we have with China.

I have a very simple question for the member. Last spring, the Canada-China legislative committee, the body that looks at the parliamentary relationship between Canada and China, took a mission to China.

The Conservative Party opted to send no members from its caucus on that trip. During that mission, we were able to meet with officials from the central committee, particularly members from the foreign affairs committee. We were able to raise sensitive issues around the consular cases, as well as other issues such as trade and the arbitrary detention of Canadians. However, new-found interest in this case has now come to Parliament.

Why did the Conservative Party choose not to send members on a very important trip to make sure that its voice was heard in a good parliamentary tradition?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member for Don Valley West engages in parliamentary friendship groups and many of these very informal social engagements that many MPs can engage in, but that is not a serious diplomatic effort on behalf of Canada.

In fact I am disappointed, because at the time the member was the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs and he would have known that if he sent a few lowly functionaries or higher than that, a parliamentary friendship group, and the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were not seized with the matter, he was not showing seriousness regarding the relationship with China.

This is why last December, Conservatives and their leader asked the Prime Minister to engage personally, as Mr. McCallum said. His words were to engage personally to show how seriously Canada views the diplomatic dispute and the detention. Months later sending a parliamentary friendship-type group is not the way to show Canada how seriously we take the detention.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as it is my first time standing in the House, I just want to thank the voters of Elmwood—Transcona for sending me back to represent our community in Ottawa.

I want to make a point. When we talk about the Canada-China Legislative Association, it has a very different name from the other associations. I am familiar with this because my father actually had some bearing on the name.

There were Liberals and Conservatives at the time who wanted to call it a parliamentary association. However, by virtue of the fact that China is not a democracy, some people on this side of the House felt that it was inappropriate to call it a parliamentary association.

We have a Canada-China legislative friendship group for a very particular reason. I thought it might be nice to remind members in the House of that fact when they are speaking about it. There is an important point to that.

I know that, back in the Harper government, with some controversy Canada signed a trade deal with China, notorious for the fact that it allows a fair bit of secrecy in announcing the edicts of the adjudications under that trade deal.

Part of the member's speech had to do with the fact that we have had a lot of trade issues with China, including canola and other agricultural products. It is an agreement that does not seem to have done much for Canadian producers.

I am wondering if the member imagines that within the scope of this committee, we would look at that agreement and whether it has been a success or not for Canadian producers.

• (1035)

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Elmwood—Transcona for the clarification of the legislative group's name.

He raises a good point that this committee should be seized with FIPA, which is the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement that was signed between Canada and China. As parliamentary secretary at the time, I was involved in that. That agreement was intended to provide some certainty to exporters.

The challenge we face is that Chinese exporters into Canada can use our courts, the most fair and judicious system of justice in the world. What do our exporters rely upon in China? There is no rule of law. FIPA was meant to take some of these disputes and almost immediately have them resolved. It maybe has not functioned as well as it should have, and this is in large part because of the Chinese state stepping back from engagement, which is being called socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Business of Supply

To be an executive or on the board of state-owned enterprises, one has to be a member of the Communist Party. All of these companies, including Huawei, are extensions of the Chinese state. All of these things can be considered within this professional, all-party committee. I hope the NDP and my colleagues support this motion.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my first time standing in the House and I want to thank the people of Oshawa for re-electing me. I promise to do the best for my community here in the House again for the sixth time.

I want to thank my colleague from Durham for bringing up this important proposal. This committee would help all of Canada and all the participants in the House, so I want to thank him for putting his hand forward to the other parties. On the China file and international affairs, the current Liberal government obviously needs a lot of help.

I remember the first trade agreement the Prime Minister had an opportunity to sign, and my colleague will remember that it was the trans-Pacific partnership. Our Prime Minister was there with Mr. Obama, the most progressive president ever in the history of the United States, and this was his deal. What did our Prime Minister do to our Asian-Pacific partners and the Americans? He just did not show up to sign that deal.

There are continued blunders, whether it was the India trip or the latest faux pas at NATO. The Chinese really want to see some certainty from Canada. They want to see some respect.

I am wondering if my colleague could comment on how important it is to get that relationship back on track, and like Mr. McCallum said, to have a principled and respectful approach and can deal with them frankly.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to thank the good people of Oshawa for electing the member for Oshawa. He is a terrific member of Parliament and my neighbour, and I have a little north part of Oshawa that I am thankful elected me.

The member is absolutely right that this committee could really help Canada at this critical time in the evolution of the Canada-China relationship. We can examine all aspects, from trade to consular and others.

I was at a great debate with my friend from Scarborough—Guildwood last week, and I was shocked that he agreed the Liberal government should not have closed the office of the ambassador for religious freedoms.

I salute his ability to call out one of many mistakes on the foreign policy level that the last government made. Ambassador Bennett was one of the first Canadian officials to raise the case of the Uighurs. That voice was silenced by the Prime Minister.

Ironically, Bob Rae, who has a good op ed in *The Globe and Mail* today on this balance, is at the International Court of Justice today on the Rohingyas. Ambassador Bennett was the first to really bring attention to their situation.

Business of Supply

When human rights, religious freedoms and the rule of law in other parts of the world are at risk, sometimes that important function of a senior diplomatic-type figure can help Canada. This committee can be seized with what we should do to bring that back or expand the mandate.

● (1040)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is related to the official opposition seeking to have a special committee established when we have numerous standing committees in place, in particular the foreign affairs standing committee, which would be appropriate. A steering committee of that particular committee will also be established.

The member opposite recognizes that there are highs and lows in the relationship with Canada and China. I remember back in the early nineties when Jean Chrétien was the prime minister and the team Canada approach enhanced economic benefits for both countries by hundreds of millions of dollars. I remember Stephen Harper going to China and bringing back a couple of panda bears. There are highs and lows. I would suggest that the relationship between Canada and China is good, and that the ministers are doing a great job of protecting Canada's interests.

Why would the member not allow the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs to look into the matter as opposed to trying to cause an issue that maybe is not substantive? This is outside the issue of captivity, which is something that all members are very much concerned about.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, this is the most fundamental foreign-policy relationship Canada will face in a generation. We do not need a three-day study at a standing committee. We need a specialized multidisciplinary committee with the ability to go in camera, on a secret level, to explore not just complex consular cases but trade, defence, security, cyber, and the actions and impacts of China on human rights and the rule of law.

In this context, when there is sensitive information that could hurt a complex consular case or relate to 5G networks, for example, those committees could be held in camera, in secret, without politicizing them here. Why would the Liberals not want that degree of professionalism?

The only reason I could think the Liberals do not want this all-party approach is that they do not want scrutiny of their record. I am sorry, but our job is to hold them to account to push for better. That is why we should pass this motion to have the special committee.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to address the motion brought forward by the member for Durham. I would like to begin by first acknowledging that today marks one year since Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were arbitrarily detained in China. It must be stated that they are and will remain our absolute priority as a government and as Canadians.

Canada's relationship with China is deep and long-standing. In these difficult times, we must work together to resolve these differ-

ences, keeping in mind that the safety and security of Canadians remains our top priority.

[*Translation*]

With perseverance, care and determination, we are working to bring them back to Canada.

[*English*]

Despite the breadth of these bilateral ties, as with any diplomatic relationship ours is not without its challenges, and we are going through a particularly difficult period. Canadians, as we have heard on all sides of the House, are deeply concerned by the arbitrary detentions of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor and the arbitrary sentencing to death of Robert Schellenberg.

Canadians are also concerned by the human rights situation faced by Muslim Uighurs and other minorities in China. The recent developments in Hong Kong are of particular concern to Canadians, given the 300,000 Canadians living there. The Government of Canada continues to share these concerns and has spoken out consistently.

● (1045)

[*Translation*]

Our government will always raise issues that matter to Canadians with the Chinese government, including respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Canada remains staunchly committed to defending its principles and interests. As the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have clearly stated, all levels of government are involved in the cases of the Canadians who have been arbitrarily detained and convicted in China.

We salute Mr. Kovrig, Mr. Spavor and their families for their courage and moral fortitude under exceptionally trying circumstances. Today, December 10, marks exactly one year since Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were arbitrarily arrested by Chinese authorities. Neither man has had access to a lawyer or any contact with their families or loved ones since they were first detained.

The government has made it very clear that the detention of these two Canadians is unacceptable, that they are being arbitrarily imprisoned and that they must be released without delay. We have raised this issue with every level of the Chinese government, and we will continue to do so every chance we get until these men are freed.

Ambassador Barton, the diplomatic team in China and our government will continue to support these men and their families by providing consular services.

[*English*]

This matter is not just a concern for Canada, but a concern to all who seek to defend the rules-based international order. Arbitrary detention and sentencing Canadians absolutely betrays the principles of the rule of law.

Several countries, despite what my colleague across the way has said, have spoken out to echo concerns about China's actions, including Australia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Spain, along with the European Union and NATO.

Leaders in academia, in the private sector and across civil society have also joined the chorus. An open letter signed by diplomats and scholars from 19 countries is just one example of how the concern over China's actions extends well beyond Canada's own borders.

We will continue, along with Canada's ambassadors around the world, to speak to foreign counterparts and other stakeholders about the issue, emphasizing the troubling precedent represented by these arbitrary measures.

Indeed, Canada is not alone as citizens of many countries have been targeted.

It is important that China recognize that its actions are harming its reputation in the eyes of many other countries, not only Canada, and sending the wrong message to the international community.

We understand that the arrest in Canada of Ms. Meng Wanzhou is a matter of utmost concern for China. Ms. Meng was arrested in accordance with Canada's international legal obligations under the Canada-U.S. extradition treaty. This was not about our relationship with China nor about our relationship with the United States. This was about Canada's unwavering commitment to uphold the rule of law and fulfill our legal obligations.

Canada has over 50 bilateral extradition agreements and we uphold them all with equal vigour. As China also has dozens of active bilateral extradition agreements, this is a process that should be well understood.

For Canada, the rule of law is not optional. It is the bedrock of our Canadian democracy and a core Canadian value. Canada will not compromise nor politicize the rule of law and due process.

Canada is conducting a fair, unbiased and transparent legal proceeding with respect to Ms. Meng. Canada granted consular access to China within hours of Ms. Meng's arrest and Ms. Meng was granted bail. Ms. Meng is represented by an experienced counsel and will be given every opportunity to raise any issue that she or her counsel believes to be relevant throughout the legal proceedings.

This is timely, as today, December 10, is also Human Rights Day around the world.

Canada has consistently called on China to respect, protect and promote the freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association and freedom of religion or a belief of all Chinese citizens.

We continue to raise human rights and the rule of law issues with our Chinese counterparts at all levels.

• (1050)

[*Translation*]

The promotion and protection of human rights is fundamental to Canada's foreign policy and remains an unwavering priority for the

Business of Supply

Government of Canada. Although China's economic growth has resulted in a general improvement in the standard of living of the country's population, there has been a worrisome deterioration in respect for civil and political rights in China. Freedom of religion or belief is also threatened.

Canada is deeply concerned about the ongoing intimidation and repression of ethnic and religious minorities and other vulnerable groups in China, including Tibetan Buddhists, Uighurs and other Muslims, Christians, Falun Gong practitioners, women and girls, and members of the LGBTQ community.

Canada has expressed concerns about the shrinking space for civil society in China. The intensification of actions against human rights defenders, such as lawyers, journalists and civil society actors, is also worrisome.

[*English*]

Our government has consistently raised concerns with our Chinese counterparts about human rights in China, including the situation in Xinjiang. We have spoken publicly at the UN Human Rights Council, urging Chinese authorities to release all Uighurs arbitrarily detained in Xinjiang. This includes statements in September 2018, November 2018 and March 2019. In July 2019, Canada stood alongside 21 countries, including Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Japan and the United Kingdom, and presented a letter to the Human Rights Council expressing these concerns.

More recently, on October 29, the United Kingdom, on behalf of 23 countries, including Canada, expressed their concern regarding the arbitrary detention of Uighurs and human rights in Xinjiang, China, at the third committee of the UNGA with the committee on the elimination of racial discrimination. We will continue to raise these and other human rights concerns at every possible opportunity and to call on the Chinese government to ensure that the human rights of its citizens are fully respected.

Canada continues to monitor closely the current unrest in Hong Kong. Canada urges all sides involved in the current crisis to exercise restraint, to refrain from violence and to engage in peaceful and inclusive dialogue.

With 300,000 Canadians living in Hong Kong, Canada has a vested interest in Hong Kong's stability and prosperity. We continue to support the right of peaceful protest and Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy under the basic law and the one country, two systems framework.

[*Translation*]

Canada commends the people of Hong Kong for the peaceful election of its district council on November 24. This was an important opportunity for the people of Hong Kong to express their point of view. We hope that the election will help pave the way for dialogue and peaceful reconciliation.

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Despite the challenges we face, it is important to recognize that Canada's bilateral relationship with China has always included many different areas of valuable co-operation. In recent years, we have enhanced our framework of formal engagement mechanisms. While we regret that the Government of China has chosen to restrict collaboration, Canada continues to pursue dialogue at every level.

With the recent exchange of ambassadors in Ottawa and Beijing, we remain hopeful that formal and informal dialogues will continue. My colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, raised his expectations for continued dialogue when he met with China's foreign minister on the margins of the G20 meetings in Nagoya at the end of November.

The Government of Canada is deeply concerned by the decision of the Chinese authorities to restrict imports of Canadian canola, and we are pressing for the complete resumption of trade in bilateral discussions in the WTO.

Our pan-Canadian efforts have led to the resumption of trade in pork and beef, and we will continue to press for Canadian interests at every opportunity.

There are many clear sectors of valuable, practical engagement. Climate change and the environment require global solutions, and China will be an essential partner in this pursuit. Canada has built productive collaboration with China in this area and will continue to do so.

Health is an example of the importance of ongoing collaboration and dialogue to advance practical co-operation. Global pandemics pose significant risks. Canada and China have long-standing bilateral co-operation on health issues, including on international health.

Culture is another important area of bilateral co-operation between Canada and China. We are witnessing a growing number of independently organized exchanges by arts organizations. These exchanges help enrich both of our cultures and contribute to shared knowledge and understanding. Canada must build a stronger understanding of China.

These and other areas of bilateral engagement are a valuable reminder of the importance of ongoing dialogue with Chinese counterparts.

I would like to emphasize that Canada will continue to navigate this challenging period with China through careful and strategic engagement. Engaging with China is important to realizing and promoting Canada's interests globally. This is why it is essential that the channels of communication remain open, while ensuring that Canada communicates clearly to China our firm commitment to securing the release of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor and to uphold Canadian values and principles.

Ultimately, China must realize that asserting pressure on another country through arbitrary measures against foreign citizens sends the wrong message to the international community. It is not an effective way to resolve bilateral challenges.

We will pursue an all-of-Canada approach and continue to endorse a united front. This is not a partisan issue nor does it help Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor to play politics with this issue.

Canada will continue to stand on its principles and the rules-based international order that has sustained global peace and prosperity for decades. In our principled engagement with China, we will pursue collaboration where we can and defend our values and interests where we must.

• (1055)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister and her government will support this motion. We are in a minority Parliament and parliamentary scrutiny of the decisions the government makes and effective debate are very important. Hopefully, the government will not seek to stymie that from happening.

I have two specific questions for the minister.

As she and those watching will know, she chose her words very carefully on the issue of Hong Kong. Do she and her government support calls for meaningful universal suffrage and true democracy in Hong Kong, which is one of the key asks of the protesters?

The second question I want to ask is about the appointment of Dominic Barton as our ambassador. He is a former executive of McKinsey & Company, a company that has advised at least 22 of the 100 biggest state-owned companies in China. He was part of a corporate retreat in Kashgar, four miles from a Uighur concentration camp. He has, in his own words, drunk the Kool-Aid on China. Dominic Barton has no prior diplomatic experience.

Therefore, I wonder what the minister thinks. A signal was sent about the government's views of the Uighur Muslims' situation, its commitment to human rights and its view of state-owned companies building artificial islands in the South China Sea. One of those companies was advised by McKinsey. What signal does the appointment of Dominic Barton send about those issues?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to continuing to serve in this Parliament with the member. I know he is very passionate about human rights, which I experienced when I was the parliamentary secretary and he sat on the foreign affairs committee. Therefore, I look forward to engaging with him on this and a number of issues.

With respect to Ambassador Barton, I would like to thank Jim Nickel, our chargé, for his excellent work. I would also like to thank our diplomats in China for their hard work in complex circumstances.

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Ambassador Barton brings a wealth of knowledge about China to his role and is well placed to understand this important relationship. His experience is already having a positive impact during this challenging moment, and we look forward to that work continuing.

As I mentioned, when it comes to Hong Kong, Canada stands with the people of Hong Kong. We were pleased to see the successful and peaceful elections of November 24. We remain concerned about the situation there and continually advocate for their ability to assemble peacefully and ensure that their freedom of expression and democratic rights are respected.

● (1100)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we strike this committee. The situation with China is very serious and raises serious questions about how the Liberal government has mishandled this file from the beginning.

We know this was set off because of the arrest of Meng Wanzhou of Huawei, whose company was involved in a serious trade war with American interests, yet we stepped in and arrested her. The President of the United States said that he would intervene if he could get a better trade deal with China, while we were left holding the bag. We have Canadians in prison as a result of it. Canola exports are being threatened because of the stance we took.

What concerns me is this was not very well thought out. We did not take the necessary steps with China to meet with it diplomatically about this move. A former Liberal, who was our diplomat, made very inappropriate comments. Then he was replaced by someone who was a Liberal adviser. It seems that time and again the government puts the interests of the Liberal Party ahead of competent international diplomats with experience. It has put Canadians and our trade negotiations at risk with a country that plays a very serious role.

Why is the minister afraid of bringing this to committee so we can examine her government's failings?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to serve with my colleague in this Parliament. I know how passionate he is about human rights, not just abroad but also at home.

With respect to Canada's priorities, as I said in my speech earlier, our top priority is the safety and security of Mr. Spavor and Mr. Kovrig in China. It is crucially important that we all work together in the House to ensure they are returned to Canada safely and reunited with their families.

With respect to committees, as my colleague from Winnipeg North asked our colleague from Durham, there are several existing parliamentary committees that can raise this issue, whether it is the foreign affairs committee or whether there is something that requires a deeper dive into higher levels of clearance. In the last parliament, our government created, in collaboration with other parties in the House, an all-party committee that would deal with security and intelligence. There are avenues to deal with this. I know that my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, would be happy to discuss this with anyone in the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is about Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, who, as of today, have been detained in China for a year. What an awful situation for these two men. What has the government done in the past year to free them? There are certainly things it has not done. For most of the year, Canada had no ambassador in China. The government finally appointed one in September.

Can the minister tell us why the government waited so long? Two men were detained for a year, and the Liberal government was unable to appoint an ambassador for the better part of that year. I find that unacceptable.

What does the minister have to say for her government?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. Bloc Québécois colleague for his question.

When making appointments, it is important to appoint the very best person for each position, and I believe that Ambassador Barton is exactly that person. He has a great deal of experience on the subject of China. He knows how that country works and how to get results. That is why appointing Ambassador Barton was the right decision.

However, I also want to reassure my colleagues in the House and all Canadians by reminding them that the safety of those two men unjustly imprisoned in China is our number one priority. We have taken steps to raise their case files with Chinese authorities at all levels and with our allies around the world. I listed our allies and the international partners that have stood with us and have also raised these cases and these issues with Chinese authorities at every opportunity.

The safety and security of Canadians around the world are always a priority for us.

● (1105)

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I want to zero in on a question that I asked before. It was very specific, and I do not think the minister addressed it directly, so I will keep it to one question this time.

Does the minister and does the government support calls for universal suffrage and true democracy in Hong Kong, yes or no?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous response, Canada is very concerned about the situation in Hong Kong. We are particularly concerned about the safety and security of the 300,000 Canadians who are there. We stand with the people of Hong Kong and we call upon China at every opportunity to ensure their ability for peaceful assembly, their freedom of expression and their democratic rights.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the minister, especially when she makes reference to the collaboration Canada has been engaged with in regard to other nations around the world, which recognize what is taking place and have been exceptionally supportive of the actions we have taken to date.

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The minister made reference to the standing committees of the House of Commons, and those standing committees are able to look into all sorts of matters. When I read the motion that has been brought forward to us to vote on today, I could not help but think that there is no reason an issue of this nature could not be addressed by a standing committee. If the members of the standing committee want to make it three days or three weeks, it is up to them to do so.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, of course committees are independent and make up their own minds and decide what they will study and for how long, so it is not for me to suggest what they do, but as my hon. colleague mentions, there is the foreign affairs and international development committee and there is the special committee of parliamentarians on security and intelligence. Those seem like very robust vehicles for studying these issues. There is even the Standing Committee on International Trade, which can look into some of the issues that my colleague from Durham mentioned.

This place, this House, this Parliament has many mechanisms for parliamentarians to bring forward issues and study them and pose questions of the government in a way that allows them to go very in depth. In the best interests of Canadians, there is an opportunity there, should the committee members decide this is something they would like to pursue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, allow me to begin by making some opening remarks, since I once said my farewells in this place. Indeed, I once said my goodbyes to my colleagues in the House of Commons because life was taking me in another direction. Life took me to the National Assembly of Quebec, where I sat for 13 years before becoming the registrar of the Rimouski CEGEP. As it happens, fate brought me back here.

I am now delivering a maiden speech as a new-again member of the House of Commons. I am very pleased to be here and I want to thank the people of the riding of Montarville for placing their trust in me on October 21.

I was even more surprised to be coming back to the House of Commons, this time to represent the riding of Montarville. The member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères is an excellent member, so I would never have encroached on him. Sainte-Julie, the most populous municipality in the provincial Quebec riding of Verchères, is located in the federal riding of Montarville, where I was asked to run. It certainly seems like it was a good fit, because not only am I enjoying myself in this new riding, but also the people of Montarville seemed to think that I was a good choice.

Here I am, back in the House, greeting colleagues, congratulating everyone on their election, and telling them I look forward to working with them. As the Leader of the Bloc Québécois has already said, on October 21, Quebecers called on us to work together. I think today, with the Conservative Party's motion, is our first test of that. I will get back to that shortly.

To close out my opening remarks, I will simply say that when I said my goodbyes to the House, it was located in Centre Block. When it was closed and the House was temporarily moved to this chamber, I remember thinking that I would never have sat in this new House. Fate sometimes has some very strange twists in store for us.

In any event, I will repeat that I am very pleased to be here and to have the opportunity today to speak to this first test of collaboration being proposed by the Conservative Party. What are we being asked to do as part of this first test?

Setting aside the words, which I will come back to in a moment, what we are being asked to do is to create an ad hoc committee on Canada-China relations so that we can work together to come up with ways to improve those relations.

I have to say that this seems like a good idea. It seems like a good idea, in a minority government, to try to collaborate with all the political parties. It seems like a good idea to sit down in a parliamentary committee and try to find solutions to a real problem. No one can deny that Canada-China relations, which were excellent until recently, have deteriorated considerably over the past few years. We can speak at length about the reasons the relationship has deteriorated, but there is no denying that Canada-China relations have deteriorated.

There is a problem. Once we become aware of the problem what do we do? We can take the Liberal government's approach of late and close our eyes and leave the Canadian ambassador to China post vacant in Beijing for eight months. Yes, I said eight months.

• (1110)

That is not a good approach to finding solutions. A minority government needs the goodwill of the whole House. We have to sit down together and look for solutions. That is essentially the spirit of the motion before us.

I will address each element of the motion in turn. Once we have a good understanding of the spirit of the motion, we will have to consider the letter of the motion more thoroughly.

That, in light of the prolonged diplomatic crisis with China, the House appoint a special committee with the mandate to conduct hearings to examine and review all aspects of the Canada–China relationship including, but not limited to, consular, economic, legal, security and diplomatic relations:

So far, so good. That is basically what I just said.

(a) that the committee be composed of 12 members, of which six shall be government members, four shall be from the official opposition, one shall be from the Bloc Québécois and one from the New Democratic Party;

That is pretty much how standing committees are composed, so that is fine, too. Nobody is going to argue against that.

(b) that changes in the membership of the committee shall be effective immediately after notification by the whip has been filed with the Clerk of the House;

That is a standard practice. There are no issues so far.

(c) that membership substitutions be permitted, if required, in the manner provided for in Standing Order 114(2);

Once again, this is a standard practice. There is nothing to say about that.

(d) that the members shall be named by their respective whip by depositing with the Clerk of the House the list of their members to serve on the committee no later than January 15, 2020;

That seems logical to me.

(e) that the Clerk of the House shall convene an organization meeting of the said committee for no later than January 20, 2020;

This too seems logical. As members can see, everything is fine so far. It reminds me of the joke about a man who falls from the 20th storey of a building. As he is falling, he passes the 10th floor. When someone there asks him if he is okay, he says that he is fine so far.

(f) that the committee be chaired by a member of the government party;

I do not see what the Liberal Party would have against that. Once again, so far so good.

(g) that notwithstanding Standing Order 106(2), in addition to the Chair, there be one vice-chair from the official opposition, one vice-chair from the Bloc Québécois and one vice-chair from the New Democratic Party;

In the spirit of co-operation, I must say that this seems logical. So far, so good.

(h) that quorum of the committee be as provided for in Standing Order 118 and that the Chair be authorized to hold meetings to receive evidence and to have that evidence printed when a quorum is not present, provided that at least four members are present, including one member of the opposition and one member of the government;

Once again, that is the usual practice. So far, so good.

(i) that the committee be granted all of the powers of a standing committee, as provided in the Standing Orders, as well as the power to travel, accompanied by the necessary staff, inside and outside of Canada;

If we want to really examine the Canada-China relationship, it makes sense that we must eventually be able to travel. So far, so good.

(j) that the committee have the power to authorize video and audio broadcasting of any or all of its proceedings; and

I think that also makes sense.

I have read nearly all the points in the motion. I do not see how any of those points should pose a problem for the government. Only paragraph (k) remains.

(k) that the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Public Safety, and the Canadian ambassador to China be ordered to appear as witnesses from time to time as the committee sees fit.

I will digress for a moment to say that I assume our Chinese friends are listening carefully to today's deliberations. I suspect they are very interested in what we are saying. I have to tell them that there may be problems between Canada and China. We need to examine this more closely to come up with solutions.

● (1115)

There are also internal problems in Canadian politics. Unfortunately, parties sometimes seek to score political points. Without ascribing any motives to my Conservative colleagues, I believe that

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item (k) shows this desire to score political points because it would compel the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Canada's ambassador to China to testify. This would likely lead the Liberal Party to oppose the motion, resulting in the Conservative Party being outraged. How would that help us improve relations between China and Canada? That would not help in the least.

The Conservative Party would probably score some points with the public by saying how mean the Liberals were for rejecting such a reasonable motion. I read each item in the motion and they are all perfectly reasonable. There is absolutely no reasonable reason for refusing this motion. It just makes good sense. However, by including item (k), the Conservatives clearly want to embarrass the Liberal government. This will result in the Liberal government saying that this motion is unacceptable and that they cannot compel the Prime Minister to appear. The Conservatives will answer: "Why not?" Is it not up to the committee members to decide who will appear before them? It seems to me that they should have left it up to the committee members to decide who is on their witness list.

Why try to embarrass the government by demanding three specific witnesses, namely the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian ambassador to China? If this was an attempt to ensure that this eminently reasonable motion would not be adopted, it was not a very sensible way of going about it. If the ultimate goal is to find solutions to the problem of the strained relations between China and Canada, we need to sit down and come up with solutions.

As I said at the start, this is a test of our collaboration skills. It is primarily a test for the Liberal government, of course, but for the Conservative Party as well. If the Conservatives would agree to withdraw item (k), I do not think anyone in the House would object to adopting this motion unanimously. We have an obligation to discharge the mission given to us by Quebeckers and Canadians, and that is to make Parliament work. Again, this is our first test. I am calling on the Liberal government and the official opposition to rise to the challenge that the official opposition itself just issued. It will require maturity and a sense of responsibility.

As the House Leader of the Bloc Québécois said during a conversation we had just moments ago, we have to consider which is likely to have a more detrimental impact on Canada-China relations: the creation of a committee tasked with finding ways to improve relations between our two countries, or a statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs about how Beijing is treating the two detained Canadians in a totally arbitrary fashion?

When the government accuses the opposition of trying to add fuel to the fire with this motion, I think it should take a good look in the mirror and realize that, after cutting through the rhetoric, there is nothing unreasonable in this motion. I read it.

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• (1120)

I therefore call on the government to step up and show some maturity. It needs to give the parties in the House a chance to work together. If the official opposition truly wants to work together, it should make its motion less of a challenge for the government and remove item (k). We should work together and come up with a list of witnesses. If the list must include the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian ambassador, then so be it. The opposition should not give the government an opportunity to reject the whole thing and throw the baby out with the bathwater by demanding that item (k) be included.

In the four minutes I have left, I will talk about Canada-China relations. Canada, which always presents itself to the world as a paragon of virtue, has always stood up for human rights, up until Jean Chrétien's former Liberal government decided to focus on promoting trade. The argument was that we could use trade to get other countries to adopt our way of life. The standard of living would improve, followed by increased consumption and more respect for human rights.

Two decades later, the only conclusion we can come to on this strategy, given the tense relations between China and Canada these days, is that this may not have been the best choice. We are at quite the impasse right now. I think there were good intentions behind this policy change brought in by the Jean Chrétien Liberal government. I think there was a profound belief that trade would bring about change. Invoking human rights repeatedly was not really going to change things. It was thought that change would come through trade. The impasse we currently find ourselves in shows that may not have been the right path to follow. What path should we take? I believe in the collective wisdom of this institution to find the right path.

That is why I fundamentally believe that aside from item (k), the motion moved by the official opposition is an invitation to appeal to the collective wisdom of this institution so that we may find the right path to improve relations with China, which had always been good. We only have to look at the legacy of Henry Norman Bethune, or the legacy of the current Prime Minister's father, which led to excellent Canada-China relations until quite recently.

I urge the Liberal government to change its attitude towards the Conservative motion, and I urge the official opposition to withdraw item (k) so that we can unanimously adopt this motion and draw on the best in each and every one of us in order to improve political and trade relations with the juggernaut that is the People's Republic of China.

• (1125)

[English]

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Montarville on his re-election and return to the House.

As I listened to his very thoughtful presentation, I wondered whether or not he sees the possibility of this same work being done through the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, which is yet to be constituted. It would be able to do exactly those things as a pri-

ority, if the committee so willed to do that. We believe the committee should be the master of its own house.

Would the Bloc Québécois be open to the possibility of this sort of work being done collegially and collaboratively at the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs?

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, naturally, the answer to that question is yes.

Can the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development do that kind of thing? The answer is yes, but this should not be used as an excuse to oppose the Conservative motion. Let me explain why.

First, there is no guarantee that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, which, as my colleague noted, is yet to be constituted, will want to do that work.

Second, I believe that the Conservative Party's intention in moving this motion on the one-year anniversary of the imprisonment of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor was to highlight the importance that this Parliament places not only on the detainment of these two Canadians, whom we hope to see released as soon as possible, but also on relations between China and Canada.

I think we need to see the essence of this motion as a desire for us to work together to find solutions for improving relations between China and Canada, which were always excellent until very recently. I am hoping that the collective wisdom of the House will yield solutions.

We should not just say that we will look into this once the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development is constituted. Our collaboration skills are being put to the test today, and I urge my esteemed colleagues to rise to the challenge.

• (1130)

[English]

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the importance of committees being formed. The Liberals are ignoring one issue, which is that a committee is formed at the will of the House. The issues that deal with China cross the lines of so many committees. For example, the trade committee cannot deal with human rights and the human rights committee cannot deal with trade. That is the problem.

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The member talked about paragraph (k). In the previous Parliament, the Liberals did everything they could to make sure the Prime Minister or certain ministers or certain people did not testify before committee. We want to make sure they do testify. The member is predicting that their answers will be such that they will embarrass the Prime Minister. How the Prime Minister testifies in front of a committee is in his hands. He could come off as a rock star if he so chooses, depending on how he presents his information to the committee. However, it is very important that we have the information so that we understand what went wrong.

In light of that, how does the member see this unfolding if the committee decided not to have the Prime Minister testify? How would we get the details from the appropriate ministers and the Prime Minister?

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, I understand my colleague's concerns. They are legitimate. This is a case of being once bitten, twice shy. The official opposition has experienced the cavalier attitude and even the arrogance of a Liberal majority government that refused to have the Prime Minister appear in committee.

From a technical point of view, the composition we are talking about seems to be essentially equal. The opposition would have some clout. I understand this concern, which I think is legitimate. However, I want members to understand that I am concerned that the official opposition is giving the Liberal government an excuse to oppose the motion, which could kill an initiative that, at first glance, seems very positive to me.

Was item (k) added with the noble goal of ensuring that the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian ambassador in Beijing would appear before the committee, or was the real goal to make the government look bad?

Only the Conservatives can answer that question. However, I would hope that everyone will take up the challenge of co-operation that the Conservatives themselves issued to us today.

[English]

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I myself am a returning member after, in my case, an involuntary absence from the last Parliament.

I did enjoy the member's comments very much. The member went through the points very thoroughly. I have a concern with paragraph (k). I would invite the member to look at the last five words, "as the committee sees fit." Would that not give the committee the opportunity to decide whether to have the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister, or the Minister of Public Safety and the ambassador appear at committee? Does that not give the opportunity instead for someone to make excuses for not coming, as was pointed out? At least the individual could appear but it is in the control of the committee. As the member pointed out, there would be six government members and six opposition members. Would that not give the member some comfort?

I do share the member's concerns. If we want to work together and have to work together, I do not want a combat zone where the opposition is set up against the government. If we are going to try to find solutions, then we should set the proper tone in the commit-

tee. Do those last several words not give the member some comfort?

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague is absolutely right. That is an important safeguard. It would indeed be up to the committee to decide when to have the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian ambassador to China appear.

The fact is that item (k) requires the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian ambassador to China to appear as witnesses, but the committee members may, in their wisdom, decide that it would be better to call the Minister of Foreign Affairs than the Prime Minister, or vice versa. Why not let the committee members decide which potential witnesses they think they need to hear from?

Once again, I understand my Conservative Party colleagues' concerns. However, I worry that this element could be used as an excuse to derail an initiative that I see as extremely positive.

● (1135)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Montarville for his excellent speech. It was very interesting.

My colleague reiterated the importance of human rights. He also mentioned that it has been one year today since Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were detained in China. It is a sad anniversary. He also mentioned that the Liberal government waited eight months to appoint an ambassador to China, a key diplomatic post to facilitate the release of these two Canadians.

As my colleague has good knowledge of foreign affairs, I would like to ask his opinion and whether he recalls there ever being a time when a government waited that long during a diplomatic crisis to appoint an ambassador to a country as important as China.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Joliette for overstating my knowledge of foreign affairs. I do indeed have some knowledge of these matters, but I do not think I am unique in that regard. I do know for sure, however, that this is an unusual case. In the context of a major diplomatic crisis between two countries, there must be an interlocutor with whom to engage.

Furthermore, if I were a member of the government in Beijing watching as Canada failed to appoint an ambassador for eight months, I would think that resolving the disputes between our two countries was not all that important to Canada, whether it be the trade disputes involving canola and pork or the human rights situation, specifically the two Canadians in prison. If I were a Chinese leader, I would be wondering how this government could behave with such cavalier disregard in the middle of a diplomatic crisis.

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The Deputy Speaker: Before we continue, I would like to quickly remind hon. members to address the Speaker in the course of their presentations, comments or speeches because this allows the Speaker to let the member know how much time is left. Members must use the third person and address their comments to the Chair for the benefit of everyone in the House.

[English]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for St. John's East.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this being my first full speech in the House, I would like to thank the people of St. John's East for giving me the honour of representing them once again in the House of Commons. I had an involuntary sabbatical during the last Parliament, but I am very happy to be back again. I appreciate the honour given me by the people of St. John's East and I thank them for it.

This is a very important resolution that has been brought before the House and I want to thank the member for Durham for bringing it forward. I think there has been some discussion about the appropriateness of having a special committee in this situation. I think the member and the opposition, through their opposition day motion, have brought forth something that is of concern to many Canadians.

The incarceration of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor has continued for a full year after an arbitrary arrest. They experience very severe conditions of want and a failure to have proper advice from legal counsel or contact with their family. This is a horrendous situation that I think Canadians from coast to coast to coast are very concerned about.

Canadians are also concerned about a lot of other issues, not only in terms of our relationship with China but also about what is going on inside of China. The protests and demonstrations in Hong Kong have been front page and television news for many months now. Canadians are concerned as to what is happening to the people of Hong Kong, Canadian citizens in Hong Kong, human rights in Hong Kong and the willingness of the Government of China to follow through on its "one country, two systems" promise to the world. That is something that we want our government to be fully involved in, as has been pointed out.

We have had a significant problem, only in the last year or so, with respect to diplomatic endeavours. When Mr. McCallum was appointed to China as our ambassador, things were very different. That turned out to be a very inappropriate appointment, partly because of the inappropriateness of the things that Mr. McCallum has said. It is interesting to notice that relationships such as Canada had with China can go south so quickly, and the Liberal government was not able to manage that relationship effectively.

We have seen in the last election that the Canadian public also decided to pass judgment on the actions of the Canadian government and the Prime Minister. The public did not think it was a good idea for the Liberals to have total control over Parliament and they wanted to give them a little help. The Canadian public, in its wisdom, said that Liberals should not have a majority. They felt that there should be a better balance and an opportunity to co-operate and that the Liberals should have to listen to the other side and be

willing to work collaboratively to make Canada work best both internally and in our dealings with other countries, in this case China.

This motion would actually put into effect the kind of collaboration that Canadians wanted to see in the government in Canada. We still have a Liberal government and we still have the same Prime Minister, but we also have other voices at the table that are going to be able to have some influence.

The member for Montarville just went through details of every section of this proposed committee, including the structure of the committee and what the mandate is going to be in terms of our entire relationship with China. It is not just about the two individuals who are incarcerated, but also our trade relationship. The motion states, "all aspects of the Canada-China relationship including, but not limited to consular, economic, legal, security and diplomatic relations."

That is an opportunity for a special committee to look at that whole relationship and see if there are ways that we can improve that relationship beyond what is being done now and in different ways. There may well be things that are being overlooked. There may be other opportunities. If the Prime Minister comes, or the Minister of Foreign Affairs comes, or our ambassador comes, it may be a way for our committee, through its actions and in the proper tone, to set up a new relationship and send a signal to China about what we want and how we might achieve it in ways that we could not do in any other way.

● (1140)

I cannot prejudge what will happen in the committee. I have to say we have some concerns. In the speech from the member for Montarville, we heard hints that we do not necessarily want to see an opportunity for a political battle between the opposition and the government or see finger pointing. That is not necessarily going to help the circumstances, so we have to be careful about that. As this motion goes forward today, I look forward to hearing from other members of the Conservative Party to see how they plan to do that.

It is one thing to be critical of the government's failures over the past couple of years, in particular over the last year with this particular crisis. Those failures are certainly obvious in many cases, including the failure to appoint an ambassador in a timely fashion. There are the difficulties that we have had with trying to ensure that there are appropriate responses. The Liberals did not move quickly enough to assure the Chinese government that our actions with respect to the arrest of Ms. Meng Wanzhou were appropriate in the context of our treaty relationship with the United States. That is something that could and should have been done very quickly, and there are other criticisms that can well be pointed against the government's actions over the past year.

However, at this point in time we have to decide how we move forward in our relationship with China. Is it possible to come up with ways and means of doing this that have not yet been tried? Obviously, whatever has been tried so far has not worked, so there is an opportunity here to find ways that might work and to develop ways to go forward.

One suggestion along the way is that perhaps we can come up with a protocol that might be agreed upon in terms of consular work in dealing with individuals who are arrested in China for various reasons, a protocol as to how Canada and China would deal with these matters. We similarly have an extradition treaty with the United States, but we might want to find ways of dealing with issues as they arise in terms of how prisoners are treated, to what extent they have access to legal counsel and other aspects. Moving forward, we can hardly expect them to follow our laws in all respects, but we could have an agreement as to how matters could go forward.

We have had other suggestions come forward. I do not know whether they were testing the waters, but there were suggestions that a prisoner exchange might be a good way of dealing with this. I do not think that was a very helpful suggestion, frankly. We are not dealing with the same kind of circumstances, and the analogy to the Cold War is not a good one. We do not want to see what is going on here between Canada and China and what is happening with China and the world developing into a standoff like the Cold War, which took place for such a long period of time.

The opportunity that this motion presents is for Canada and China to reset a relationship going forward to avoid some of the negative consequences that could come about. This is a positive opportunity but one that we have to be careful and cautious in implementing. It is going to require some significant restraint on the part of the official opposition and all the opposition in dealing with this issue.

We have to recognize that diplomatic relations are just that, diplomatic, and they have to be carried out in a spirit of willingness by all members in this House who might participate in this committee, and by all parties in this House, and that must be kept in mind in the operation of such a committee. Without that spirit of collaboration, there could be a danger that the relationship could be harmed. It is a leap of faith of the members of this House, a test of the notion of collaboration and a test of the maturity of this Parliament to be able to operate such a committee in a way that meets the needs of Canada in trying to find a solution, but it is also an opportunity for constructive criticism or at least for attempting to find out what does work and what does not work.

• (1145)

It is a positive and optimistic proposal. I do not think it is naive. I think we have to be concerned about not being too naive. We are dealing with a significant country with a very powerful place in the world and a very long history.

As was pointed out by the member for Durham when introducing his motion, we do have a long history of Canadian-Chinese relationships, as has been mentioned by a couple of members. Dr. Norman Bethune was very influential within China and very well respected by China. His work has been acknowledged in Canada. In fact, in Montreal, we will find a statue of him not far from Concordia University. If members are there, they should have a look at this very fine statue. We do have that history. Hopefully, we will have an opportunity of making it a positive part of future relations with China.

Business of Supply

We have a complex relationship and significant trade relations with China. We have seen how disruption in that trade can so quickly and seriously affect Canadians, particularly, as we have seen, Canadian farmers with canola, soybeans, peas, beef and pork, which cost many millions of dollars and are still costing many millions of dollars to Canadians in the case of canola. Some of these issues have been resolved, but others are still outstanding. It is an important relationship and something we have to take very seriously.

It is a complex relationship, particularly as China has a political system that we are not satisfied with in terms of how it deals with human rights. We are not satisfied with the situation in Hong Kong. We are very sympathetic with the concerns of the demonstrators, and on their opportunity and desire to have peaceful demonstrations to seek influence on the future course of what will happen in Hong Kong. We recognize and support their efforts to have their own say in what is going on. We decry some of the tactics used by the police forces in dealing with these demonstrations.

Also, from a human rights perspective, concern for the Uighurs is extremely high in Canada. We have to find ways to put pressure in whatever way possible to seek to resolve some of these issues. We have long-standing concerns about Tibet as well.

These issues have been there for a long time and are not going to be fixed by this committee. I do not think we could have too high expectations. However, we can try to find a way to ensure that Canada is doing everything it can in this relationship to seek the release of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor as soon as possible. Dealing with this issue on the anniversary of their incarceration is paramount in my mind and, I think, in the minds of many Canadians, and certainly the families of these two individuals. All Canadians see this as something that needs to be resolved. One of these individuals is a Canadian diplomat who is on leave from the foreign service. He was working with the International Crisis Group, which is an important international agency. It is highly problematic that he or any Canadian should be subject to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment such as has happened.

I will conclude my remarks by saying that we will support this opposition motion with the cautions that have been laid down by me in my remarks here today.

• (1150)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too will take advantage of this time to thank the people of Scarborough—Guildwood for electing me this eighth time. I continue to be honoured by their respect shown.

I will also take this opportunity to welcome my friend back. We enjoyed some interesting times on the defence committee together when he was previously here.

Setting aside for a moment the gratuitous, and in my judgment, unnecessary commentary on the part of the member for Durham and the overreach in the motion, it does speak to a central issue of this Parliament and many future parliaments going forward, which is the relationship between Canada and China.

Business of Supply

In my judgment, China is the colonial power of the 21st century. It is saying to the world, and particularly to Canadians, not to involve themselves in the Uighur situation or the Tibetan situation, as they are internal matters. It is saying that the Hong Kong situation is an internal matter, that the Taiwanese situation is an internal matter, that the Falun Gong situation is an internal matter, and the Christians, that is an internal matter. The list goes on and on.

Currently, we are dealing with the most difficult situation with respect to Huawei. Four out of the Five Eyes countries are saying that they will not allow Huawei into their countries. These are issues that need to be faced not only by government but also by Parliament.

Would the hon. member agree that while this may not be a cold war, it is in some respects an asymmetric war with a front on intellectual property, academics, trade, human rights and pretty well the entire panoply of relational elements between one nation and another as China asserts its colonial status?

• (1155)

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Scarborough—Guildwood for his kind remarks and welcoming me back. We worked well together and had some good differences but also many agreements on the defence committee. It is good to be able to engage here on the floor of Parliament with the hon. member.

The member raises a good point. This is obviously a philosophical point, and I do not know if we are able to resolve that today, but we know that China is anxious to participate in the world. He has described it as colonialism. As a label, that may not help very much to deal with what is going on. However, if China seeks to engage with the world, it also has to show that it understands the world and can be influenced by the world. Progress happens, sometimes slowly, but obviously when one wants to engage with someone, one cannot always dictate the terms of engagement.

China has to be influenced by the countries it is dealing with. Its citizens who work and live in Canada and all around the world are listening and learning as well. In Hong Kong, we see a good example of how that engagement takes on a different point of view. Where it goes and how fast it goes is a matter of hard work being done and engagement. However, if China wants to engage with the world, it is also going to have to understand as time goes on that it is a two-way street and things will have to change at some point in time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for St. John's East on his speech and his re-election.

At this time, China looms large in foreign policy around the world. China is asserting itself as an economic power.

Does my colleague not think that the diplomatic solution to China should rely more on a multilateral solution rather than the current bilateral one? In the last Parliament, we saw that Canada is retreating from multilateralism and seems to be taking the U.S. approach of relying on bilateralism.

Should the solution not involve more multilateralism?

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. We are talking here about the Canada-China relationship, but it is obviously in the context of how we solve it.

One of the solutions, I believe, is a greater engagement in multilateralism. The Minister of International Development spoke in detail about some of the work with other countries on this file. I think that is an important step along the way. Also, we see what is happening with the instability of the relationship from time to time between Canada and the United States, such as some difficulties in NATO and not being sure of where the United States exactly stands on issues. I think it is time that Canada, in some respects, acted more independently internationally through multilateral development and working with other countries. Canada could be a stronger force in the world's circumstances through multilateral efforts.

The member is absolutely right and I look forward to hearing more about that at our committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is a dean of the chamber with a great deal of experience. I have always had a great deal of respect for the fine work that standing committees have done over the years, even when I sat in opposition. There are a lot of incredible contributions from all sides of the House.

Given that we have these standing committees, looking forward to the next six months or years ahead, does the member believe that anything has been lost at all in regard to not providing standing committees the opportunity at least to debate this issue or have that discussion? I am thinking of future standing committee meetings. Should the House be providing more direction? Does he have any thoughts on that issue?

• (1200)

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, certainly, I am happy that we have very useful standing committees on a number of matters, many of which touch on the Canada-China relationship. Unfortunately, when we are dealing with something as substantial as this that is so prominent right now, the best way to deal with it, I believe, is a special committee.

I have had lots of experience on standing committees, whether it be the justice committee, public safety committee or defence committee. A standing committee could do a study, but there are a lot of other things that are going on at the same time in defence, foreign affairs, and other departments.

To focus on this particular issue, I think, requires a special committee with a particular focus on a problem that we are faced with to come up with some way forward that involves the collaboration of all members. I think a special committee is a good fit for this particular type of issue and the prominence that it has right now.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his very thoughtful comments and his answer to my hon. Liberal colleague's question around why a special committee is needed.

I wonder if my colleague could also comment on what he thinks the ramifications would be if this challenge, this strained relationship, is not resolved.

I am from Manitoba, and we have a lot of canola producers. I know there is an impact on our producers and a greater impact around, actually, human lives abroad. I wonder what my colleague thinks the impact would be if the status quo continues where there appears to not be a plan, where there appears to not be a resolution in sight. What could the impact be on the people of Canada?

Mr. Jack Harris: Madam Speaker, clearly, the relationship would deteriorate. We have seen in the past year or so how quick and easy it is for China, in this case, to take actions that hurt people. We have to move on this and we should move quickly.

This gives me an opportunity to repeat what I said earlier. Perhaps there should be some time limit on this proposed committee to present a report. I do not think an open-ended committee for the life of the Parliament is what is desirable. I think we should come up with a time frame in which this committee should report as well.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the member for Prince Albert.

As this is my first time rising in the 43rd Parliament, I want to begin by thanking the people of Portage—Lisgar. I am grateful and humbled by the support and trust they have placed in me. This is the fourth time I have been elected by the riding of Portage—Lisgar and I am more appreciative than ever.

A huge thanks also to so many friends, volunteers and people who helped out during the campaign and supported me. I have a special thanks to my partner Michael. This is the first election campaign he jumped into, and he jumped in with both feet. I appreciate so much the love and support of family, friends and my constituents of Portage—Lisgar.

I know the people of Portage—Lisgar elected me to come here once again to not only be a strong voice, but a direct voice, to say things that have to be said and do things that have to be done. I know all of us in this place take that responsibility very seriously.

The motion we brought forward as an opposition party reflects that. We could have brought forward a number of issues today. There are still many outstanding issues from the last Parliament to do with ethics, accountability, the government and the rule of law. There are questions around higher taxes for Canadians and a real plan to combat greenhouse gas emissions. There are all kinds of issues that could have been addressed today in our opposition day motion, but we chose this for a number of reasons.

I am so happy we brought this forward. This is a very difficult issue, one surrounding our relationship with the Government of China. However, it is an issue that requires all of us to come together to find a solution. That is the spirit in which this motion is brought forward.

Business of Supply

The motion would establish a special standing committee that would examine this specific issue. It would not wade into other issues but would only look at our deteriorating relationship with China and how to resolve it. I know there have been some questions from the Liberal side on why we do not let the foreign affairs committee do this.

The Liberals, especially, have said time and again that we should not direct committees on what they should or should not study. For the Liberals to now suggest that we would assume the foreign affairs committee would take it over is a bit of a contradiction in their own approach to committees. It is for that reason the Conservatives would not just expect that the foreign affairs committee would look at this situation.

This is not a challenge that can be solved in just five or six meetings. This issue is multipronged. It affects foreign affairs, trade and the rule of law. There are public safety issues around Huawei, for example. It is a multi-faceted challenge that requires a committee dedicated solely to helping find a solution. When we as parliamentarians come together, though we are in a minority Parliament, we can find a solution to this problem.

I will go over a couple of things.

Why do we need a solution and why do we need it now? It is obvious that this strained and broken relationship with the Government of China is having real, meaningful and very serious effects on Canadians, not only Canadian groups like our canola, pork and beef producers, which, in turn, affect jobs, families and certainty around all of these industries, but today especially, this is having a real impact on lives. The lives of individual Canadians are at risk. This certainly is an issue with which we should all be seized.

It is important to say that our reputation on the world stage is also being impacted by this. I think most of our partners know that the Government of China is not an easy government to deal with and that it is complex. How we deal with what China is doing to Canadians is being watched. We have to recognize that the impact is not only on individual Canadians, but also on us as a nation, and it needs to be addressed.

How did we get here? I believe, in part, there has been incompetence and some bad decisions by the current government and it is important that we recognize it. We cannot go back and undo all of the wrongs, but if we do not recognize some of the wrongs that have been done and the poor decisions that were made, we cannot move ahead.

Business of Supply

● (1205)

Certainly, we have to discuss the complexity of having a relationship with a government like the government in Beijing, China. It is very complex. This is a regime that does not respect the rule of law. It does not respect democracy in many ways, which we are seeing in Hong Kong. It does not respect the very people who it is governing. I think we all recognize it is not an easy government with which to deal. This problem has been created because of some mistakes and it is also there because of the complexity of dealing with the Government of China.

I want to break that down very quickly.

A lot of the problems started before the Prime Minister became the prime minister, when he stated that he had an admiration for the basic dictatorship of China. I do not know if any of us, to this day, can understand why he would think that, but even more so why he would say that. That really begs a lot of questions, and I hope since then he has changed his mind. I hope he can now recognize that a dictatorship and the way that China operates are not to be admired at all. It is something to be recognized for what it is.

That was not a good start. He then became Prime Minister and in 2015 and well into 2016 and maybe even 2017, we saw the government basically courting the Government of China and many of the businesses that were part of that regime and trying to be courted by them, kowtowing to that regime. It was very hard to watch. A number of experts saw it.

I want to quote David Mulroney, former ambassador to China. In December 2018, he said, “I think the Liberals tended to be naive and have been naive. That precedes the current prime minister, but when the prime minister certainly in some of his statements said that it was the administration he most admired, it showed naivety.”

In a February 2019 column, Terry Glavin stated:

From the outset of his emergence on the national scene, [the] Prime Minister...has happily accepted the warm embrace of Canada's China business lobby, and his enthusiasms have not gone unrequited. From his appointment of Peter Harder of the Canada China Business Council to lead his transition team — Harder is now... [the Prime Minister]'s point man in the senate — to his private cash-for-access fundraisers with Chinese billionaires, [the Prime Minister] had been Beijing's hands-down favourite among G7 leaders.

Make no mistake that being a favourite of Beijing's G7 leaders is not a positive; it is a negative. He was seen as the little potato by the Chinese regime.

We saw that mistake really set the tone for our relationship. Subsequent to that, we saw issues where we, as Canadians and as a Canadian government, obeyed the rule of law. We arrested, under an extradition warrant, a certain Chinese executive. We then saw the retaliation of the Chinese government when it took two Canadians hostage. The relationship from there has gone downhill. We saw our former ambassador, John McCallum, mishandle, misfire and misspeak, which again showed great misjudgement.

In an interview in *The Globe and Mail*, Guy Saint-Jacques, a former ambassador, said, “apart from seeking support from allies...I am not clear on what is the strategy being pursued by the Canadian government. It may be useful if there was better communication.”

It would be useful if there were a strategy. If there is one, we have not seen it. The proposed committee will provide the opportunity for the government to get not only ideas, but input and buy-in from Parliament and show the Chinese government that we are united and that we will stand up for Canadians and Canada. We are not naive; we are sophisticated, strong and we have the ability to find a solution.

We ask all parties to support the motion and find a way forward to solve this ongoing crisis.

● (1210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not agree with the narrative of the member across the way in regard to Canada's relationship with China. China does have and should have a healthy relationship with Canada, as it has with many other countries around the world.

Canada has also spent a great deal of time in developing relationships with other countries. This is one of the reasons why under this administration we are seeing more trade agreements with other countries than any other government in Canada's history with respect to formal agreements being signed. Whether it is with countries in Europe or with the United States, we are moving forward from a global perspective. I understand and I appreciate the concerns the Conservatives are raising today.

Does the member feel in any way that we are undermining the potential of our standing committees, especially when we have a minority situation? I suspect that the standing committee could very easily cover the areas that have been pointed out. I am looking specifically at the foreign affairs committee. If the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs was constituted, to what degree would the motion be necessary? We could empower a standing committee in which the opposition has a majority.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members to keep their questions brief enough because other people want to ask questions.

The official opposition House leader.

● (1215)

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, the member may have missed my point. It is a bit of a contradiction that the government has said that it does not instruct committees on what to do and now the government suggests that it would tell the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs to cover this. I do not think that is the solution. This is a multipronged challenge that requires a committee that can look at all facets of it, whether it is the foreign affairs side of things, trade or human rights.

However, the member's previous comments are what concern me the most. Is he somehow suggesting that this really is not a problem and we do not have to worry about it? If so, he is very much mistaken. Is it his approach that we should just wash our hands with our relationship with China and start to establish other relationships with other countries, including South Asian countries? It is certainly a valid point that should be discussed in this context and could be part of what we discuss. However, right now we have a problem with our relationship with China that is affecting Canadians. The government needs to recognize that, not underplay it. It needs to recognize that we need a solution.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague and to the Liberal response. There are a couple of issues that are very important here. Our relationship with China right now has been very compromised. We are dealing with a geopolitical situation in the world where we have an American ally with Mr. Trump, who sometimes makes some very problematic decisions that affect Canada. We also have a very aggressive Chinese policy in many parts of the world and we have not taken this issue seriously.

We have Canadians on trial. We have affected canola. We have an issue here where we can come together and establish a special committee, not try and tell a standing committee, which is not the right of Parliament, so we can apprise and look at this issue and find solutions. We can look at the threats being posed, as well as how we start to manoeuvre in the geopolitical world we live in, which is a very different world from what it was 10 years ago.

How does my hon. colleague think this committee could move forward on addressing these issues?

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with my colleague's comments. Not only is this situation changing literally day by day and week by week, but we have to look at what our approach has been in the past decade or number of decades.

That is something the committee could look at, but it begins with the government recognizing what my hon. colleague just pointed out, that this is an issue with which we have to deal. It is not just a little disagreement we have with a country that maybe is having a small impact.

I am concerned that if the government does not recognize this problem, or if it is trying to protect its pride or is more worried about saving face as opposed to actually addressing this problem, then it will continue and there will be a greater impact.

I very much agree with my colleague. This committee would be established for the sole purpose of finding solutions to the deteriorating relationship. No other committee would have that ability or be able to direct itself in that way.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Madam Speaker, I welcome you to the Chair. It is great to give my first speech in the House in front of you.

I also want to take the opportunity at this time to thank the people in the riding of Prince Albert in Saskatchewan for electing me to represent them here in this great chamber.

Business of Supply

My riding is a very special riding. It has had three prime ministers. Of course, one of the most famous is John Diefenbaker. What did he do to make himself so famous? He did many things, such as appoint the first female cabinet minister, establish the Bill of Rights and allow the first aboriginal vote. This was done by John Diefenbaker, a Conservative. He was the first global leader to criticize apartheid in South Africa. As he was balancing these issues, he was able to balance them with the needs of doing trade with China.

In 1961, China was experiencing massive starvation. It was having huge economic issues. John Diefenbaker, through the Canadian Wheat Board, offered China 40 million bushels of wheat for sale. Through compassion, he stepped up and gave it to China on credit, of all things. He was criticized. Our neighbours to the south were upset with him when he did that.

However, he knew it was important to find a way to balance what was required in China with human rights and other issues that were important to Canadians. I think that is what Canadians expect of any government moving forward.

We had a really good relationship with China up until about 2017. In fact, in 2015, when Canadians went to the polls, they never expected the Chinese relationship to be a problem with the current Prime Minister. They assumed it would keep growing. Yes, we had issues with respect to human rights and security. Yes, we had issues, but we had mature conversations with China to deal with them and find solutions to them together. However, in 2017, this all changed.

I am going to talk to this from a trade perspective and how important this market is to Canada. However, we cannot look at this issue from just a trade perspective. When we look at what China means to us, what it means to Canada and Saskatchewan, it is huge. It is 4.3% of our total exports. Of course, the U.S. is number one, with 75%.

China is our second-largest trading partner for merchandise and our fifth-largest for services. We trade approximately \$100 billion a year, and that is growing. It has a population of 1.4 billion people, which is growing. It has a GDP of \$23.3 trillion. It is huge. It is a massive marketplace for people from around the world to sell into and participate in.

Canada has sold \$2.6 billion of canola. Of that crop, 40% went to China. That crop does not have a home today. We have not seen solutions presented from the current government on what to do with that or to compensate the farmers who grow canola. About 2.4 billion dollars' worth of wood pulp comes out of Canada.

Those are just some examples of the things we sell into the Chinese marketplace that make it so important to us. These are things that we want to make sure we continue to move forward with, because these are the things that it requires and that we have an abundance of.

On December 1, 2018, the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, and I apologize to her if I have pronounced her name wrong, the chief financial officer at Huawei, caused a problem. I get that.

Business of Supply

However, the answer to that problem was that the legal and political systems are separate in Canada. China respected that answer until the Prime Minister decided he was going to interfere in the legal system in Canada with SNC-Lavalin, and that is what he did. That is when we saw the problems happen.

In April 2019, there was a ban on canola seed by the Chinese. In May there was a ban on Canadian pork, of which 20% went to China. In June there was a ban on Canadian beef and veal. Canada was banned from its fifth-largest market. At that time, we had no ambassador. There was no game plan or repercussion for what was happening.

We have to ask why this happened. What went on in the background that took our country from being one that had a respected relationship with China to a situation where it will not even talk to us or acknowledge that we need an ambassador? What happened? We need to have a committee go through and research that.

• (1220)

Thankfully, in November 2019, the ban on meat was lifted. I was glad to hear that because our Canadian farmers needed that piece of good news. Hopefully, that is something we can build on. Maybe that is something the committee could analyze to find out what we did that allowed us to resume trading our meat to China.

It is really tough to pigeonhole this issue into one of our existing committees, because issues outside of trade impact trade. Human rights issues impact trade, and security issues impact trade.

One good thing about trade, and I still believe this to be true with respect to all of the countries around the world that we trade with, when we trade with countries such as China or Saudi Arabia, when we have concerns about human rights or women's rights, would we not be better off having a conversation with those countries?

Would we not be better off to challenge them to do better and encourage them to do better? Would it not be better to reach out to those countries and show them a better way to have a better society? When they do not talk to us, what influence do we have? We have zero influence and zero impact on the ability to move the yardsticks in a positive fashion.

The importance of trade to Canada is huge. When we look at our role in the world, our influence around the world, trade is one of the tools that we have in our tool box that we could utilize effectively. If we do not have those markets, if those countries will not talk to us because of something our Prime Minister has done, or because of bad policy or bad judgment shown in foreign affairs, the developers of the products we sell around the world are hurt.

No dollars will come out of the Prime Minister's back pocket. For example, a Canadian farmer grows 1,000 acres of canola. The market drops to about \$1.50 a bushel. That farmer grows roughly 50 bushels in an acre, which is roughly \$60 to \$70 an acre. That farmer has lost \$70,000 out of his back pocket because of the actions of our Prime Minister.

That is important. That means a lot. That is a huge dent in that farmer's livelihood. Then we throw a carbon tax on top of him. Let us not talk about that and what it will do to the drying cost and everything else, which the Liberals seem to ignore. I will not digress

because that is a different topic for debate. This shows why people in western Canada are so mad. They are the ones who are always paying for the Liberal government's mistakes.

Then there is Huawei. One of the things that does not get talked about, with respect to the Chinese government, is that it massively invested in western Canada, in the resource sector. When the Chinese government found out that it could not get pipelines and resources to market, its investment was stranded. How did we expect the Chinese to react? They need our resources.

We want to make sure that we give our oil and natural gas resources to the Chinese, because every time we ship our natural gas to that country it is one less coal-fired generating plant there. That helps our north. That helps us directly. That helps climate change in a global fashion. That is important. Again, when the country does not talk to us and will not trade with us, what have we done? We have lost all of those opportunities.

It is important that the committee comes together because people do not trust the Prime Minister to lead the discussion with China. They trust this Parliament to do it. The Prime Minister needs the committee to give him the appropriate advice to move forward to rebuild that relationship. Members of the House can work together and co-operate so Canada can benefit as a whole.

I look forward to the committee coming together. I look forward to working with all sides of the House in a positive and constructive manner. I look forward to analyzing what went wrong, but not only that, I am looking forward to solutions. The people of Canada need solutions. The Conservative Party has some solutions and we are more than happy to share them for the benefit of all Canadians.

• (1225)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, both the member opposite and I were sitting here when the Bloc representative was addressing the House. That Bloc member raised the issue of why the Conservatives brought forward part (k), which mandates that there be three individuals appearing before the special committee, and suggested that the committee should be allowed to make that determination and that it would be a better motion if part (k) was deleted.

I am wondering if the Conservative Party would be open to an amendment of that nature, thereby reinforcing the importance of committees, whether it is a special committee or a standing committee, to be able to determine whoever it would like to appear as witnesses.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, I will remind the member that the Liberals do not have a majority government. They do not have that mandate. We have seen tricks and games played by the Liberals in the past where they have prevented people from coming to committee. That is why the committee of the whole has to do it. That is why the will of this House of Commons has to be in the motion.

Why are you assuming that the Prime Minister is going to embarrass you?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member to address the questions and comments to the Chair.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, why are the Liberals assuming the Prime Minister is going to embarrass them in giving testimony? What does that mean? Do they not have confidence in him either? Now they have just joined the rest of the people in Saskatchewan and Alberta and right across this great country, because we do not have confidence in him either.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague about item (k) in the motion.

My colleague from Montarville said in his speech that this Conservative motion was the first test of the parties' willingness to work together. He went through the motion clause by clause, pointing out that it all made sense. He did note that item (k) could ruffle some Liberal feathers. He also said that the committee essentially has the power to summon anyone it wants, as set out in item (k).

I will repeat my colleague opposite's question. Would the Conservative Party consider removing item (k) from the motion to eliminate any potential sticking points?

• (1230)

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party would give reasonable consideration to all types of proposals brought forward.

I do have to commend the member for Montarville. He gave an excellent speech where he talked about the actual motion and went through it line by line. He explained to everybody in the House why it was such a good motion and why we should proceed with it.

We look forward to your support on this as we move forward, and we look forward to working constructively with you for the benefit of all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member for Prince Albert one more time that he is to address the questions and comments to the Chair.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague talked a lot about resources and the importance of resources. One thing that has not been brought up yet is that in the House a couple of years ago, we expressed concerns for the government when it was moving forward with a very murky insurance company called the Anbang Insurance Group and the sale of our residential care facilities to China.

Members might be aware that it turns out that three on the island have now had to be taken back over by the officials on the island due to the care that was given.

They need to move slowly in terms of the decisions around foreign investment, and this is another good example. I would like comments from my colleague.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Madam Speaker, that is just another example of why we need this special committee. When we see purchases

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made by state trading enterprises out of China, we need to have appropriate review of them. It is obvious we cannot trust the current government to do that review because of some of the assets it has sold and some of the security concerns we have had with them.

Moving forward, this is a good example. When we see a proposal brought forward to Canada saying we want to take over this type of entity, we could actually do a proper vetting and maybe set up some policies around certain things that we would be willing to allow having Chinese investment in and certain things we would not consider to be allowable for a Chinese state trading enterprise to invest in.

Again, that would be the will of the committee. The member could use the committee to bring forward these types of issues and then find a way forward to find appropriate policies to deal with them.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a great privilege again to represent the people of Don Valley West, and I want to thank them for their confidence in me. I will be splitting my time with the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

This is an important motion and an important discussion we are having as a House of Commons, as members of Parliament. The diplomatic relationship we have with China is complex, important and sensitive. I am actually very pleased that the member for Durham has raised this motion today, to give us an opportunity to have this discussion as members of the House.

Let me assure all members in the House that on the government side we are listening to all the arguments being made by members with respect to this motion. We are listening carefully to every concern raised. As those concerns are raised, I would hope that there is agreement in this House that the relationship with China is important; our trading, cultural and people-to-people relationships, as well as every consular issue, are of great importance to people in this House.

As we are doing that, let me say very clearly that if the intent of this motion is to have a robust discussion and get to the core of these ideas, it is absolutely an appropriate idea. What we are wondering about on this side of the House is where that discussion is best held. Is it best held in a standing committee, or several standing committees, or is it best held in a special committee? We are listening to the arguments carefully to understand the best place for this discussion to be held.

Underneath all of these issues, whether they are about trade or security, all of us need to hold up the state of Canadians held arbitrarily in detention in China, especially after one year. As the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have said very clearly, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor are and will remain our absolute priority. Also, in the case of Robert Schellenberg, it is of extreme concern that China has arbitrarily applied the death penalty.

Formerly, as parliamentary secretary, I had the opportunity to travel to China and to raise these cases with officials in China, as well as to observe the quiet but very effective diplomacy of our diplomatic corps in Beijing. I want to commend each and every one of those people, who have provided leadership and thoughtful understanding of the intricacies of this consular dilemma.

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Consular cases are the most sensitive files that a government can be faced with. Families, friends and communities are at the heart of everyone. To take this responsibility is to take it seriously and importantly. There is nothing more important to us as a government than the safety and security of Canadians at home and abroad.

Each consular case involves a person, a Canadian, and is unique. Our consular officials are trained experts who know how to approach each case in each country differently and uniquely.

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

A year ago today on December 10, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were arbitrarily imprisoned in China.

On November 23, his third day in office, the Minister of Foreign Affairs raised these cases directly with his Chinese counterpart at the G20. On the sidelines of the G20 meeting, a bilateral meeting that lasted almost an hour was also held with China's foreign affairs minister, Wang Yi. Our minister took that opportunity to express Canada's serious concerns about the cases of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor.

The minister reiterated that these cases were his top priority as Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs. More specifically, he expressed his concern, and that of all Canadians, regarding these men's detention conditions. He clearly stated that the detention of these two Canadians was unacceptable, that they had been imprisoned arbitrarily and that they should be freed immediately.

I am asking members of the House to take the time today to think about what these two men and their families are going through. We all need to continue to support Michael Kovrig, Michael Spavor and their families.

The government will continue to work tirelessly until these men are once again free.

[*English*]

Canada opposes the use of the death penalty in all cases. Therefore, we will continue to advocate for Robert Schellenberg at the same time. Aligned with this principle, our government seeks clemency for all Canadians facing the death penalty anywhere and everywhere in the world. These are difficult situations, especially for the individuals involved and for their families. Our government and consular officials continue to provide consular services to them and their families.

I take exception to Conservative members of Parliament who somehow suggest that we are not doing absolutely everything in our power. With great expertise, with officials, with diplomatic relations, and with our minister and Prime Minister, we take every opportunity possible to raise these cases as well as the ongoing diplomatic issues that are important to every member of this House. Our efforts also include active engagement with the international community.

It is clear that, just as these Canadians are not alone, Canada is not alone. Canada is grateful to our many allies who have spoken out in support of us, such as Australia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the U.S., The Netherlands, Latvia,

Lithuania, Estonia, Spain, the European Union, NATO, and respected members of civil society and scholars. All have echoed these statements loudly and clearly regarding China's action and are in support of Canada. They, too, have called for the release of Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor and for an impartial due process for Mr. Schellenberg.

Canada and this government will continue to raise our deep concerns, emphasizing the worrying precedent that China's arbitrary actions have set. It is a precedent that will undoubtedly be of concern to any country, business, organization or person seeking to deepen ties with China. Ultimately, China must realize that expressing displeasure with another country through the arbitrary detention of its citizens and the arbitrary imposition of the death sentence sends the wrong message to everyone in the international community.

The Canadian government has raised specific cases, as well as our opposition to the use of the death penalty, directly with the Chinese government. We will never waver in these ongoing efforts. Neither will we ever waver in our ongoing stand for human rights, democratic institutions and the rule of law, absolutely standing firm on those issues while maintaining an important relationship with a country, China in this case. We will continue to undertake calculated, strategic engagement with China and express our extreme concerns on these cases.

With respect to where this discussion should happen, I would argue, having been a chair of a standing committee, that those are the places where we should most appropriately deal with this. We should allow the committees to do their work. The House may direct a committee on certain work, which has been done several times, but we need to manage our resources well. We need to also allow our standing committees to be masters of their own houses. We will continue to do that as a government. We have shown our respect for committees and we will continue to do that.

We will continue to listen today. We will promise to always collaborate. We are looking forward to constructive suggestions on how to improve every diplomatic relationship. We will count on the opposition to hold Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor in their minds and hearts this day and every day to ensure that their safety trumps anything about politics or personal advantage.

• (1240)

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the citizens of Flamborough—Glanbrook for returning me back to the House. With my first question, I did not have the time to thank them, but I want to thank them sincerely and appropriately.

Also, if we are able, we should get this video feed to Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor so that they can rest assured that much of this debate is happening because of our grave concern for their safety. We will continue to have these debates because their safety, the safety of other Canadians and, frankly, the human rights of the citizens of China are that important.

My colleague said that the issue is complex, important and sensitive, that the Liberal Party is listening, and government members are doing everything they can. Therefore, if that is the case on all those points, I would sincerely ask the member if a special committee would not do everything it could with 338 minds here to be able to feed into that committee. Would the Liberals not have the option, if they wanted, to swear members of that committee to secrecy or even, if the Prime Minister wanted, to swear them into the Privy Council? There are a lot of options to be able to hear from a special committee on this issue, to help us with our relationship with China.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member on his re-election. I have stated very clearly that I appreciate greatly his commitment to human rights, fairness and the rule of law and all the words he has offered in this House.

To his question, standing committees are the place where these subjects would best be discussed. To divert resources to a special committee would be less than optimal. However, I can see the advantages of it as well. I understand that there are times when a special committee is necessary. I co-chaired the special committee that was set up to discuss medical assistance in dying, because it crossed a variety of subject areas. It was an important discussion, but it was time limited, it was directed and it was important to get the work done quickly.

This issue is ongoing and will continue—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, I have to allow for other questions.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will begin with a comment for my colleague.

His argument about potentially having standing committees study this type of problem is hardly convincing, since the diplomatic crisis with China is nothing new. It has been a problem for some time. The member himself pointed out that two Canadians have been arbitrarily held in detention in China for one year. When the Liberal Party had a majority in the House, why did it not use standing committees to study this issue?

In my mind, the official opposition's motion is the first test of whether all members and parties can work together. I humbly suggest that my colleague try this committee so that we can work together.

• (1245)

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs did consider the relationship with China quite considerably. It called the ambassador in and had in camera meetings about the situation. Members discussed consular affairs, I understand. I was not at the meeting, but a variety of issues came up because they were important for the committee.

We still need to allow Parliament to work. We will take direction, obviously, from this Parliament, we will be respectful of what Par-

liament says and Parliament will decide what every committee should be doing.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as this is my first chance to speak in the House in the 43rd Parliament, I would like to thank the constituents of Ottawa West—Nepean for giving me the privilege of representing them in this House.

I want to thank my colleagues across the aisle for bringing such an incredibly important issue to the attention of this House and giving all of us the opportunity to share our concern about what is happening to our citizens under arbitrary detention in China. That is what I will speak about today.

[*Translation*]

The Government of Canada shares the distress felt by many Canadians with respect to the arbitrary measures taken against Canadian citizens in China. As the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs clearly stated, all government sectors are affected by the cases of Michael Kovrig, Michael Spavor and Robert Schellenberg.

One year ago today, December 10, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were arbitrarily arrested by the Chinese authorities. We will continue to insist that these arbitrary detentions are unacceptable. We will continue to call on the Chinese government to immediately release Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor. We will do so at every opportunity until these men are released.

[*English*]

As we acknowledge this one-year anniversary, I ask members to take time today to reflect on what these individuals and their families are going through. We must all continue to stand with Michael Kovrig, Michael Spavor and their families.

What is helpful to these Canadians is a united front in defending their interests. I am happy to see that today in the House we are demonstrating exactly that. We have seen support from international partners, allies, civil society, diplomats and Canadians across our country, who echo our call for their release. Working together is in the best interest of these Canadians.

We also remain seized with the troubling case of Robert Schellenberg. We oppose the arbitrary decision to issue a death penalty and continue to call on China to grant clemency to Mr. Schellenberg.

While Canadians are especially troubled by China's actions, it is important to recognize that this is not just a Canadian problem. Many others around the world share our deep concern about China's arbitrary measures against foreign citizens. We ask China to recognize that its actions are harming its global reputation, which is not in China's best interest.

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[Translation]

The concerns expressed by China have been echoed by many other countries, including Australia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Spain, as well as the European Union and the Secretary General of NATO.

U.S. President Donald Trump, Vice-President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have all openly expressed concerns. Mr. Trump personally raised the issue with the Chinese president. Secretary of State Pompeo announced that the United States was standing with Canada in the face of China's arbitrary and unacceptable detention of Canadian citizens.

The U.S. Congress also passed two resolutions, one in the Senate and the other in the U.S. House of Representatives, commending the Government of Canada for upholding the rule of law and complying with its international legal obligations. Congress also joined Canada in calling for the immediate release of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig and for due process for Robert Schellenberg.

- (1250)

[English]

The foreign ministers of the G7 also emphasized together, in the communiqué released after their April meeting in Saint Malo, France, their collective, deep concern about the arbitrary actions of Chinese authorities against foreign citizens.

The European Union also raised its concerns with Chinese authorities during the 37th EU-China Human Rights Dialogue in April, in Brussels. The EU emphasized in particular the need for due process and the importance of ensuring that Canadians are treated properly while in Chinese custody.

The EU president, Donald Tusk, also expressed his personal support over social media, saying, “Both Canada and EU stand by the rule of law underpinning the global order. EU calls for the release of the Canadian citizens detained in China.”

Australia's foreign minister, Marise Payne, has also denounced China's actions, and emphasizes her government's concerns about these arbitrary detentions.

The U.K.'s foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, has expressed his own government's concerns. The U.K. has noted in particular its concern over “suggestions of a political motivation” for the detention of Kovrig and Spavor. France and Germany, among others, have echoed these concerns.

[Translation]

In addition to voicing concerns, the governments of Spain and the Netherlands, among others, released statements stressing the importance of ensuring that Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig receive fair treatment in China. Canada has concerns about conditions of detention in China, and it has shared them with Chinese authorities.

This includes calling on China to respect internationally recognized standards for detention, including the Nelson Mandela Rules, meaning the United Nations standard minimum rules and basic principles for the treatment of prisoners.

[English]

It is not only foreign governments that have expressed concern. Leaders in academia, the private sector and across civil society have also joined the chorus. An open letter signed by diplomats and scholars from 19 countries is just one example of how the dismay over China's actions extends well beyond Canada's borders. The letter, issued on January 21, states that Mr. Kovrig's and Mr. Spavor's detentions send a message that their efforts to build bridges and better understand China are “unwelcome and even risky in China.... That will lead to less dialogue and greater distrust, and undermine efforts to manage disagreements and identify common ground. Both China and the rest of the world will be worse off as a result.”

Canada is grateful to all those who have joined us in raising these concerns. The government will continue to work diplomatically to address the issue and encourage international partners to stand with Canada. Our international partners recognize that China's arbitrary measures set a troubling precedent for the international community. It is important that together we send a message that exerting arbitrary measures against foreign citizens is not an effective approach for addressing bilateral concerns.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that through careful and strategic engagement, Canada will continue to work with its friends and partners around the world to navigate this challenging period. Canada and its allies will continue to stand on our principles and defend the rules-based international order that has sustained global peace and prosperity for decades.

- (1255)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to take this moment to thank the people of Yorkton—Melville for putting me in this position again. I deeply appreciate it and will serve them to the best of my ability.

It is important that today we look at the fact that the problem, or at least from what I hear in my riding and throughout the country, is that Canadians do not have confidence in the way the government has been proceeding. With the amount of time that has passed, the gaffes that have taken place within foreign affairs and the multiple issues we now have with trade, especially in my province, where farmers have faced significant problems, we have a situation that is very multi-faceted.

The member across the way focused mostly on the Canadian citizens being held inappropriately. I totally appreciate that, but we have a circumstance here that is very multi-faceted. Does she not see that the best answer to this circumstance, to get the best response, is to support the motion put forward today?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Madam Speaker, I do not accept the entire premise of my hon. colleague's question. We heard earlier from the member for Prince Albert that conversation and dialogue are vitally important, and this is precisely what the government has done right up to the level of the Prime Minister.

With regard to the motion before the House today, I sat on the foreign affairs committee, which travelled to China in 2018. Earlier this year, it released a report on its engagement in East Asia. I believe that the foreign affairs committee has the history, the institutional knowledge and the expertise to be able to take on this subject area. I also believe other committees could too. I was chair of the pay equity special committee that did incredible work, but I am not convinced that it could not have done better if it had been done through the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which has the history and institutional memory.

I am not convinced that another special committee is the way to go, but I significantly appreciate that this is a subject we as parliamentarians have to be seized with.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, my real concern is that Canada has deep ties with China. We have cultural ties and many of our communities have deep ties, yet things have gone terribly wrong since we arrested the Huawei executive and put ourselves in the middle of the trade war between the United States and China. There are people in jail unfairly who are facing extreme conditions. There is a trade war.

There is also the brewing unrest in Hong Kong. Canada can play a huge role in this because of our connection to China and the people of Hong Kong. There is a growing concern about what is going to happen in Hong Kong. We saw what happened in Tiananmen Square.

Given that we now have a very compromised relationship with China, how will we be able to ensure there is pressure to protect the democratic rights of the people of Hong Kong from unfair and arbitrary attack in their fight for democracy in the streets of Hong Kong?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Madam Speaker, as the member knows, I was the chair of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights. I have worked around the world on the right to democratic participation and the right to peaceful assembly. We stand very strongly behind the people of Hong Kong, who are peacefully expressing their right to peaceful assembly and their legitimate aspirations for a true democratic country.

I appreciate very much the member's raising that issue. In fact, in October the Minister of Foreign Affairs raised this issue at the G20. I believe we have consistently expressed our position and values when it comes to people's legitimate aspirations on democratic rights.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate you for resuming your role in the chair.

It is indeed a pleasure to be back in the House of Commons. This is my first speech in the 43rd Parliament, although I took part in question period and in committee of the whole last night. I want to thank the constituents of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman for putting

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their trust in me again. I am humbled by their support. This is the sixth time I have been elected, and I always look forward to representing them and being their voice in the chamber.

I am splitting my time with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

This motion by the official opposition is indeed timely, one that I support wholeheartedly and one that deals with a growing concern among Canadians. My riding of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman has been dealing first-hand with the impacts of our increasingly difficult relationship with China. Earlier our agriculture, beef and pork producers were sanctioned, banned from moving product into the Chinese market. We are still dealing with the restrictions on Canadian canola, and that is having a huge impact on the farming sector in Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman and right across the country. The mismanagement on this file by the Liberals has created the challenges we are now facing in our economy, as well as making it more difficult to work with China when it comes to our national security, and it is affecting our national defence as well.

I have always been a big advocate of standing up for human rights. I brought forward the legislation to recognize the Ukrainian Holodomor as a genocide in this place. I sponsored the bill on the Magnitsky act and making sure we have sanctions in place against corrupt foreign officials who are gross human rights violators. I have been advocating for some time that Chinese officials responsible for those human rights violations need to be added to Canada's Magnitsky sanctions list.

We know how the Chinese have been behaving. We know the Chinese government has allowed individuals to profiteer by harvesting organs from political prisoners and exporting them around the world. We know that the Chinese government has intentionally targeted practitioners of Falun Dafa, often called Falun Gong, because it does not believe in their right to peaceful assembly or to worship or meditate in their own way. The government imprisons them, harvests their organs and tissues, and exports them all around the world. That, to me, is disgusting, and we need to put a stop to it. That is one of the things that this committee could look at, these human rights violations, such as how Tibetan monks have been treated by the Chinese government or how often Tibetan monks, in protest, will go out into the streets and light themselves on fire.

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We have seen that Chinese Muslims, the Uighurs, have been targeted as well and imprisoned. Right now there is a smear campaign going on against them by the state of China itself. The regime in Beijing is discrediting minority and religious groups within China. That again is something that this committee could drill down on by allowing the different organizations and faith groups to appear in committee and talk about the human rights abuses that they have been facing. We have recently been witnessing the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong and know that the Chinese military massed itself on the borders of Hong Kong to threaten the citizens of Hong Kong, saying that if they did not do what it wanted, citizens could face military oppression or possibly see Hong Kong turned into a police state. That threat is still there. Trying to appease China or normalize relations with it, to me, is very disheartening.

We know that the Minister of National Defence, the Prime Minister and the former minister of foreign affairs have not viewed China as a threat, yet we have heard over and over again that our allies, both in the Five Eyes and the two eyes, NORAD being the two eyes, have grave concern over allowing a Chinese company like Huawei to have access to our 5G network.

● (1300)

We already know of the challenges for other countries that had adopted Huawei as their main Wi-Fi provider, with its backdoor access to their information systems putting at risk not only national security but also individuals, who were having to make sure their identities were not harvested and circulated through cyberspace or that their personal information was not stolen to be used for more nefarious reasons.

We recently had the Halifax security forum. The Minister of National Defence was there. On November 22, he said:

We don't consider China as an adversary. We do have two Canadians that have been arbitrarily detained in China and we ask China for their expeditious release and that's extremely important to us.

We have now learned that those two Canadians will be facing national security charges in a trial in Beijing.

Right after the Minister of National Defence quit speaking, Robert O'Brien, the national security adviser to the United States, got up and said, "The Huawei Trojan horse is frightening, it's terrifying."

Of course, we all know there is always a huge U.S. congressional presence at the Halifax security forum, and CBC reported on November 23 that "Democratic and Republican senators...spoke with one voice, saying the dangers of proceeding outweigh the benefits."

Senator Angus King said:

We differ sometimes on issues, but not on this one. The risks of Huawei coming into your country far outweigh any benefits.

Therefore, we are looking at protecting our systems, our financial and transportation infrastructures, and making sure that things operate well, never mind protecting our Canadian government and our national security.

Why would we want to allow a company like Huawei, which often provides intel to the Government of China through a backdoor access, into our Wi-Fi system?

Aside from the national security threat of having Huawei become part of our Internet system here through the 5G network, we also need to look at the military threat.

When I spoke here last night, I talked about the buildup of the military presence of Russia and that the rear admiral who is in charge of the northern fleet for the Russian Federation is anticipating a conflict in Canada's Arctic. I can tell members that if they look at China right now, which is not an Arctic nation, it has an Arctic policy called the "polar silk road". It intends to make use of Canadian and Russian waters for transit. We would think that in itself, if it got approval, with the disappearing sea ice, would enable more trade up there, which could be a good thing. However, why would China, which is not an Arctic nation, currently have two polar research vessels and six People's Liberation Army navy ice-breakers?

We are talking about the Government of China having heavy ice-breakers. We are talking about the capability not to transit but to wage war. These are combat ships. Therefore, we have to be prepared. I have not heard anything from the government on how we are preparing to defend our sovereignty in the Arctic.

That is another thing we can talk about when this all-party committee is struck. We can get down to the essentials of Arctic sovereignty, protecting the Canadian domain, and making sure we are keeping China in check as it does things like militarize the South China Sea, as it continues to rattle sabres with neighbours like Japan and South Korea and continues to support North Korea in its efforts to build ballistic missiles. These are things that we have to take a serious look at.

I know that in 2019, the United States put China on its worldwide threat assessment. It is very concerned about China's military capabilities and the concentration of power within the regime in Beijing. We have to make sure that we are standing up for Canada first, for human rights and for the rule of law.

● (1305)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have appreciated the discussion and the debates for the last few hours. There is no doubt that there is a need for us to have that conversation. We have pointed out the importance of our standing committees. It should not surprise anyone that this is something we have believed in for many years. At the end of the day, a standing committee has the authority to do exactly what is being requested through this special committee.

The question I have for the member opposite is in regard to what the Bloc members were proposing. They were proposing that item (k) be deleted from the motion. I am very much interested in the Conservatives' position on that issue. Dropping item (k) would empower that special committee to determine who the witnesses should be, as opposed to being told by the House who the witnesses would be, and thereby give a vote of confidence to the special committee, whether it is a standing committee or a special committee, by saying it is the group that ultimately makes the determination as to who the witnesses should be.

• (1310)

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, first and foremost, the reason that we need this special committee struck up now is that the standing committees are not going to be stood up for another two months. It will probably be in February when we will see standing committees actually struck and in operation in the House. We need to have the special committee now.

The threat assessment is real, and it is important that we do have the special committee, because it covers so many different areas: foreign affairs, human rights, trade, national security and national defence. We need to have a special group.

The member for Winnipeg North wants to talk about eliminating one section of the motion. Is it any surprise that we have the Bloc Québécois supporting the Liberals? It is really unfortunate that the people in Quebec wanted to vote for something different from Liberal, so they voted Bloc. Instead what they get is Liberal lite. It is completely disappointing to see them in here pandering to the Liberals and keeping the current Prime Minister in power.

What it comes down to is that this motion has some very strong definitions in it. It would empower members of Parliament to do the work that has to be done to make sure we address this issue head-on.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a few comments for my colleague.

First, I would like to remind him that the Liberal Party and the Bloc Québécois are not really the same. From his outside perspective, there may appear to be similarities, but that is simply not the case.

Earlier, my colleague from Montarville reminded the House that the motion proposes a first test of the ability of the parties in the House to co-operate. He also mentioned that the Liberals might not like item (k). He suggested removing it to see whether the Liberals would support the motion and whether it could be adopted unanimously. That is what we were talking about.

In closing, I would like to remind members that it is a serious mistake to confuse the Liberal Party with the Bloc Québécois.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, actions speak louder than words, and all I see right now is the Bloc wanting to be the Liberals' BFF. It really does come down to what we have here, which is that these guys have been walking around hand in glove and just loving each other.

Business of Supply

Let us get down to the issue at hand. China is destabilizing world trade and world peace and violating human rights in a major way, and it has been going on for some time. It is about time that the government stood up and said something. Its silence is deafening. As long as the government is mute when it comes to dealing with China and is trying to appease the Chinese, it is the work of this House to go ahead and investigate and bring back a report that all parliamentarians could support.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be in the House once again. As this is my first time giving prepared remarks, I would like to thank the people of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill for electing me once again. This time I ran as a Conservative, and I am so pleased that they saw fit to send me back here as a Conservative. I am humbled by the opportunity. I take this responsibility very seriously, and I want to thank all the volunteers and all of the people who supported me from across the country. I would also like to thank my family, without whom I would truly be lost.

We are here today to talk about a very important motion for a very important point in our history. The Canada-China relationship is probably the greatest diplomatic challenge of our time for Canada. That is why we are proposing the composition of a special committee.

We need a special committee to examine and review all aspects of the Canada-China government relationship because we have standing committees and they are focused on individual subject matter areas. These include foreign affairs, international trade, official languages, and health and well-being. They have many other things that they need to study as well. We want to ensure that those other committees have the opportunity to study the things within their mandate that are important to Canada. However, regarding something of this magnitude, complexity and breadth and depth of scope, we need to examine and review all aspects from foreign affairs, to health and safety, cybersecurity and defence. The only way that we can look at it from a cross-functional perspective is by having a special committee.

That is why we are proposing it. Why is the Canada-China relationship important now? What really is at stake?

In the last five years, we have seen an incredibly rapid deterioration of the relationship. We have seen everything from wrongful and arbitrary imprisonment to pressures on our trade agreements. China buys \$4.7 billion of agricultural products from Canada, yet at the moment it is not honouring our trade agreements and punishing our canola farmers. That affects everyday lives. Everyday Canadians are being impacted by the relationship and the failed approach to that relationship.

We are also seeing that we have foreign state-owned resource companies, from natural resources to technology companies, and there is a concern about whether we can protect the viability and the national security interests of Canada. We have seen cyber-attacks from the Chinese government on our Canadian government departments. We are worried about the potential for influence, interference and spying in our telecommunications networks with the introduction of Huawei.

Business of Supply

Other countries have taken the step of banning Huawei from their internal communication networks for those very reasons. At the same time, Canada needs to have the opportunity to have a robust discussion, examination and review to understand whether that is the course of action that we need to take.

Everyday Canadians are also facing challenges from the Canada-China relationship with respect to health and safety. We find that we have an overwhelming number of illicit drugs, fentanyl and others, coming into the country and literally killing our citizens. We need to find a way to stop that and prevent that from happening, but the only way we can do that is if we understand the size and the scope of how it is coming in and where it is coming from. We know that the United States has done an initial review. There was a *60 Minutes* documentary talking about just how serious this is, leading to a congressional committee that said that the highest number of illicit drugs, including fentanyl, is coming from China into the United States.

• (1315)

Do we have a similar problem here in Canada?

We can talk about defence and security. I mentioned Huawei but there are other mechanisms where our telecommunications, information, banking, and infrastructure are under threat. Money laundering is also possibly an issue that we need to look at, as well as other aspects of espionage.

The Chinese military is the second-largest investment behind the United States at \$250 billion. That is significant and something to be concerned about. Some of those investments are going into ice-breakers and submarines, which we are finding in Canada's Arctic. The Chinese government is talking about itself as a near-Arctic state. That is an interesting proposal. We would need to understand how that would affect our sovereignty, our security and our ability to leverage the opportunities that Canada's Arctic offers. These are serious issues that affect Canadians not only today but into the future. We need an opportunity to review them and examine them in depth.

China is building 3,000 kilometres of pipeline. It is looking at massive expansion in the belt and road initiative and in many ways having the opportunity to leverage certain countries simply by making investments in their infrastructure.

Those are the types of things that we are competing with. If we are not able to understand how we are going to leverage the resources that we have here, then we are not going to be able to compete in the future.

Then we look at climate change. There is no question that climate change is very important. We need to take action on climate change. China's emissions have gone up exponentially and continue to do so while Canada, although still expanding our economy, is not seeing the same rapid rise in our emissions. We are working to bring them down and we have some of the most advanced, highly technological and environmentally friendly approaches. These opportunities would allow us to help China look at how it can reduce its emissions. This is also another opportunity for us to examine and review how we can best leverage.

Why now? Obviously we have seen a deterioration. We have a Liberal government and a Prime Minister that admires the Chinese government and does not have a strategy and a plan to actively move forward on improving the relationship.

We as parliamentarians are entrusted with the responsibility to have these in-depth reviews and conversations. That is why we have parliamentary committees. This is exactly what we should be doing as parliamentarians. We should bring in experts and stakeholders, and bring Canadians along with us as we do this important review.

That is why we need this committee. That is why it should be an all-party committee. That is what we as parliamentarians can do to fulfill our role. It needs to be an interdisciplinary committee so that we can look at all aspects, understand the complexities and the balances, and make strategic improvements for all Canadians.

• (1320)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have two quick questions for my colleague across the way.

First, in terms of the position that the Conservative Party is taking on the matter of China, has it consulted with constituents on the Prairies, particularly those in the agricultural sector? Obviously, China represents a major market and the absence of that would be hurtful to many of the folks that the member represents.

My second question has to do not so much with Huawei, but with 5G generally. Many people who we refer to as wearing tinfoil hats are really concerned about that technology and the impact of the radio frequencies used, the possible health implications, etc. I am wondering if the Conservatives have heard the same thing and what they think about it.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Madam Speaker, the Chinese are procuring \$4.7 billion in agricultural products from Canada. Whether we can get those products to them has a significant impact on our economy, so yes, the farmers are dramatically impacted and we need to understand. If the Chinese do business in Canada and something goes awry, we have a rule of law structure where they can bring challenges. However, in China, the same is not necessarily true.

Absolutely, a part of the research of this committee would be to understand what the impact is, the best way to address it and how we can move forward.

Secondly, for 5G, it is exactly the same thing. I think it is new and we do not have all the information. We could look in depth at the impact from a security perspective and from a national health perspective.

• (1325)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, seeing as this is my first time rising in the 43rd Parliament, I would like to thank the good people of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for again placing their trust on my shoulders.

I agree with the motion. I was a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture in the last Parliament and China loomed large in that committee, as it did at the international trade and foreign affairs committee. What I like about establishing a special committee is that it can take all of these separate threads, put them together in a comprehensive report and really look at all those issues.

Over the course of debate, I heard members from the Bloc and the Liberals speak about some concern over item (k) of the motion. I wonder if it is the hon. member's intention to maybe get rid of the item, if we can get more members in this House to support this and then allow the committee to go ahead and call those witnesses as it sees fit, as is mentioned in that particular section.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Madam Speaker, I think that is a really important question because paragraph (k) says that the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Public Safety and the Canadian ambassador to China be ordered to appear as witnesses from time to time, as the committee sees fit.

If we want this committee to do the very important work that we are asking of it, then from time to time, it may see fit to hear from the Prime Minister, the Chinese ambassador, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Public Safety, to adequately inform the committee on the government's position, why it has taken that position and the challenges to it. There is no mandate that says that they must appear. It says from time to time, as the committee sees fit.

If we do not allow the committee to do that, then how will we give the committee the ability to do the real work we are asking of it?

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member of Parliament for Don Valley East.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motion. Given that it is my first time speaking in the House in this 43rd Parliament, I want to take a moment to thank my constituents in York Centre for the honour and privilege of returning to represent them in this House.

On the topic at hand, I will start by saying that the detention of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor is arbitrary and unjust, and they should be immediately released. While the debate on this motion has covered a wide range of issues related to the Canada-China relationship, it must not distract from the fundamental underlying question: What is in the best interest of the two Michaels as we mark the grim one-year anniversary of their imprisonment in China? We can have a broader discussion on the merits or lack thereof of this motion, but we must come back to reflect on that question. It must always guide our actions.

The Canada-China relationship is important to our government and to members on all sides of this House. That relationship is important to Canadians across the country. Right now, nothing is more important in the Canada-China relationship than securing the immediate release of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. The Prime Minister, the minister, the whole government and parliamentarians across the spectrum continue to work tirelessly to that end.

Business of Supply

As chair of the foreign affairs committee in the 42nd Parliament, I had the opportunity to work with the member for Durham in committee, including on this issue. In fact, the member was vice-chair when we studied the issue of consular affairs and tabled a productive report, which the Conservatives supported. One of the fundamental things that we heard, and that members from all sides of the House know, is that sensitive consular issues, like the detention of Canadians abroad, should not be arbitrated in public. It is not in the best interest of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, not in the best interest of their families, and not in the best interest of Canadians.

I bring members' attention to a column in today's *Globe and Mail* by our esteemed former colleague, Bob Rae. He rightly notes that Canada and China are two very different countries. China is not a democracy, and there are serious human rights issues that must be addressed, but the response to that cannot be yelling into the wind. The response has to be diplomacy and engagement. It is not always easy, and it takes time, but it is what is necessary as Canadians, and we know it is essential.

Today is also Human Rights Day, which marks the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At a time when leaders around the world are challenging the idea that human rights are universal, we must continue to uphold and protect human rights.

The promotion and protection of human rights is fundamental to Canada's foreign policy and remains an unwavering priority. As we know from our experience at the foreign affairs committee in the last Parliament, Canadians care deeply about international human rights, and our foreign policy reflects that priority.

We are deeply concerned about the ongoing intimidation and repression of ethnic and religious minorities and other vulnerable groups in China, including Tibetan Buddhists, Uighurs and other Muslims, Christians, Falun Gong practitioners, women and girls, and members of the LGBTI community. Our government has also expressed concerns about the shrinking space for civil society in China and the troubling and continued intensification of actions against human rights defenders, like lawyers, journalists and civil society actors.

At every opportunity, the government has consistently called on China to respect the fundamental freedoms of opinion, expression, assembly, association and freedom of religion of all Chinese citizens. We continue to raise human rights and rule of law issues with our Chinese counterparts at all levels. The Prime Minister has done so. The former foreign affairs minister, who is now Deputy Prime Minister, has done so. I know that the new Minister of Foreign Affairs will do so, because human rights are fundamental Canadian values which are fundamental to our foreign policy. Publicly and privately, in multilateral forums and bilateral settings, Canada has consistently called on the Chinese government to address these concerns.

Business of Supply

We should also reflect on the cases that the Canadian government, under both parties, have sought to remedy, such as the imprisonment of Canadian Uighur Huseyin Celil, who has been detained in Xinjiang since 2006.

• (1330)

In my work on the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, we studied Canada's engagement in Asia. As part of that study, a group of us, including the member for Durham and the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, travelled to Beijing and Hong Kong. We had very frank meetings where we discussed human rights and raised these issues directly with Chinese officials. We know there is a productive way of addressing these concerns that furthers the cause of human rights, but there is also a counterproductive way of doing that. We should be careful that we are not undermining the cause we are seeking to support, particularly when it comes to securing the release of arbitrarily detained Canadians.

When we were in Beijing, we raised a number of issues related to human rights. Canada remains deeply concerned about the human rights situation in the Tibet autonomous region, including increasing restrictions on the freedom of language, culture and religion; freedom of expression; freedom of movement; destruction of historic buildings, temples and mosques; and forced patriotic education of ethnic Tibetans.

Canadians are deeply concerned by the credible reports of the mass detention of Uighurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, including re-education camps under the pretext of countering extremism. I know that the government shares those concerns and has voiced them publicly.

At China's universal periodic review last year, the government called on China to uphold its human rights obligations and release Uighurs and other Muslims who have been detained arbitrarily, and to end the prosecution and persecution on the basis of religion or belief, including for Muslims, Christians, Tibetan Buddhists and Falun Gong.

This past July and October, Canada joined over 20 countries in calling for unfettered access to Xinjiang for international independent observers, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Last, I know that many Canadians, including my constituents, are concerned about the situation in Hong Kong. With 300,000 Canadians living in Hong Kong, we have a vested interest in its stability and prosperity and we will always support the right of peaceful protest and Hong Kong's autonomy under the basic law and the one country, two systems framework.

In my former roles as chair of the foreign affairs committee and before that as chair of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, these issues are dear to me and reflect essential Canadian values.

While this motion and today's debate have covered a wide range of issues, I want to come back to my initial point. We cannot be distracted from the fundamental issue, which is what is in the best interests of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. I would ask all

members to reflect on that as they consider the motion in the House today.

• (1335)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, let us highlight the motion which involves the creation of a special committee to study these issues. Importantly, the motion does not name specific consular cases. It does not oblige a public study on any specific issue. The member will know that parliamentary committees and this special committee cutting across a wide variety of policy areas would have the flexibility to approach these studies in the spirit that he put forward.

On that basis, will the member agree that it is important for the motion to pass, to give the committee the mandate and the ability to take action in this area and to do so in a way that reflects the best advice and the most appropriate and strategic way of responding to the challenges he identified?

Mr. Michael Levitt: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, I point out the good work we have done in a range of human rights issues. We know how delicate the issues related to the consular cases and to the relationship in general can be. Those consular cases have priority right now for Canadians, for the government, for so many parliamentarians and also for the families of those detained.

I ask again for members to consider what is in the best interests of moving this issue forward and bringing it to a positive conclusion. I ask members to dwell on that point as they make their decision and rise to vote on the motion later today.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague about one of the other issues that has not really been talked about much, which is the threat that fentanyl has been playing in our communities. It has devastated rural regions and downtown areas. In the northern reserves, Fort Albany and Attawapiskat, there are states of emergency.

The difficulty of dealing with fentanyl is much greater than the original opioid crisis because there are these black market labs in China marketing fentanyl on the dark web. There is a necessity to have an international regime where we can target and identify the purveyors and sellers of fentanyl so we can stop this. This is a very difficult issue.

I am asking this across party lines because every one of our communities is affected. I will ask for the member's opinion on how our multilateral international effort will stop the trade in fentanyl through these black market factories.

Mr. Michael Levitt: Madam Speaker, the member for Timmins—James Bay raises a very serious issue. He is absolutely right that this is affecting all areas across the country and constituents in all of our ridings.

As it relates to the debate we are having today regarding this special committee that would look at Canada-China relations, I question whether working with like-minded allies through other international fora might be the better place to deal with this serious and significant problem. The member highlights something that is a real concern. It is something that, as parliamentarians, we have to be aware of and seek to do even more to protect the interests of Canadians and our own constituents.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, this is an important debate to have and having a committee to look at this issue is important. This is not something that is just related to the current government. This goes back quite a way.

When we first opened up trade with China, we did not make human rights part of that agreement, that China improve human rights or that it look at democratizing. This goes back to the 1970s and 1980s.

Of course, with both governments, we had the Canada-China FIPA that was brought forward by the Conservative government, which gives Chinese state-owned corporations extraordinary powers. It is not a reciprocal agreement. The Chinese state-owned corporations have an extraordinary amount of power in that agreement. It is probably the worst trade treaty we have signed.

Should we be making our trade and most favoured nation status contingent on human rights, on environmental standards—

• (1340)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but I do have to allow for the answer. I want to remind members that they need to keep their questions short.

The hon. member for York Centre.

Mr. Michael Levitt: Madam Speaker, I want to highlight the work of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights during the last Parliament. I had the honour and privilege of chairing that subcommittee for a number of years and also working with members in a consensus way on issues including the plight of Uighurs and human rights around the world.

That subcommittee does incredible work. It again can be highlighted today when human rights are becoming even more important and more at risk as we stand here on Human Rights Day. I suggest that the place to examine those issues related to human rights is the subcommittee.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this being my first speech in the 43rd Parliament, I would like to thank the residents of Don Valley East for their confidence in me.

I thank the hon. member for raising the vital issue of our relationship with China. As I have been listening to the presentations by various members of Parliament, we need to reflect on the motion itself and whether it would get the intended results.

On this anniversary of the detention of two Canadians, we all share the concerns of getting an early release of the Canadians who were arbitrarily detained. However, would the committee that is being proposed be able to handle that? Are there any existing standing committees that could best address these issues?

Business of Supply

The motion talks about a diplomatic crisis. I hope we think through this clearly. How would this committee be charged to take on a diplomatic issue? The standing committees on foreign affairs, trade, security, etc., could deal with issues that have arisen.

As I look at the motion logically, I do not believe it is in the best interest of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor to have the government publicly discuss the ongoing diplomatic efforts to secure their release. There are things that can be discussed in public and there are things that need to be done discreetly. The proposed motion would not allow this.

Our government has been working hard to ensure the release of the two Canadians. We have sought the assistance of other like-minded countries and are grateful to them for their support.

The other aspect of the discussion of the House on this topic focused on our agriculture industry as well.

Our farmers are critical to our economy. Canada and China have a long-standing relationship, spanning almost half a century. China is a priority market for the Canadian agriculture sector and our second-largest trading partner after the United States.

The agriculture industry is very important. Canada is a significant trading nation. We are in the top five exporters of agriculture and agri-food products. We are the world's top exporter of canola, flax, pulse crops and wild blueberries. We are in the top three exporters of wheat and pork. On average, about half of the value of Canada's agriculture product is exported.

Our farmers depend on exports. Well over a third of their wheat crop, two-thirds of their pork, 85% of their canola and 90% of their pulse crops are exported. All told, agriculture and agri-food and fish and seafood trade drive over \$66 billion of our exports and contribute \$16 billion to our balance of trade. All this economic activity supports jobs, growth and opportunities for Canadians.

We are pleased that through our diplomatic efforts, China restored access to our high-quality Canadian meat last month. Our appointment of Dominic Barton as Canada's ambassador to China enables Canada's advocacy efforts to resolve trade issues, as well as the release of the two Canadians.

Issues like this do not get resolved without the hard work of our industry and trade officials in the trade area and of course the leadership of Mr. Barton and his diplomatic efforts.

Business of Supply

I heard some hon. members mention canola. We continue to work hard to restore our canola markets in China. The canola sector contributes almost \$27 billion to Canada's economy and employs a quarter of a million Canadians. Canadians take pride in this industry as it is an innovation by our scientists at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

In April, we formed an industry-government working group, co-chaired by the Canola Council of Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, with representatives from the prairie provinces. The working group continues to meet regularly, with discussions focused on developing strategies to resolve the market access issues with China.

In the meanwhile, to help the canola farmers, we have instituted an advance payments program and implemented the stay of default, and extended the deadline of AgriStability.

● (1345)

The advance payments program helps producers manage their cash flow concerns throughout the year. We also increased the interest-free cash advances available to canola producers from \$100,000 to \$500,000 for the 2019 program year. Total advances of up to \$1 million are now available for canola and all other commodities, up from \$400,000. This change is permanent and will be available beyond 2019.

With our provincial partners, we also extended the AgriStability enrolment deadline by two months.

I would add that we are working closely with the Canadian canola industry every step of the way. As the president of the Canola Council of Canada said in his recent "speech from the combine", "The draw bolt of growing the ag sector is cooperation between industry and government, and between the federal and provincial levels of government."

The canola sector has participated in trade missions to key markets in Asia with both the hon. Minister of International Trade and the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. In her meeting with the G20 agricultural ministers earlier this year in Japan, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food also took the opportunity to engage the Chinese minister of agriculture and talk about Canada's concerns.

The canola industry has also hailed the appointment of Dominic Barton as Canada's ambassador to China to help advance Canadian interests at this critical time. Most recently, Canada has been meeting with China for formal consultations under the WTO in an effort to resolve this issue as quickly as possible. We continue to push hard to restore business with China.

If our farmers are to take full advantage of sales opportunities around the globe, we absolutely need to address the issues of non-tariff trade barriers, and we need to ensure farmers have the tools they need to compete on the world stage. Canadian farmers can compete with the best the world has to offer, but to do so, they need a level playing field that is clear of barriers to trade.

Our government is standing shoulder to shoulder with Canadians producers and farming families. Canadian farmers should know that we have their backs.

I thank the hon. member for raising the issue. For us to address the multipronged issues of globalization and geopolitics, it is important that we use diplomacy rather than create another bureaucracy that may impede this process.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is lovely to see you in the chair, and congratulations.

I also congratulate the member opposite on her re-election.

The government has been calling on this minority Parliament to work together, and the throne speech talked about the middle class. Certainly, we see the farmers being impacted by China. It talked about climate change. We have heard comments today about China going in the wrong direction on that. We have heard about making lives better, the health of Canadians and the fentanyl crisis.

Would the member not agree that this committee is an example of how a minority Parliament could work together on things that are highlighted in the throne speech and of such importance to Canadians?

● (1350)

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Madam Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for her reappointment.

I come from an area where governance is very important, and effectiveness is important. The standing committees on trade, health and other areas will be able to address the issues she has raised. We cannot create a super-committee that probably does not know what it wants. Does it want diplomacy? Does it want to get people out of jail? Does it want to do trade?

I would suggest that we stick with what we have at the moment and make it work.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have been listening to Liberal arguments during the course of debate today, and they seem centred on two particular problems.

Number one is that the Liberals are concerned about the effect this committee would have on Canada's diplomatic efforts with regard to China. This committee would have the ability to go in camera. I trust that its members would treat these issues with the sensitivity they deserve.

The other argument I hear is that there are existing standing committees to look at these issues. Yes, that is true, but standing committees have a lot of pressures on them and a lot of different agendas coming their way. One thing I have learned, being a member of the standing committee on agriculture, is that we often wish we could go a little further. What is needed is to have a special committee to tie all these threads together and issue a comprehensive report on the matter.

Why can my hon. Liberal colleague across the way not see the good in this proposal? This proposal would allow this Parliament to work together over a very important issue, namely the relationship between our country and China.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Madam Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on his election.

If other standing committees are not able to address issues, how will this committee be able to address issues that are of such a geopolitical nature? What are we going to address and where is the focus going to be? Is the focus going to be on agriculture, diplomacy or fentanyl? Without a mechanism or thoroughly thinking through this new creation, I have a problem with it.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member illustrates exactly why this special committee is needed: All roads lead to China, whether it is trade, the fentanyl crisis, the consular crisis, the geopolitical building of islands in the South China Sea, Huawei or 5G. Why would the Liberals not want a committee that allows some of the sensitive elements on the consular or national security side, things like cyber-attacks and these sorts of things, to be handled in camera? This will be the real first test of a minority Parliament.

Will that member undertake to work within her caucus to get members to vote to allow Parliament to have a proper committee that is finite in time to examine these critical issues in Canada-China relations?

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Madam Speaker, we have a Canada-China parliamentary association that deals exactly with those issues.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi: Madam Speaker, I did not intervene when other members spoke, so they should be quiet.

This committee has no powers, unless it is giving itself super-powers.

I thank the hon. member for bringing the issue up, but he cannot be so engrossed in his motion to not think outside the box.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that the House is in session. I know there are people coming in and out for question period. I also want to remind members that when someone has the floor, please respect that he or she has the right to have his or her voice heard. I would ask people to wait if they have questions and comments or anything else to add.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Foothills.

• (1355)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak about this very important topic.

I would like to say from the beginning that I will be splitting my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable. It is great to have my colleague be able to speak on this issue. He knows it extremely well.

I would like to thank the constituents of Foothills for re-electing me. It is a great honour to have that trust and confidence from my constituents to re-elect me as their representative.

Business of Supply

It is apropos that the first subject I am going to talk about as we begin this 43rd Parliament is the canola crisis that our constituents are facing with China, which I think this motion would address, and why it is so important that we support this motion for the special committee, which has the opportunity to discuss this critical issue in more depth and at length.

I will go back to when this issue first happened almost a year ago, when we highlighted the canola crisis with the previous Liberal government, which has now spilled over into this current one. We saw that nothing had been done to address it when the Liberals were in government in the 42nd Parliament.

I think the lack of discussion on this crisis in the throne speech highlights that nothing has changed. It is still not an issue or a priority for the current Liberal government. For it to not even discuss the canola crisis and the trade embargo with China within the throne speech was a very loud message to canola farmers across Canada that this is not a priority for the Liberal government. It has no intention of standing up for Canadian farmers or standing up to China to get back one of our most critical canola markets.

For the Liberal government not to understand the far-reaching impacts of this crisis within our agriculture sector I think is very short-sighted, but it also shows how out of touch the government has become.

To put this in perspective, China accounts for more than 40% of all our canola seed exports, more than 40% of the product that is grown here in Canada.

This has nothing to do with the quality of our canola seed, which is second to none in the world. The Conservatives understand that this is completely a political decision and that the ineptitude and bungling of the Liberal government have led to this problem with the Chinese government.

This is a \$2.7-billion industry for Canadian canola producers that has now been completely neglected by the Prime Minister. There are 250,000 jobs, not only in western Canada but across this country, that are being impacted by this.

We went through this last year. At that time, we told the Liberal government that there were some things it could do to try to address it. It could file an official challenge to the WTO. It could withdraw the funding to the Asian infrastructure bank. At the very least, it could name an ambassador to China.

It took the government more than eight months to do one of those three. It finally named an ambassador to China. The government has now hinted about maybe bringing forth a challenge to the WTO on this trade issue, yet it has still given \$250 million to the Asian infrastructure bank, which is building infrastructure, including pipelines, across China.

Meanwhile, we have more than 150,000 energy workers in Canada out of work and the Liberals are doing nothing to address that. Now we have 250,000 jobs at risk in the canola industry and once again, the Liberal government is turning a blind eye to that issue.

Statements by Members

I want to take a moment to address one of the comments from my colleague across the way, which was that the Liberals have been there for canola farmers because they expanded the advance payments program.

Let us put that into perspective. This is exactly what the Liberals have done, which is what they do with just about any problem they have. They threw some money at it and hoped it would resolve the problem. What the government did to canola farmers was like extending the credit on their credit cards to something that most of them could not afford or access. Then, the government would not let them pay the debt once it came due. Let me be clear, the debt will come due.

Once the farmers have accessed the advance payments program, there is still interest on a portion of that which they have to pay back. They have gone through this harvest, which our producers across Canada have called the harvest from hell. Those of us in Alberta, Saskatchewan and western Canada have certainly felt that.

More than half of the canola crop in northern Alberta is still under snow, which has made it impossible to access. These canola producers have gone through all of the last year not being able to sell their product to one of their most important customers, and this year they have had a horrific harvest.

• (1400)

The canola producers have accessed the advance payments program but they cannot sell their crop, what crop they could get out. Half of it is still under the snow. They have no way of paying back the advance payment program the Liberals have said has been the band-aid solution to this entire problem. The government is ignoring the actual problem, which is getting access to China.

Reopening that market is a critical problem and it has not been addressed in the throne speech. We have given the government an opportunity here to establish a special committee that will investigate or discuss the issues that we have between ourselves and the Chinese government.

We tried to do this last year through the international trade and agriculture committees. At that time, some of the ministers refused to even be at those committees or to give their position. They said that the crisis with China was not important enough to have a high-level delegation.

I look forward to finishing this speech after question period.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have four minutes to finish his speech and then five minutes for questions and comments after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

THE DALAI LAMA

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today is the 30th anniversary of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

As the member of Parliament for Parkdale-High Park, I take great pride in representing the largest Tibetan diaspora in North America.

[*Translation*]

The Dalai Lama is not just a leader for the people of Tibet; he is a leader for us all. Thanks to his efforts to promote non-violence and to defend religious freedom around the world, this Buddhist leader has become a champion for justice and human rights for millions of people throughout the world.

[*English*]

I was humbled to meet with the Dalai Lama in 2018 in India. What I will always recollect from that meeting is his wisdom, his kindness and most of all his dedication to the Tibetan people and his promotion of the Middle Way approach.

To our honorary Canadian citizen, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, I say a simple thanks [*Member spoke in Tibetan*] for all he has done, not just for the Tibetan people, but for the global community and promoting the cause of peace and pluralism internationally.

[*Member spoke in Tibetan*]

* * *

RON CAREY

Mr. Bob Benzen (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday family and friends held a celebration of life for a Calgary businessman, philanthropist and my friend, Ron Carey. Last month Ron died in a collision during a vintage car rally in England.

Ron built his company, J&L Supply, into a successful drill bit service provider for the oil patch, but among his passions away from work was collecting vintage automobiles.

Ron's collection was exceeded only by his generosity when he donated dozens of antique vehicles and vintage gas pumps to the Heritage Park Historical Village. In fact, Heritage Park built the Gasoline Alley Museum to showcase his vast collection.

Ron himself had a hand in restoring many of these beautiful cars and they will persevere at the museum as a tribute to the generosity of a man who delighted in sharing his passion and the rewards of his success with his community.

Ron Carey, a great Albertan, will be sorely missed.

[Translation]

CHIC RESTO POP

Ms. Soraya Martínez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a young immigrant girl who was welcomed by this country, I am deeply moved and I feel a profound sense of responsibility as I rise in this House for the first time.

I would like to begin by thanking the people of Hochelaga for their support and trust. As an MP, I know that we have set ambitious but achievable goals for ourselves, goals relating to transportation, social housing and food security.

Today I would like to congratulate Chic Resto Pop, which is celebrating its 35th anniversary. Chic Resto Pop is an organization that understands the importance of helping vulnerable populations meet their basic needs, such as food. Over the past 35 years, it has served more than 4 million meals.

Once again, I want to congratulate Chic Resto Pop.

* * *

LUC O'BOMSAWIN

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Abenaki nation, along with the other indigenous nations of Quebec, are mourning the passing of Luc O'Bomsawin, a prominent figure in indigenous circles.

Luc passed away on December 4 at the age of 62 from an aggressive cancer, three weeks after being diagnosed.

Luc first served with the Canadian Armed Forces as a communications specialist and crew member of the 12e Régiment Blindé du Canada. He then joined the aboriginal police, serving in several Quebec communities, then worked as a correctional officer at the Donnacona Institution, and finally was a member of the Ports Canada Police and the Sûreté du Québec. He was also the founder of the Quebec Aboriginal Veterans Association.

The Abenakis of Odanak remember Luc as a decent, dedicated man who was very involved in his community and proud to showcase it.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois and all members of the House, I offer our condolences to his family and the entire Abenaki nation.

* * *

• (1405)

[English]

PUBLIC HEALTH

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to thank the people of Brampton South, my family, all the volunteers, voters and supporters. Each and every one of them helped me to get re-elected.

I would like to speak about an issue of great concern to Bramptonians.

Brampton needs its fair share of health services to keep up with the rapid growth of our city. As a health care professional for 18

Statements by Members

years, I also know how important disease prevention is in taking pressure off our health care system.

On that note, I want to thank all of the organizations that joined me on November 30 to mark Diabetes Awareness Month, including Diabetes Canada, the YMCA, the JDRF, LMC Healthcare and the Healthy Communities Initiative.

Working together, we can defeat diabetes, improve the health of Canadians and save our health care system billions of dollars.

* * *

ORO-MEDONTE

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, standing up and speaking for the first time in Parliament should be an occasion filled with joy and happiness. Unfortunately, it is with heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to not one but two Oro-Medonte councillors who recently passed away.

Councillor Scott Macpherson passed away on November 6, 2019. Scott Macpherson was a retired Simcoe County School Board teacher and dedicated community volunteer. He was serving his second term on council.

Deputy Mayor Scott Jermy passed away on November 20, 2019. Scott Jermy was a dairy farmer and a local pillar in the farming community. He was also serving his second term on council.

Both were fine gentlemen who served their communities well. Their passing is a deep loss to the township of Oro-Medonte. They will be dearly missed by their families, friends and constituents. They will always be remembered for their positive legacies that they leave behind.

* * *

[Translation]

ALFRED-PELLAN

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate you on being elected Speaker of the House. The fact that you are the first Speaker of Italian Canadian descent, like me, fills me with pride.

I would also like to say thank you 26,015 times to the constituents of Alfred-Pellan who have once more placed their trust in me. This solid and growing trust strengthens my sense of duty to move forward together, to fight climate change, to strengthen the middle class, to support the businesses and organizations in my riding and to remain present and receptive.

As the holiday season is fast approaching, my son Gabriel, my wife Rana and my team join me in wishing the residents of Laval and all my colleagues happy holidays and a happy new year.

[English]

I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy new year. *Buon natale e buon anno a tutti.*

*Statements by Members***KITCHENER CENTRE**

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pride to rise today for the first time in Canada's 43rd Parliament.

I am deeply humbled to have earned the trust of the people of Kitchener Centre who sent me back to Ottawa as their representative. I want to thank everyone who helped me during the last campaign, including supporters and volunteers. I am here in this House to provide a strong voice for their issues, which I have engaged with both on and off the campaign trail. These include taking firmer action to address the climate crisis and working to make life more affordable for Canadians.

It is always exciting and a privilege to share in celebrations and events across the region that highlight our community's rich diversity. Over the coming months and years, I look forward to working with and listening to my constituents to make life better for them. Regardless of whether they are seniors, students, new Canadians, scientists, artists, athletes or parents, I am here for them.

I return to Ottawa with great optimism and look forward to advancing issues important to Kitchener Centre and to this great country.

* * *

● (1410)

LANGLEY—ALDERGROVE

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first time rising in this House, I would like to thank the citizens of my riding, Langley—Aldergrove, for placing their confidence in me to be their voice in the nation's capital.

I also want to honour the memory of my immediate predecessor in this role, Mr. Mark Warawa.

As the new representative for this riding, I want to bring to the attention of the House that the population of Langley—Aldergrove has been growing steadily over the last couple of decades, and with it, road congestion and pollution. The people of my riding are looking for a greener and cleaner transportation option, namely the expansion of Metro Vancouver SkyTrain all the way to Langley.

Right now, funding is in place to build the first half of it, but another \$1.6 billion is needed to finally bring this dream to a conclusion. We are looking to both sides of the House for support for this very great project.

* * *

AGA KHAN

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, December 13 marks the 83rd birthday of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan. His Highness is the spiritual leader of over 25 million Ismaili Muslims spread across the globe.

Over the past 62 years, His Highness, through the Aga Khan Development Network, has improved the quality of life of the most vulnerable populations. Through education and economic opportunities, he has helped empower women and girls and provide stabi-

ty and prosperity to communities, irrespective of race, ethnicity or faith.

Canada is extremely fortunate to have the Aga Khan as a partner in the Global Centre for Pluralism, which is a beacon of dialogue and engagement with the world. In this age of conflict and nationalism, the ethos of pluralism, as demonstrated by the Aga Khan, is sorely needed.

[*Translation*]

I wish His Highness a happy birthday.

* * *

[*English*]**SASKATOON—UNIVERSITY**

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the good people of the Saskatoon—University riding for placing their trust in me.

I would also like to thank my wife Danielle and my two boys, Jacob and James, for their love and support over the campaign. It has been a wonderful ride, and I am so grateful for their support.

I would also like to thank, in my office, Justin Ollerich, Helen Harvey and James Hawkes, who have worked tirelessly over the campaign and are now helping me out in my office here in Ottawa and back in Saskatoon. I am very grateful for their support. I am so grateful for the hundreds of volunteers and the people who donated to our campaign and made it the success that it was. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I am indebted to them forever.

The people of Saskatoon—University are proud and hard-working. They are struggling because of the decisions of the government. The failure to build necessary national infrastructure projects such as pipelines is hurting them, with consequences that can be seen every day—

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

* * *

FIREARMS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents are farmers, hunters and sport shooters. They are licensed, law-abiding firearms owners who have invested in these tools as an integral part of their lives. They are also among the most heavily vetted people in the country. Every day, the name of each licensed firearms owner is checked against the police database to make sure they have not committed a crime, yet these are the same people whom the Liberal government is targeting with its forced confiscation of lawfully owned property.

The Liberals are not making life miserable for gangsters, smugglers and violent criminals but instead are blaming law-abiding Canadians who happen to own firearms as part of their way of life. This is outrageous. Only in Liberal lefty la-la land does the government focus on turning law-abiding citizens into criminals, instead of turning criminals into law-abiding citizens.

I encourage all Canadians to speak out against this unconscionable government overreach and encourage the Liberal government to focus on actual measures that will reduce crime. To law-abiding gun owners, the Conservatives will continue—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Hamilton Centre.

* * *

• (1415)

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the finance minister announced that the Liberals are prioritizing tax giveaways to the wealthy instead of help for those who are most in need. They are handing over \$6 billion and giving the biggest benefits to folks who are already making between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year.

While we support the idea of giving a break to those who earn the least, if we target the Liberals' proposed changes to those making less than \$90,000 a year, we can give free and full dental care immediately to those who need the help the most. It would save our health care system millions of dollars and help millions of Canadians in a very real way.

If the Liberals are just interested in staying in power, they can continue looking to the Conservatives and the Bloc. However, if they actually want to get things done for Canadians and help them with the struggles that they face every day, then we are here—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

* * *

[Translation]

CÉLINE LEFEBVRE

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a remarkable woman, Céline Lefebvre.

Ms. Lefebvre is a cofounder of Liberté de choisir, an addiction prevention organization. She built a professional team entirely dedicated to raising awareness among young people about addiction to alcohol, drugs, energy drinks and the Internet.

Ms. Lefebvre created innovative programs that have inspired countless organizations in Quebec that work in addictions services. She has had such an impact on the lives of hundreds of people that the Association québécoise des centres d'intervention en dépendance created an award in her name this year, and she is the very first recipient. This award acknowledges the work of community organizations that stand out for their dedication to addiction prevention.

Today I am proud to recognize the major contribution of this constituent of Salaberry—Suroît to Quebec society.

Statements by Members

I extend my heartiest congratulations to Ms. Lefebvre.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the government took office, foreign investment has fallen by 56%, \$100 billion has left the energy sector and investments in plants and equipment are down. Real wages have barely risen, nearly half of Canadians are within \$200 of insolvency and a third of Canadians are broke at the end of each month. October had the highest number of personal bankruptcies in 10 years, and per capita GDP is falling. The economy lost 71,000 jobs last month, and we are falling behind our international peers. The cost of living is increasing, and standards of living are stagnating. This is not middle-class prosperity.

Because the government broke its promise to balance the budget within its first term and created a structural deficit without delivering the infrastructure that it promised, it has squandered the fiscal capacity that it inherited during a time of economic growth. Canadians deserve better, and Canadians can count on Conservatives to fight for those working hard to join the middle class and those desperately struggling to remain in it.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Human Rights Day, I want to recognize the courageous work of human rights defenders around the world. Far too often, they are lone voices on the front lines to protect and advance the dignity and rights of others.

In Sri Lanka, the University Grants Commission and the Jaffna University council have barred human rights lawyer and the head of the Department of Law, Kumaravadivel Guruparan, from practising law.

In South Africa, Ayanda Denge was brutally killed for her advocacy in support of sex workers.

In Haiti, Charlot Jeudy was killed for his work on LGBTI issues. He worked with an organization called Kouraj and was on Parliament Hill for the Pride flag-raising ceremony in 2016.

Human rights defenders are harassed and intimidated, and are under constant surveillance with the aim of undermining their work. This often leads to a chilling effect that curtails civil society activism as a whole. Today and every day, we honour the women and men who peacefully speak and act to uphold human rights here in Canada and around the world.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is the one-year anniversary of the arbitrary detention of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig by the Chinese government. These men have endured torturous conditions and will now be facing a second Christmas away from home. I know I speak on behalf of all members of Parliament when I send along our best wishes and sympathies to the two Canadians being detained and their families.

Can the Prime Minister update the House as to the efforts that are being made to secure the release of these two Canadians?

• (1420)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, indeed today unfortunately marks one year since Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were arbitrarily detained in China. They are and will remain our absolute priority. We will continue to work tirelessly to secure their immediate release and to stand up for them as a government and as Canadians. We are grateful to the many countries around the world that have expressed support for Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to standing up to the Government of China, on many issues the Liberal government's reaction is costing Canadians. In fact, when it comes to protecting our canola exporters, the Liberal government dragged its feet on raising the Chinese blocking of our exports to the World Trade Organization, and as a result, the industry lost billions. The Liberals waited over six months just to file that complaint.

Why did the government wait so long to take any action on behalf of Canada's agricultural sector?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that our government has always stood shoulder to shoulder with our farmers. We take this issue very seriously. We have always worked very closely with the industry and take its advice into consideration. We have started the discussion at the WTO, and there have been technical discussions between the CFIA and Chinese officials. Ambassador Barton is working hard in China, and we work as well to diversify our markets.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): The trouble is, Mr. Speaker, that just is not the case. The Government of China is illegally detaining two Canadian citizens. It has blocked billions of dollars in agriculture exports. It is now starting to take aggressive actions in the Arctic, calling for a "polar silk road". Now, not only is the government not standing up for Canada: it is

actually borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars from taxpayers to send to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Why is the government subsidizing the Government of China during this diplomatic crisis?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been pleased to be part of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. We know that it is important to develop the entire region. It is an important way for Canadian organizations to get opportunities in that part of the country. Obviously, over the long term, what we want is a global economy that works, which not only helps us internationally but also helps us back at home with our own economy.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all know that because of his antics, the Prime Minister is not taken very seriously on the international scene.

Is he effectively managing foreign threats here, in Canada? It is a valid question. The Chinese government has clearly indicated that it wants to become established in the Arctic and gain influence over this territory.

Does the Prime Minister recognize this threat, yes or no?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada will always defend its sovereignty.

That has nothing to do with our government. It is clear that we will always defend Canada's rights and territory.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that this government is misreading the Canada-China relationship.

The Prime Minister has no intention of defending human rights in China, protecting Canadians against security threats or working on guaranteed access to markets for Canadian farmers.

In 2013, the Prime Minister said that he admired the Chinese dictatorship. Does he still?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our absolute priority is the well-being and safety of the Canadians detained in China.

The best interests of Canadians are at the heart of all of our decisions. Canadians need a united front defending their interests, not petty politics. We have assembled an international coalition in support of Canada's position, and we thank our many allies who have spoken on our behalf.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Prime Minister, but oh well. I will still ask it. Wherever he is, he will hear it.

• (1425)

The Speaker: Order. There are a lot of new members in the House, and this is a good learning opportunity. I want to remind the member and everyone that they must not draw attention to the presence or absence of a member in the House.

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, please rest assured that I am most compliant.

That said, I understand that the Liberal members and ministers have been instructed to express great joy today and to celebrate the likely ratification of a new free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, they can carry on like that, I have more along the same lines.

However, we know that Mexico does primary processing of aluminum, which will come largely from China, an aluminum producer and recycler. We are being told with great concern that aluminum would not be protected in this new version of the free trade agreement.

Is that—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of International Development.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, we are very proud of the new free trade agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico. We have always stood up for Canada's aluminum workers. The new NAFTA contains strict requirements for the domestic content of this North American industry, which helps create a more level playing field for our workers. We will continue to protect aluminum workers here in Quebec and in Canada.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, they cannot say one thing and do another. When the content of this agreement is presented to the people of Quebec, to the workers of the eight aluminum smelters in Quebec, they may see things differently and in a much harsher light. I caution the government—and the other political parties can tell me what they think—that if anyone is under the impression that the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of an agreement that sacrifices Quebec aluminum, the Bloc's answer is no.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether there was a question in there.

In any case, we are very proud of the agreement between Canada, Mexico and the United States that will be signed. It is a good deal for Canada, it is a good deal for Canadian workers and it is a good deal for industry across the country. We are very proud of it and we will continue to defend the rights and access of Canadians to North American markets.

Oral Questions

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal tax plan does not help 47% of people, but if this measure is targeted to help those who need it most, we can also implement a national dental care program. This will help 4.3 million people.

If the Prime Minister really wants to help people, is he committed to implementing a national dental care program?

[English]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned before, Canadians are incredibly proud of our health care system here in Canada. We are making important investments to protect it and to expand health care access across the country.

As we mentioned in the throne speech, the universal dental care idea is one that is worth exploring. I look forward to working with all members in this House to do exactly that.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between saying the right things and doing the right things. Twenty per cent of Canadians cannot access dental services because they just cannot afford it. If we had a national dental care program right now, it would save families at least \$1,200 a year. That is a concrete way to help out families, keep them healthy and save money, and the Liberals could still continue with their proposed tax changes.

If the Liberal government really wants to help people, will the Prime Minister commit to a national dental care program?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, health care delivery, including a potential dental care plan, would be in delivered in partnership with provinces and territories. That is why it is not as easy as just delivering it now. It would be something that would be worthy of exploring, though, and I look forward to working with all members of the House on how we can actually move forward in ensuring that all Canadians have excellent access to quality medical care.

* * *

• (1430)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the House is debating the most challenging foreign policy relationship Canada has at present: China. The government has made serious missteps on security and trade issues with the Chinese government and is avoiding tough decisions when it comes to Huawei and other issues.

Will the Prime Minister agree to a specialized all-party committee to review all aspects of the Canada-China relationship?

Oral Questions

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for raising a very important issue in this House today, which I think is resulting in some really important debate on all sides.

We all agree that the Canada-China relationship is incredibly important, and we are exploring all of those issues when it comes to human rights, when it comes to democracy, when it comes to trade and when it comes to our security. Of course, the House and Parliament have many standing committees that deal with all of these issues, and we look forward to seeing how the committees decide to manage their own business.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nearly half of Canada's canola seed exports, worth some \$2.5 billion, have been lost due to Chinese non-tariff trade barriers. Canadian farmers want to know what the Liberal government's plan B is, because plan A is obviously not working for them.

Can the minister answer what the Liberal government is doing to regain the market access that it lost in China for our canola farmers?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will keep standing with our farmers and ranchers. This is very important to us. We have been working with them, with the industry and with the provinces to find the best solutions. We have started the conversation at the WTO, CFIA is having discussions with Chinese officials, Ambassador Barton is working hard, and obviously we are working on diversifying our markets as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the past four years, Canadians have lost confidence in the Prime Minister and the government in matters of foreign policy. Canola producers have paid too high a price because of the government's inability to act. He denied the crisis with China for months. It took an election for him to finally file a complaint with the WTO. As for Canadian canola, it is still banned in China.

Will the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food support the opposition motion and finally stand up for canola producers?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the very beginning of this affair, we have been standing up and working very closely with producers, their industry representatives and the provinces most affected. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is having technical and scientific discussions with their Chinese counterparts. We have also begun discussions and consultations with the World Trade Organization.

Ambassador Barton has been appointed, and he is doing a very good job on the ground.

Obviously, we are working on market diversification.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the upshot is that canola is still banned in China. China is blocking

imports of Canadian canola. China is suppressing pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.

What does the new Minister of Foreign Affairs think about that?

According to him, in a world of uncertainty, unpredictability, of questioning about the rules that have been established to govern our trading relationship, Canada and China stand out as beacons of stability, predictability, a rule-based system, a very inclusive society.

Really?

When will the Prime Minister take off his rose-coloured glasses and live up to Canadian values, which are based on rights and freedoms?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada always stands up for Canadian values and principles, whether it is about human rights, democracy or international rules. We are always front and centre, and we are always able to state our views and talk with our counterparts around the world, including in China.

The important thing right now is for all Canadians to come together and form a united front in order to protect our economy, our major industries and, of course, our Canadian values and rights.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our allies have said that Huawei participation in Canada's 5G network is a threat to national security, and security experts in CSIS have said that it is a threat. The only person who seems to think that it is not is the Minister of Public Safety, who said that it is not appropriate to criticize a company that is used by the Chinese government to spy on Canadians.

When will the Prime Minister protect Canadians and ban Huawei?

● (1435)

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I should point out that the statement just attributed to me is completely false.

Our government takes the security of Canada's telecommunications networks very seriously. That is exactly why we have been conducting an examination of emerging 5G technology and the associated security and economic considerations. We want to make sure that Canadians have access to the most beneficial 5G technology. At the same time, we will make sure that Canadians are safe and that their systems will not be compromised.

We are taking all scientific and security factors into account, including discussions with our allies and our security agents.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill has a question and I am sure she wants to hear the answer. I am sitting very close to the minister and I am having a hard time hearing him. I just want to remind hon. members that the hon. member wants to hear the answer to her question.

The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has failed to manage our relationship with the Government of China, from control of Canadian resource technology and service companies by Chinese state-owned entities to cyber-attacks on our communications networks, to security concerns in our Arctic, to international drug trafficking of deadly substances like fentanyl. There are many areas of critical importance that require a thorough review and balanced approach.

When will the Prime Minister support our motion to appoint a special committee to review the Canada-China relationship?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these are issues that all Canadians are concerned about, including on this side of the House. Of course, as the Government of Canada, it is something that we are working very diligently on.

As I mentioned, when it comes to trade, agriculture, foreign affairs and security, there are committees of the House that deal with these issues already. Of course, we look forward to seeing how these committees decide to manage their business and should they be interested in learning more about the Canada-China relationship, we will be looking forward to working with them.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec aluminum is the cleanest in the world. In the midst of a climate emergency, Quebec is producing carbon neutral aluminum. However, the changes to the new NAFTA that the government wants to sign today will allow China to dump its coal-fired aluminum, driving down prices and halting the expansion of our industry.

Is the government really going to sacrifice a clean industry and Quebec workers in favour of China's pollution-causing dumping?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we worked hard to sign a good deal for Canadians and Canada. We have always stood up for Canada's aluminum workers. We recognize that the aluminum industry is a world leader in clean industry and the fight against climate change. The new NAFTA contains strict domestic content requirements for aluminum here in North America. We will continue to stand up for aluminum industry workers.

Oral Questions

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government does not seem to understand how important the aluminum industry is to my region. The Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region is responsible for 60% of Canada's total production. Production alone accounts for 7,000 jobs. It is the cornerstone of my region's entire industrial sector and a key middle-class employer. Today's news jeopardizes three major aluminum plant expansion projects in my region.

How can the government say it is defending middle-class workers when it is putting Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean aluminum workers at risk?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that important question. This morning, I had an opportunity to discuss this very issue with the mayor of Saguenay. I am sure the member is aware that our government has always stood up for aluminum workers, especially when the Americans imposed tariffs. Our government and the then foreign affairs minister worked to get those tariffs lifted. We will always stand up for them. Everyone can rest assured that this will also be the case with the new NAFTA.

* * *

● (1440)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 75 years ago, soldiers from Winnipeg and Quebec City fought to defend the people of Hong Kong, including my father. Hundreds of Canadian soldiers were killed in the Battle of Hong Kong. Some 300,000 Canadians live in Hong Kong today, and millions of people are marching in the streets for their freedom.

Will the government take a firmer, stronger and clearer position on Hong Kong?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague pointed out, one position that is shared by all Canadians is our support for the people of Hong Kong. I thank my hon. colleague for sharing his personal connection to this issue.

We will always stand up for the rights of the people of Hong Kong. The Prime Minister and my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, have spoken with their counterparts and partners around the world to ensure that the human rights, democratic rights and basic rights of the people of Hong Kong are respected.

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

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Dai Qing is a Chinese citizen, once China's most famous investigative journalist, a former political prisoner, and widely recognized for her writing and lectures at universities across North America. She was invited to Canada again this fall to discuss her new book. However, when she applied for a routine visa, she was surprised that her application was subject to review, and her passport, two months later, is still being held by the Canadian embassy.

Can the minister assure the House that Dai Qing's visa application is not being blocked for political reasons?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first occasion in the 43rd Parliament to rise in the House, I want to thank the good people of Eglinton—Lawrence for re-electing me as their member of Parliament.

I want to assure my hon. colleague that these visa applications are processed by highly trained professional officials within my department. We take these applications very seriously. Of course, they are not motivated, nor would they ever be, for political purposes.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC): Mr. Speaker, fentanyl overdoses are the cause of more and more deaths in Canada and are especially prevalent in British Columbia. Parents and residents in my riding are concerned about the impact of this crisis on our region and the safety of our children and youth.

A significant amount of this drug is illegally imported from China. The Liberals have had four years to act. When will the Liberals take action to prevent opioids from entering our country?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the tragedies that have taken place across Canada as a result of synthetic drugs, the opioid crisis and methamphetamines in so many of our communities. That is why we have taken very significant steps to interdict the supply of these drugs and the precursor chemicals used in their manufacture.

We have ensured that our law enforcement agencies and border security officials have additional resources to deal with this crisis. We are working very collaboratively with our international partners to keep these drugs and the chemicals used in their manufacture out of our country.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister was part of the problem in the 42nd Parliament with the inaction on this file. Due to the Liberals' inaction, 12,000 Canadians have died from the opioid crisis. Fentanyl continues to pour into our country from China. While places like the U.S. have put controls in place, Canada is nowhere on this file.

What is the government going to do to stop the illicit importation of fentanyl into Canada?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has illustrated the strong action we have taken on the importation side. It is really great to hear the member opposite wake up to the crisis that opioid overdoses have presented to our country for well over 10 years.

I come from the world of drug policy and we on this side know that we need to treat this situation as a health crisis. That is what we have been doing. Over the last four years, we have been saving lives so people can access recovery. Every life matters.

The Speaker: Once again I want to remind hon. members that a question was asked and it is being answered. On the other hand, I want to remind both sides that, whether it is a question or an answer, if we do it with respect, I think we get better results.

The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's refusal to defend basic access to health care for Canadians and the fundamental right to choose is inexcusable. It is failing to stand up for people in New Brunswick, who are poised to lose the only abortion provider in Fredericton. This was first raised in 2005. The Liberal minister at the time was supposed to act, but failed. Now, almost 15 years later, the minister has continued to do nothing.

What is it going to take for the Liberals to defend people's rights? When will they enforce the Canada Health Act?

● (1445)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side, our party and our leader have been extremely clear that all Canadian women have the right to receive consistent access to reproductive health services that include abortion. As the Prime Minister has said, we will ensure that the New Brunswick government supports clinics that offer abortion services outside of hospitals.

I know the Prime Minister had a very constructive conversation with the premier. I plan on speaking with my counterpart this week. We will continue to work to make sure that abortion access as well as all reproductive services are available equally across the country.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on October 21, first nations and Métis people in Churchill—Keewatinook Aski sent a message to the Liberal government: enough of promising a new relationship and doing the opposite; enough of promising the Dene to settle the north of 60 land claim and bailing; enough of promising to solve the housing crisis and failing; enough of ignoring the suicide crisis in Gods Lake Narrows where over 100 people, primarily young girls, have attempted suicide in the last four months.

Will the Minister of Indigenous Services acknowledge that the Liberals failed on their promises and act urgently on the issues facing first nations and Métis people?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, departmental health teams continue to work closely with our partners in Manitoba to coordinate augmented crisis response and mental wellness supports to mitigate any gaps in coverage during this time. We are in regular contact with the community of Gods Lake Narrows and departmental officials will be meeting with the community leadership in Gods Lake Narrows on December 11, 2019.

We will continue working with the leadership to support their needs as a community-led approach is the best approach, especially when it comes to mental health wellness.

* * *

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honour to rise in the House to ask a question on behalf of the constituents of my great riding of Markham—Stouffville.

Today, December 10, marks the last day of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. Over those 16 days, we reflected on the lives of the survivors of gender-based violence and the lives of those we have lost.

In York Region, we have come to know that human trafficking is posing a real threat to our young people, and although women in my riding do have access to shelters like the Yellow Brick House and Sandgate and their great staff, it is clear that more needs to be done on prevention—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister for Women and Gender Equality.

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend a warm welcome to my hon. colleague from Markham—Stouffville and thank her for her leadership and for representing her community in the House. It is going to require strong leadership like hers and all hon. members to ensure that we eliminate gender-based violence in Canada.

To date, our government has worked to introduce a strategy to end human trafficking. We have worked to ensure that students are safer on campuses. We have created and maintained 7,000 shelter spaces so that women and children have a safe place to turn to

Oral Questions

when they need it. There is so much more work to do and we are committed to doing just that.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again the government has made major concessions in the new NAFTA.

First it was supply management, and now it is the aluminum industry's turn. This government knows full well that we produce the greenest aluminum in the world, but it just allowed Mexico to import cheaper, dirtier aluminum from China. Workers in my region have been hurt by additional tariffs.

How can the Prime Minister look workers in the eye and tell them he got a better agreement?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we worked hard to sign a good agreement for Canadians.

Our government stood up for Canadian workers and protected jobs. We worked hard with our partners in the United States and Mexico to enhance the progressive aspects of this agreement, the very aspects that the Conservatives voted against. We are proud of the agreement we have, and it will be good for Canadians.

* * *

• (1450)

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, natural gas has been produced safely in British Columbia for over 60 years. B.C.'s natural gas reserves could fuel our domestic consumption and our exports for the next 150 years. The global demand for LNG is expected to grow by 45% in the next decade. There are six LNG projects in British Columbia, with LNG Canada being the largest project in Canadian history.

LNG represents a billion-dollar opportunity for first nations, yet the Minister of Environment wants to talk down our LNG opportunities. Why?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, LNG is well positioned to become a major player in the global LNG industry with proposed projects in the west and in the east. We have strong measures in place to attract investment while also reducing emissions. After securing the single largest private sector investment in Canadian history, it is clear that our plan is working.

Oral Questions

We will continue to take action to ensure Canada is on track to become the world's cleanest producer of LNG and reach global markets.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the voters of Calgary Forest Lawn for electing me to this House. It is a great honour.

The Liberal attack on our energy sector has me worried for my province and my city. Canadian LNG is a world-class product that is desperately needed to help achieve global emission reductions. We need new pipelines to move that gas to the coast, but we cannot do it without changes to Bill C-69, changes that allow Alberta gas to share the opportunity.

When will the Liberals make the changes to Bill C-69 that Alberta and Canada so desperately need?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there need to be better rules to fix the gutted process that was left behind to us. It was a broken process that made Canadians lose trust. It failed to get our resources to new markets. It made large projects, including pipelines, vulnerable to legal challenges.

Our better rules will make good projects move forward and grow our economy in a responsible way. We welcome input from our partners on how to best implement this new legislation.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people of Alberta sent a message to the Liberals this fall about Bill C-69. The energy industry has rejected the bill. Foreign investment is fleeing and 175,000 jobs have been lost in the energy sector. Premiers from coast to coast agree that the bill needs to be changed.

When will the Prime Minister and his government listen to Albertans, make the changes needed and get people back to work?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, I am happy to report to the House that it was just last week that I was standing with the Alberta energy minister in Acheson, Alberta and with some of the 2,200 workers who had been hired at one of many construction sites, as construction of the Trans Mountain expansion project goes ahead.

It was a good day for our energy industry, it was a good day for Alberta and it was a good day for Canada. With a continued commitment to getting it done the right way, the TMX expansion project is being built.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as Pierre Falardeau used to say, we always go too far for those who are going nowhere.

Today, 200 people came to protest in Ottawa because the government is really going nowhere with its national housing strategy.

FRAPRU and the Réseau solidarité itinérance du Québec are in front of the Prime Minister's office at this very moment. They are calling for more new social housing and for help to renovate low-

income housing. They are also asking that funds earmarked to fight homelessness be transferred to them. There are children sleeping outdoors in Montréal.

How much longer must we wait for the government to tackle this issue?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take concrete action to protect the most vulnerable Canadians. As part of the national housing strategy, we are investing \$4.3 billion in the federal community housing initiative, which will help protect and build community housing for more than 330,000 families in Canada.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I may be new here, but I am not an idiot. I understand that there is nothing encouraging in that answer.

The federal strategy does not meet the needs of the people who are hoping and waiting for social housing. Quebec's National Assembly has unanimously called on the federal government to stick to its role, which is to provide Quebec with funding for social housing with no strings attached. The groups want the federal government to provide the money without imposing any directions on Quebec on how to fight homelessness. We have the expertise.

Will the government listen to Quebec and unconditionally transfer—

● (1455)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to fighting homelessness across Canada, including in Quebec. Over the next five years, we will invest more than \$175 million in preventing and reducing homelessness in Quebec, which will help us achieve our goal of reducing chronic homelessness by at least 50%.

*Oral Questions**[English]***THE ECONOMY**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, asked yesterday if he was worried about Canada's weak economy, the finance minister said that it was his job to worry and that he was not worried at all. Well, he should be worried.

Insolvencies have reached a 10-year high. Half of Canadians are \$200 away from going insolvent. Our unemployment rate is above the G7 average, above the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Germany.

On this question of worry, is the finance minister going to look the 71,000 people who lost their jobs last month in the eye and tell them, "Don't worry, be happy"?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have worked hard over the last four years to make sure that we have an opportunity for Canadians to work across the country. Left with a 7.1% unemployment rate from the previous government back in 2015, we immediately started investing, investing in Canadians, investing in families and investing in infrastructure. Our economy grew and we grew employment, more than a million jobs.

We will continue to invest as we see challenges in the economy. Right now we are happy to say that we continue to have growth. We look like we will be the second-fastest-growing country among the G7, and employment continues to be strong in this country.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our unemployment rate is higher than the G7 average. The United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Germany have lower unemployment rates than Canada. Here in Canada, we lost 71,000 jobs in November, and half of Canadians are \$200 away from insolvency at the end of the month.

The minister can ignore these problems, but they continue to exist.

When will he face the facts?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last four years, we have invested in our economy, in families and in Canadians. We are doing well. Our rate of growth is among the highest in the G7. We continue doing well in terms of unemployment.

We will keep investing in Canadians and, as we announced yesterday, we will be reducing income taxes for 20 million Canadians.

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*[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Ontario is a national leader in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In the throne speech, the Prime Minister committed to working with the provinces, but he has yet to accept the made-in-Ontario climate change plan that will actually reduce emissions.

When will the Liberals stop dragging their feet and give Ontario an answer?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that a majority of Canadians voted for serious action on climate change. That means we must co-operate with each other to bring the best ideas forward to fight climate change. We already have a credible and affordable plan, with over 50 measures that were developed by Canadians for Canadians.

While we are making real progress, there is much more to do. We will continue to work with provinces, territories and indigenous peoples across the country to do just that.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the residents and constituents of Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel for their support and allowing me to participate in the present legislature, which will be most productive and effective with everyone's goodwill to move the country forward.

[Translation]

We often hear about the incredible sacrifices Canadians made during the Second World War on D-Day, but we do not hear about those who took part in the less-known, but equally important, Italian campaign.

I know that the Minister of Veterans Affairs was recently in Italy—

• (1500)

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs.

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 75th anniversary of the Italian campaign. It was a great honour for me to lead the delegation to Italy, including 15 incredible veterans of the campaign and members from all sides of the House.

Canadians can be extremely proud of how the Italians thanked the Canadian people and the Canadian veterans. They will never forget the bravery shown by Canadians, and we will always remember them.

*Oral Questions***FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has ignored B.C.'s forest industry and its workers for far too long. Thousands of workers in communities in British Columbia are out of work. Residents in my riding are suffering, thanks to the Liberal government's indifference. These men and women want and need to get back to work.

Could the Liberals inform the House if the new NAFTA agreement includes an agreement on softwood lumber, yes or no?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the new NAFTA that will be signed shortly between Canada, the United States and Mexico. We are very proud that we have continued to stand up for Canadian workers and Canadian industries from coast to coast to coast. We are very proud of the new chapters on the environment, on labour, on dispute settlement to ensure that we get the best deal for Canadians, elements that the Conservatives urged us to abandon.

This is a good deal for Canadians, and we will continue to stand up for them and industries at every opportunity.

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, NorSask Forest Products is a 100% first nations-owned company whose profits are directed to the nine bands that make up the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. These funds are used for services like housing, education and health care, including suicide prevention programs.

Since 2017, NorSask has paid over \$10 million in softwood lumber tariffs. That is \$10 million not being used for services in these communities. When will the Liberals prioritize the negotiation of a new softwood lumber agreement with the United States?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue that my colleague across the way raises. This is something that we have been committed to and are working on very diligently.

The previous minister of foreign affairs, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister will continue to ensure that we advocate for Canada's interest in the softwood lumber industry and ensure we get not just any deal, as the Conservatives keep advocating, but a good deal.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House today for the first time. I am grateful to the good people of Tobique—Mactaquac for electing me as their member of Parliament.

New Brunswick has presented a credible and effective environment plan to the government for review. Unlike the federal carbon tax, New Brunswick's plan is made in New Brunswick and protects consumers and local businesses.

The provincial government is still waiting for a reply. When will New Brunswick receive its answer?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his presence in the House.

We will continue to work with provinces, including the Province of New Brunswick, in order to evaluate its plan and to make sure it is in keeping with the government's priorities.

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HEALTH

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past month, I have heard from many constituents from my riding of Miramichi—Grand Lake who have loved ones struggling with an addiction to crystal meth. Crystal meth devastates lives and communities, and it is both accessible and very cheap.

[*Translation*]

Often, the stigma is also an obstacle for those who want to get help.

Can the Minister of Health tell the House what the government is doing to help Canadians struggling with substance abuse problems?

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake for his advocacy. This is an issue that affects many people and their families. My heart goes out to all the people and families struggling with substance use problems across the country.

Over the past years, we have restored harm reduction to our national drug strategy, because we believe that every life matters and that recovery is always possible. We also know that access to treatment is not equal across the country, which is why we have committed an additional \$700 million to make sure people can access treatment that is appropriate, no matter where they live.

* * *

● (1505)

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while scientists at COP25 and young people across the country insist that this is a climate crisis, the Liberals are all over the map.

The commissioner of the environment and sustainable development announced today that not only are we going to miss the Conservatives' 2030 targets, but also that the Liberals are hiding key information on their climate failure. That is unworthy of a government that claims to be transparent.

Will the Minister of the Environment commit to adopting a green new deal and telling the truth to Quebeckers and Canadians?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge the commissioner's recommendations and we are taking action to follow up on them.

Our government has always been clear that we will meet and surpass our 2030 climate targets, and we believe that this plan will get us there. If we need to do more, we will.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Mr. Speaker, today is Human Rights Day. A year ago this week, the UN human rights office sent a letter to the government requesting information on the steps taken to suspend the Site C dam until free, prior and informed consent was obtained from affected indigenous—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I know some people are new to the House and if I can have some quiet, I can explain what the rules are.

The rules are that if members have something that they refer to, they can use it as a reference, but if they hold it up and use it, that becomes a prop. That is inappropriate by parliamentary rules. I am sure the hon. member did not mean to break the rules.

I will let him continue with his question.

Mr. Paul Manly: Mr. Speaker, my apologies.

Today is Human Rights Day. A year ago this week, the human rights office sent a letter to the government requesting information on the steps taken to suspend the Site C dam until free, prior and informed consent is obtained from affected people. A second letter requesting additional information was sent—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is restoring confidence in federal environmental assessments. The previous government approved the project and set legally binding conditions with which the proponent must comply. We will ensure that every condition attached to the project's approval is met, and we will conduct regular inspections to ensure compliance.

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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

The Speaker: I am now prepared to propose, for the ratification of the House, a candidate for the position of Assistant Deputy Speaker and deputy chair of committee of the whole.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 8, I propose Ms. Hughes for the position of Assistant Deputy Speaker and assistant deputy chair of committee of the whole.

[*English*]

The motion is deemed moved and seconded.

[*Translation*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt this motion?

Business of Supply

Hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Speaker: I am now prepared to propose for the ratification of the House a candidate for the position of Assistant Deputy Speaker and assistant deputy chair of committee of the whole.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 8, I propose Mrs. Mendès for the position of Assistant Deputy Speaker and assistant deputy chair of committee of the whole.

[*Translation*]

The motion is deemed moved and seconded.

[*English*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1510)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—PROPOSED SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and continue my discussion on the importance of this special committee to investigate the trade relationship between Canada and China.

I will take this opportunity to read what Jeff Nielsen, the chair of Grain Growers of Canada, said earlier this week. It relates to the lack of any mention of agriculture in the throne speech and the crisis with canola. He said:

Yesterday's Speech from the Throne displayed a concerning lack of understanding of the unique needs of Canada's export-oriented agriculture producers. This is particularly surprising considering the magnitude of the challenges currently facing farmers in every province across the country.

The absence of any recognition of the dire circumstances facing farmers today, suggests that our political leaders are not only oblivious [to] the harsh realities facing Canada's export oriented farmers, they are without a plan to address them.

Business of Supply

That is a very stark comment by the chair of Grain Growers of Canada about the lack of any consideration for the crisis that Canadian farmers are facing when it comes to our relationship with China. As I said earlier in my speech, 250,000 jobs are at risk and about 45,000 producers across Canada are relying on access to that critical market.

What is in the bins from last year's harvest has already devalued by more than \$1 billion. These funds are not going to farmers to pay off mortgages, loans on equipment or their input costs. It is money they need to purchase the seed to get ready for seeding next year. Many of those farmers have not even been able to harvest this year's crop because of an extremely harsh harvest.

Once again, this is a recurring issue with the Liberal government; it is not something new. The bungling of important trade relations with some of our most critical partners around the world has become a regular occurrence with the Prime Minister. It started with his "tickle trunk" tour of India, which has resulted in the loss of one of our most important customers for pea and pulse crops. Now we are losing our canola crop exports to China, our durum wheat exports to Italy, and barley and wheat exports to Saudi Arabia and Vietnam. It also impacted our relationship with Australia and Japan when we were going through the TPP signing process.

The Prime Minister does not seem to understand the importance of our global relations with some of our most important partners. Unfortunately, time and time again, those paying for these mistakes are in Canadian agriculture: our farmers and ranchers who work extremely hard every single day to ensure that they have the highest-quality products not only on our tables but for customers around the world.

We tried to address this last spring. We asked many times for an emergency debate. I believe it was eight times. Each and every single time the Liberals denied us that opportunity. Then we tried to bring it up at the trade committee and the agriculture committee, but many ministers refused to appear at those committees to discuss the issues we were facing. In fact, we heard the minister say that the crisis with China was not important enough, as it had not reached the stage for sending a delegation, which would have included ministers, to China to address this issue and regain market access.

That is why this special committee is so vital. Members from all parties would have an opportunity to discuss and debate this crisis with China.

Billions of dollars in trade are on the line. The lives of farmers and ranchers across Canada depend on this critical relationship with China. It behooves the government and all members of the House to be part of a special committee to investigate our relationship with China to ensure we get that critical market back.

• (1515)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to many members of the Conservative Party talk about this special committee, but they have failed to clearly demonstrate the difference between this special committee and a standing committee. There is nothing that this special committee

could do that a standing committee could not. Our foreign affairs committee has a history of dealing with many different issues in the past. This is one question I put to my friend across the way.

The other question is on the good, solid suggestion from the Bloc regarding paragraph (k). Why does the Conservative opposition have no confidence in a committee, whether a standing committee or a special committee, to determine on its own who should be the special witnesses, especially given that we have a minority situation?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I think what agriculture producers specifically and all Canadians in general are looking for is leadership, something the Liberals are failing to show. They did not even mention this in the throne speech. The throne speech was supposed to give the pathway of the government's priorities and this crisis was not mentioned.

The Liberals want to show leadership. This committee is important because it would show Canadians that we care about this issue and understand that 250,000 jobs in the agriculture sector, in canola alone, are at risk and more than \$1 billion in crops.

This would show leadership by the Liberal government. It would show Canadians and agriculture producers from coast to coast that this is an important issue that we are willing to step up and address. That is why this special committee is so important.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the People's Republic of China has a history of weaponizing trade, especially with countries in the G7. It has specifically targeted Canada for special sanctions. This is the second time it has taken action specifically on canola, but it happens across the board on different types of agricultural products, whether through slowing down trade or blocking it.

I would like to hear from the member what particular subject matter he thinks this committee could look at.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Shepard is exactly right. We know the decision to block canola exports into China is politically based. Canadian producers have the highest-quality canola in the world. However, this has also had an impact on pork and beef, which China has allowed back in simply because the Asian swine flu has decimated its own pork herd. It had to bring products in from other countries.

There are certainly other commodities at risk. If we do not address the issue, China can expand on the targets of their export ban, whether it is seafood, maple syrup or ginseng. We do not know what other products could be targeted.

That is why it is so important to have this special committee look at what other commodities may very well be at risk. I am sure stakeholders have approached all members about rumours that other products are at risk. These are some of the things this committee could review.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, could my friend explain why we would not have a special committee for any major issue we have to face? Ultimately, one could argue that every opposition day motion that is important to Canada needs to be debated in a special committee.

Has the Conservative Party no confidence in our standing committees? Is that the real reason it is doing this?

• (1520)

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, what are the Liberals afraid of? What are they afraid is going to come out of this special committee that they do not want put out to the public?

We want a forum for stakeholders, ministers and members of every party to have an opportunity to discuss the importance of our relationship with Canada and China, which many of my colleagues across the way have said impacts many different aspects of the Canadian economy, whether in trade, agriculture or manufacturing.

We understand how important this issue and this trading relationship with China is. The government should show leadership here and support our motion to form this special committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to sincerely thank the constituents of Mégantic—L'Érable who did me the honour of once again electing me to represent them in this 43rd Parliament. Over the past few years, we have been able to work hand in hand, together, with people, organizations and elected officials in my riding. People wanted us to continue on with our work, and it is with pride that I will represent them once again during this term as the member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

I want to thank my small team—Isabelle, Hélène, Jessica and Gilles—who have supported me from the beginning and throughout the election campaign, as well as all the volunteers. I also want to thank my family, Caro and my children. When we are here, we are not with them, and it is a great sacrifice for our families to let someone go away for long stretches of time, as we do. We must be grateful to them for allowing us to do the work we love to do here in the House for the good of our ridings and for the good of all Canadians.

Today, on the first opposition day of the 43rd Parliament, the official opposition is introducing a very important motion about the current crisis with China. I want to talk about the Liberal government's failure to come up with a coherent plan in the previous Parliament to protect Canadian interests, including the welfare of our citizens, to protect our commercial interests and our national security interests, and to prepare for China's emerging role in world affairs. This failure is quite simply incomprehensible.

Canadians no longer have confidence in the Prime Minister when it comes to his performance on the world stage. Here is a little history to remind us why Canadians have lost confidence in this Prime Minister. We can all remember his famous and disastrous trip to India. Then there was a series of serious diplomatic incidents around the world, including those involving our main trading partner, the United States. Our Prime Minister is well known for putting his own personal brand, and that of his party, ahead of Canada's interests.

That attitude has isolated Canada at a time when our role as a country, as a member of NATO, of the G7, of NORAD and of the Five Eyes is more important and necessary than ever. Let us therefore take advantage of the fact that we have a minority government and hold the Prime Minister to account. We have wanted to hold him to account before. We have tried to get answers to these questions before. Unfortunately, the government turned a deaf ear and pretended there was no China crisis. The fact that we have a minority government finally gives us an opportunity to hold the Prime Minister to account and make sure the government takes this situation seriously from now on.

Our motion would create a special committee to resolve the current diplomatic dispute with China and develop a specialized, multidisciplinary approach to addressing the many bilateral challenges that characterize Canada-China relations.

We invite this committee to meet in the new year and fulfill all of its duties by June 2020. Already, the time between now and June 2020 is less time than it took the government across the aisle to acknowledge that there was even a crisis with China. The committee will therefore have until June 2020 to make its recommendations. It will have the authority to call experts, key witnesses, including the Prime Minister, our ambassador to China and other government ministers, to enable Parliament to carry out its democratic duty. That is very important.

We understand that in international relations, there are sensitive issues, some of which sometimes have to be discussed behind closed doors, such as all national security issues. That is why our motion gives the committee the power to meet in camera in order to protect sensitive information related to national security and consular cases that may be more complex.

Judging from the debate since this morning, it is clear that the government does not intend to support this motion. Clearly, the government is afraid of this special committee.

• (1525)

What is it afraid of? We do not know. However, this government claims to be transparent and open. Since the election on October 21, it has been repeating over and over again that it will work with the opposition parties. Today, we are proposing that the government take the first concrete step toward co-operation, to enable all parliamentarians in the House to study this difficult situation between Canada and China. Parliamentarians from all parties would be brought together in a special committee to come up with a real solution to this diplomatic crisis, which is getting worse every day. The government should welcome this proposal from the official opposition, because it will allow us to explore the essential elements of Canada-China relations, which are politically quite complex.

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If the government opposes this modest proposal to create a committee to discuss it, it will just be admitting that it wants to avoid talking about how it handled the crisis in the previous Parliament. It would be ignoring its role as a minority government by not allowing Parliament to create a committee to study this relationship.

Clearly, the Liberals have been having a very hard time with China. The government's first mistake was appointing John McCallum, a former Liberal cabinet minister who was ousted from his role as minister and later ousted from his role as ambassador. He only made the relationship between Canada and the Chinese government worse. After that, the Prime Minister took months to appoint a new Canadian ambassador to China, which prevented us from working on our relationship with China for months.

Lastly, when China imposed unacceptable restrictions on Canadian agricultural products, a Liberal minister thought it was a good idea to go to China to promote Canadian investments in China. This government is mismanaging this whole affair and definitely lacks leadership and vision.

As a final point, I would like to talk about canola. For too long, this government denied the very existence of the Canadian canola crisis. It wonders why we are asking for a new committee. It is because we asked the Liberals to talk about canola over and over again in the previous Parliament. We asked for an emergency debate in the House a number of times, but the Liberals refused. We asked the minister to appear before the Standing Committee on International Trade, but they refused. We had to apply constant pressure day after day for them to agree. We never were able to discuss this at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. That is the reality.

If the government refuses to talk about the real facts, then it is only natural for the opposition to call for the appointment of a special committee to examine the Canada-China relationship so we can review all aspects and hear from every parliamentary group that has something to say about how this government might find a solution. It is clear that the Liberals do not have a solution and are not looking for one.

This special committee would help the government and allow parliamentarians from all parties to provide input on ways to help the government. What the Liberals do not realize is that our intention is to help canola producers and everyone who trades with China. Ultimately, that is what this type of committee should be used for, and it is our job to serve our constituents, our businesses and our farmers.

The time has come for the Prime Minister to take off his rose-coloured glasses and see the China crisis for what it is. He must live up to Canadian values, which are based on rights and freedoms. We must support the opposition motion, which seeks to get Canada out of this diplomatic crisis with China.

• (1530)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to focus on how important it is that we recognize the valuable contributions committees can make, whether it is

a special committee or a standing committee, to healthy parliamentary discussions.

I was interested in what was being proposed by the Bloc party. It did not move an amendment, but I am very much interested in what thoughts the Conservatives have on this issue, as it deals with the independence of the special committees and standing committees.

Why does the Conservative Party find it necessary that the chamber dictate to a special committee, and I suspect also to a standing committee, if one follows the logic, as to who should appear? Why would we not entrust that responsibility to the standing committee or special committee? Would the Conservatives not agree that we should have confidence in those committees?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, this government has created special committees on medical assistance in dying, electoral reform and pay equity.

Did this government establish those committees because it had no confidence in the other House committees? Why did this government see fit to create special committees? It was because special situations required a special, specific response from Parliament.

We are saying that the government has done nothing. It showed that it was incapable of dealing with the crisis for the entire time it had a majority. Today, it has a minority.

Since the government has not been able to get this done, we will create a committee and we will solve the crisis ourselves.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable for his return to the House. I sincerely enjoyed working with him in the previous Parliament on the agriculture committee, and I look forward to working with the member for Foothills on that very important subject.

When we are debating this motion, the fates of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig are in everyone's hearts. In everything we do, we should have the well-being of those two gentlemen at our hearts in our deliberations.

The Liberals keep on raising the point that by setting up this special committee, we will somehow be endangering those two men. I invite my colleague to explain to the House the ways in which this special committee could conduct itself to keep those diplomatic efforts safe and secure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I feel that this special committee will give us a chance to talk about our diplomatic relations with China as a whole, to look for ways out and opportunities for discussion, and to use all possible means available to Canada to find a solution to this situation, which has gone on too long.

The committee would even be able to meet in camera to discuss sensitive issues without hindering any negotiations that might be under way to secure the release of the Canadians, the two Michaels, who are currently being detained in China. Our thoughts are certainly with those Canadians and their families.

I hope that this committee will be able to further their cause so that they can finally be free.

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to see you back in the chair.

I want to ask my colleague a question and go through a bit of a history lesson here on why we are raising these concerns.

The small business tax changes devastated Canadian farmers. Then we had the grain backlog and lost trade relationships with India, China and many other countries. We had the CN strike this fall. Then agriculture was not mentioned in the throne speech. Also, this summer the Liberals missed a critical deadline in applying for negligible risk status for BSE. Now our Ontario ranchers are having an extremely difficult time. Canadian farmers see the indifference from the Liberal government and how it just does not seem to care about agriculture.

I would like to ask my colleague, from whom I am honoured to take the title of shadow minister of agriculture after he had done such an amazing job over the last year, why he thinks the leadership that this special committee will show to Canadian farmers is so important.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, Canadian farmers and producers expect their government to show leadership.

As the member for Foothills mentioned, he will be taking over for me as shadow minister of agriculture, and I am very proud of that. I can confirm that he has always been a friend to farmers and that he was one of the people who helped me fulfill my duties as shadow minister and fully understand the situation in western Canada.

What he is saying is that, for the past few months and years, we have had a government that ignores agriculture. This government has shown no leadership in resolving the crises that agriculture is currently facing. It did not even lift a finger to address the recent crisis caused by the CN strike, when farmers in Quebec and Ontario had no propane.

If the government will not show leadership, it is entirely appropriate for the official opposition to do so, under the capable direction of my colleague, the member for Foothills.

[*English*]

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by indicating I will be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga Centre.

I am very pleased to rise today to address this important motion that has been raised by the member for Durham. Obviously I want

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to acknowledge that it has been one year since Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were arbitrarily detained in China. It must be stated that they are and remain our absolute priority as a government and as Canadians.

[*Translation*]

With perseverance, care and determination, we are working to bring them back to Canada. Our government will always raise issues that matter to Canadians with the Chinese government, including respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Canada remains staunchly committed to defending its principles and interests.

[*English*]

This matter that is being raised today and being debated in this chamber is not a concern just for Canada. It is also a concern for all of our allies. This shared concern has led to a broad coalition of support and we as Canadians are grateful to our many international allies who have stepped up and spoken out on these two citizens' behalf. Speaking with one voice demonstrates that we as Canadians are not alone on the international stage.

As has been referenced at different times during the course of today's debate and during question period, we know that December 10 is Human Rights Day. I want to focus a bit on human rights in the context of the debate on today's motion.

We know that human rights matter, not just for international organizations but they matter to everyday Canadians whom we engage with as our constituents, whom we have engaged with on the campaign trail. Human rights matter and our foreign policy reflects that very same issue.

We, as the Canadian government, have consistently called on China to respect, protect and promote freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of religion and belief of all Chinese citizens.

[*Translation*]

Canada is deeply concerned about the ongoing intimidation and repression of ethnic and religious minorities and other vulnerable groups in China, including Tibetan Buddhists, Uighurs and other Muslims, Christians, Falun Gong practitioners, women and girls, and members of the LGBTI community.

Canada has also expressed concerns about the shrinking space for civil society in China and the troubling and continued intensification of actions against human rights defenders, like lawyers, journalists and civil society actors.

[*English*]

These are important issues I am speaking of, and I say this as a member of our government caucus, as a parliamentary secretary in the past Parliament and also as someone who represents Tibetan Buddhists in my riding of Parkdale—High Park. Seven thousand strong, it is the largest Tibetan diaspora in North America.

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We raise these issues not just for the Tibetan people but for many different groups, including the Uighur Muslims as I have mentioned and including the various other groups that have had, and continue to have, their human rights restrained in China.

We have consistently raised these human rights concerns. Let me indicate one that has preoccupied me directly. As a member of this House, and as one of 10 Muslim members of the government caucus, members can appreciate that I am gravely concerned and preoccupied with the situation concerning Uighur Muslims in what is known as Xinjiang.

We as a government have spoken out publicly at the UN Human Rights Council, urging Chinese authorities to release all Uighurs who are arbitrarily being detained in Xinjiang. We have seen reports as recently as the past two weeks about the conditions, about the scope of the detention, about the scope of the internment and about the scope of the persecution that is happening.

As a government, we spoke out in statements in September 2018, November 2018 and March 2019. In July 2019, we stood alongside 21 other members of the international community, including Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Japan and the United Kingdom, and presented a letter to the Human Rights Council expressing these very specific concerns.

Most recently, again on this Uighur point, on October 29 the United Kingdom, on behalf of 23 countries including Canada, expressed its concern regarding the arbitrary detention of Uighurs and the deprivation of human rights in Xinjiang, China, at the third committee of the UN General Assembly with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

I will turn to another issue that is very much at the core of why I stand in this House and why I defend the rights of my constituents each day that I can. It is the issue of Tibetans and Tibetan rights being protected within China.

● (1540)

Today is not only Human Rights Day, which is celebrated internationally, but it also happens to be the 30th anniversary of the recognition and bestowing of the Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He is venerated internationally because he stands up for religious freedom. He stands for non-violence and stands against persecution and in favour of what is called the middle way approach.

Let us talk about what we have done as a government with respect to Tibetans. We have publicly voiced concerns to that same body about the Tibetan plight at the United Nations Human Rights Council, and to the Chinese authorities themselves about the intimidation and repression of the ethnic minority and religious groups in China, including Tibetans.

We made specific representations to the Chinese about the case of linguistic advocate Tashi Wangchuk. Tashi Wangchuk is a person who dared to speak out about promoting the Tibetan language in the Tibet Autonomous Region. He was charged and imprisoned unfairly. Canada has spoken up about his case and we will continue to do so.

We have also spoken up as the Canadian government about continuing to seek access to what is called the TAR, the Tibet Autonomous Region, for our diplomats, parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations and for visiting delegations. This is a concept known as reciprocal access. If a foreign government arrives here in Canada, its movements are unimpeded. We want the same access when we visit China, including into the Tibet Autonomous Region.

We have also consistently advocated for substantial and meaningful dialogue between the Chinese government and His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his representatives to work toward a resolution of issues acceptable to both sides. We did this at bilateral meetings in 2016, 2017 and 2018, and we will continue to do so at every opportunity.

This is critical to underscore because this motion is important. It is important that it is being raised by the member for Durham because it touches on the Canada-China relationship and many aspects of it.

One of the fundamental aspects of that relationship is how we respect one another, how we deal with what we call the rule of law and how we address the protection of fundamental human rights. The Tibetan plight, the Uighur plight and many others are at the core of what we must be addressing, lest I mention Falun Gong.

The member from Ottawa West—Nepean, who has been the chair of the subcommittee on human rights, has looked at this issue, among others, very closely at that subcommittee. The committee has looked at things like organ harvesting and some of the really problematic issues that have arisen with Falun Gong. We have spoken out about that and will continue to speak out about it.

Let us talk about the broader bilateral relationship now. In terms of that, we are ensuring that we have dialogue at every level. The newly entrenched Minister of Foreign Affairs was recently at the G20 meetings in Nagoya at the end of November raising these issues that I am mentioning.

We have had further discussions with the Chinese authorities about an important point that was raised by the opposition critic for agriculture, which is the issue of canola and what we are doing to ensure there is access to Canadian canola in the Chinese markets. We are speaking out loudly and clearly about climate change and about how, if this is a global problem, it requires a global solution that China has to be part of.

We have talked about health. It is part of the dialogue that we are having with the Chinese, as well as about co-operation on health issues. There is cultural bilateral co-operation occurring. All of these are critical issues, and we are exploring all of them in the context of developing this relationship.

This is an emerging global power. This is a relationship that has to be cultivated. It has to be developed in a balanced way but also in a principled way. There is no contention between us and the party opposite with respect to that issue. We must speak with principle and we must speak in a balanced framework, but we must address the relationship clearly and vociferously, particularly highlighting the issues I have raised about human rights.

It is a difficult moment. That is clear to anyone who reads the newspapers. However, what we are keeping in mind always is the safety and security of Canadians, which remains our top priority. We believe and have clearly stated that the detentions that have occurred are arbitrary and should end. We have rallied international allies to that cause. Engaging is important because it promotes Canada's interests globally, and we will maintain that communication line open and clear.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

More generally, Canada will continue to stand on our principles and defend the rules-based international order that has sustained global peace and prosperity for decades. In our principled engagement with China, we will pursue collaboration where we can and defend our values and interests where we must.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Parkdale—High Park for his speech and his very obvious commitment to human rights both here in Canada and abroad.

Two of the most important functions the House serves, and indeed its committees, are oversight and accountability. We have oversight over government programs and we make sure that the government is accountable for delivering on its mandate and providing services that Canadians need.

I have heard the Liberal arguments refer to the fact that there are many standing committees that already have mandates to look into issues associated with our relationship with China, and I agree. However, one of the limitations on standing committees is that they are grasping at all these different threads and many of them have different agendas and different pressures for different studies.

I am trying to come to terms with the Liberals' reluctance to establish a special committee so that we can take all of those different threads and weave them together in a comprehensive report that will get us somewhere with the relationship that is really the trying issue of our time in international relations.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for his comments and for his contributions to the House. It is an interesting question, but I would offer up a couple of aspects in response.

First, rarely do we have a special committee struck to study a relationship between two singular nations. We have friendship groups and parliamentary associations that sometimes deal with a particular bilateral relationship.

Second, committees are masters of their own destiny, so regardless of which committee members are on, particularly in a minority Parliament where the opposition parties have the majority on committees, they can determine what should be studied by which committee.

In terms of housing it all in one place, that is a fair point and I appreciate that contribution to this debate, but I would point out that, again, the Subcommittee on International Human Rights is

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where we had the most glaring study about the Uighur situation thus far done by this Parliament.

Different committees, including subcommittees, are already doing terrific work. I want to empower those committees to continue that work to shine a focus on the accountability of the Chinese government, specifically with respect to human rights.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague from Parkdale—High Park. I know that he has been a tremendous advocate working with the Tibetan community and it is wonderful to hear him speak about it.

What we have today is a motion about setting up a special committee specifically to delve into issues with the Canada-China relationship. He has said and set out quite carefully the delicate balance in some of these issues that we are talking about today.

Does he believe that what is proposed in the motion today is the best way to go about all of those issues that he has stated so well and explained to us?

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, everything I have learned in this chamber in the last five years has been about the delicacy of dealing with consular matters and the delicacy of dealing with matters that affect people's lives very severely, including when we have two people unjustly imprisoned in a foreign territory. While difficult, these are very sensitive matters that are best dealt with through consular channels between the two governments and not through public airing.

I firmly believe that to be the case. It does not mean that the opposition gets excluded from participating in this kind of endeavour. It means members can and should be included, but it needs to be done in a very careful manner that most fundamentally respects the privacy and confidentiality of the families above all else.

• (1550)

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I struggle with is that the current situation with the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs has not been successful. The relationship with China is failing. We have gone nowhere. Performance is usually rated in success. I do not see any success. We have two Canadians in jail. They are going to have their second Christmas in China held in jail, yet we are not moving forward.

The proposed committee for China and Canada to build a relationship is going to be successful. It will be based on performance measures.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member to the chamber and I welcome his question. I would respectfully disagree that there has been no success with respect to the Canada-China relationship. We are going through a difficult period, but the longevity of that relationship commenced by the first Trudeau to serve as prime minister in the House is a strong one, as it needs to be.

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We have always spoken clearly about the importance of equality in human rights and the rule of law in the context of developing that relationship, literally since about 1971 or 1972. That relationship is going through a brief period of some concern, but I think the relationship can and will remain strong because we are so economically integrated. We will continue that economic integration through pursuing further avenues of trade and engagement with Asia as we have done with CPTPP and as we will do with the LNG facility at Kitimat.

There are many avenues for further exchange and dialogue with the Chinese. We need to be at the forefront of that, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I rise for the first time in the 43rd Parliament, I want to thank my constituents for once again re-electing me to this chamber. I want to thank my supporters, my friends and everyone who believed in me. I watched the unfolding of the previous election through order and peace. We have to remind ourselves of how great our country is and that we must never take our democracy for granted. I am delighted to be back here, along with my colleagues and the leadership of our Prime Minister. I look forward to continuing to serve my constituents with integrity and pride.

Today, we are debating a very important issue and motion. I want to thank my colleague for Durham for proposing this motion. I have had the privilege to serve as a parliamentary secretary for consular affairs for a period of time. I worked with my colleagues from all parties in responding to important cases where Canadians found themselves in difficult situations abroad. As well, I worked with my colleagues in the opposition in responding to those situations and I saw first-hand how complicated and difficult this process is. I saw first-hand how anxious the families are when it comes to their loved ones being stuck in difficult circumstances abroad. I could never imagine the magnitude of anguish that families and friends go through when their loved ones are in a very difficult and uncertain situation abroad.

That goes for Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig. This is a very important case. Both of them are very close to our government. We are seized with the situation. The Prime Minister, the previous minister of foreign affairs, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, our entire government, our public servants, our ambassador and our consular officials are following this case with incredible care. It is a priority for our government and I know it is a priority for all members of the House of Commons and for all Canadians.

I welcome the pressure from the opposition on this case. I welcome its interventions on how to deal with this case. However, I want to remind my colleagues, some of whom were in government in the past, that they know how delicate and sensitive these cases are. They know that it requires a lot of diplomacy, conversations and discussions. They know that a lot of the time excessive public partisan and hyperpartisan debate can be unhelpful to the individual cases. I know they know that, and I am not suggesting that is what they are trying to do today, so I welcome the fact they play an important role in this. However, I want to repeat my plea to my colleagues, as I have done in the past, to avoid doing something they might think will be helpful to the case that might be counterproductive. Therefore, I welcome the fact that they have a role to play, but

it is highly important that we realize the sensitivity and delicacy of the situation and accept that we need to work together to find a way to bring these two Canadians back home safely and that we need to do it in a most effective way.

I also want to say to my colleagues that we can be firm and diplomatic. We can be principled and pragmatic. It is very important not to confuse diplomacy with weakness. It is incredibly important not to confuse pragmatism with lack of principle. I know that sometimes it can be seductive for partisan games to take place and to play out these issues in a public arena. I just want remind my colleagues that consular cases require persistent principle and delicate handling.

• (1555)

In my role as parliamentary secretary, I have seen how that type of work pays dividends. I have seen how persistent, diplomatic and consistent work with allies and like-minded countries working through multilateral fora pays dividends.

To date, it has not brought back the two Michaels, I admit that. We need to continue to look for more ways to advocate for Canadians in China and elsewhere. However, it is counterproductive to assume that increased partisan attention will be helpful in this case.

My colleagues in the opposition have an important role to play here. Even when I do not agree with them or their proposals, I recognize we must not take democracy for granted. We must cherish the role of every MP in this chamber and accept their input and feedback.

I want to remind members that it is really important to leave consular cases outside the political realm. That does not mean that we cannot work together on this case or other cases. We have worked together behind the scenes in the past, advocating for consular cases, working for Canadians, making sure they are safe and that their interests are advocated for, and working hard until we see them returned to their families and their loved ones here at home.

We are in a minority Parliament and there are many opportunities for us to work together, to advocate for good policies and to advocate for all Canadians who have elected us to the House of Commons.

We have standing committees that are asked to conduct studies, consult experts and work with stakeholders to provide recommendations to the government of the day. I see no reason why the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs cannot do the study or examine the other factors the motion is describing. The motion deals with really important issues that deserve parliamentary attention and debate. For the life of me, I do not understand why there is a need for a new committee when we already have an existing committee to conduct studies like the one the motion is asking for.

I look forward to discussing this further.

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• (1600)

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off by thanking the residents from Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge for voting for me. I am just happy to serve them in this House and in our communities.

As I listen to the members from the Liberal caucus speak, I must admit that it is very disconcerting to keep hearing words such as “delicate”, “we are in a delicate situation” or “it is a sensitive matter”, and “diplomacy”. It appears to me that the Chinese government has absolutely no respect for the Canadian government in the way it has mocked the Prime Minister as a “little potato”, and how it has blocked imports from Canada without fearing any repercussions, even though we import twice as much from them. The fact of the matter is that we are dealing with a bully, whether it be toward the Chinese government, their neighbours, their own people, minorities and others, or Canada.

Does the member not see that striking this committee is an opportunity to show strength and focus on this very important issue and relationship?

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome my colleague to the House of Commons. I appreciate having the privilege of answering his first question.

Colleagues will not be surprised to hear me say that I disagree with some of the characterization that the hon. member included in his question. Having said that, I do not disagree that there is an opportunity for members of Parliament to have a forum to have these conversations. I also want to reiterate that people should not confuse diplomacy with a lack of firmness. People should not confuse pragmatism with being principled.

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs would be able to conduct this study and do this research. It is able to reach out to other stakeholders for the entire representation of the House of Commons, to hear directly from them and draw its own conclusions.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member is right. The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs could look at this issue, as could the Standing Committee on Agriculture or the Standing Committee on International Trade. I mean that is the very point. We have a number of different standing committees that could look at different aspects of this. My argument all day long has been that it is entirely proper for this House to constitute a special committee to weave all these threads together and constitute it into a report that is comprehensive and all-encompassing.

The hon. member was referring throughout his speech to how delicate consular affairs are and he will find no disagreement on this side of the House. We very much agree.

Would the member not agree that there are ways for committees to handle themselves when discussing sensitive subjects? First of all, I would assume that all members of the committee would realize the seriousness of the issue that they are facing, but there are also opportunities for that committee to go in camera so that those delicate discussions happen behind closed doors. Would he not

agree that this is an entirely appropriate avenue for a committee to go down, should it be discussing those sensitive topics?

• (1605)

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his re-election.

The member posed two questions to me. His first question was about why we cannot have a committee that brings together a variety of files into one committee. He knows the foreign affairs committee is mandated to deal with issues of foreign affairs. It may have different dimensions within it, but it has something to do with Canada's relationship with a foreign country. I will repeat that, in my opinion, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs is able to draw on all of these various files and study them at the same time.

I hope and I believe that many members of this House understand the delicacy of consular affairs. People will forgive me for being skeptical. All we need to do is look at question period at times to realize that there are sometimes irresponsible questions or irresponsible conduct that takes place on delicate matters. Please forgive me, but I need to do my job in reminding all of us how delicate this matter is.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the excellent member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

As the party that received the most votes in the last election, the Conservative Party is working hard to lead constructively in this minority Parliament and use its increased clout to drive conversation and solutions on vital challenges facing this country. One of those is the Canada-China relationship. Recognizing that our existing standing committees often have a full agenda, are designed to focus on specific individual policy areas, and very likely will not start their operations until well into the new year, we believe that this Parliament must strike a special committee right now to study all aspects of the Canada-China relationship, and to study them on an ongoing basis. Of particular importance to me would be the way that Canada can be a stronger voice on the world stage for human rights and to counter the efforts of China's government throughout its repressive political model around the world.

China's current political model is straight out of George Orwell's book, *1984*, with constant surveillance and a system of social credit where one's every action is monitored, and the ability to do any basic activity is dependent on a social score assigned by the party. All activity, all investment, all speech, all opinion, everything, is intended to be under the thumb of the state. The state does not recognize the bounds of the law or commitment, including commitments to other countries.

The Prime Minister has expressed admiration for China's so-called basic dictatorship and his hand-picked ambassador led a company which was heavily dependent on contracts from Chinese state-owned companies. I wonder if Dominic Barton and our Prime Minister read *1984* during their childhood and thought that it sounded like a great place to live.

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China's repressive political system is not what the Chinese people want. It is not what the people of other Asian and African nations want, even though citizens of other nations face the increasing imposition of Chinese government-backed actors on their countries. Orwellian authoritarianism is not what Canadians want. It is not what almost anyone wants. Therefore, we must stand together against this oppressive political model. Our party stands unapologetically for the advancement of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This is in our interests and is reflective of our values.

I would like to highlight some of the key problems we see today which necessitate the engagement of this Parliament through the creation of this special committee. I will comment on the situation of Uighurs, Tibetans, Christians, Hong Kongers, students, Taiwanese Falun Gong practitioners and people in neighbouring and regional countries.

The Chinese government is detaining Uighur Muslims in concentration camps. This is a further step in a long-running effort to destroy their culture and their faith. Every Ramadan, Uighur Muslims have faced repression of their right to fast in an attempt to impede this important expression of personal piety.

Under the Liberal government, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board put over \$48 million of Canadian pension money into Hikvision and Dahua, companies that are working closely with China's military and playing a significant role in Uighur imprisonment. When this was raised in question period earlier this year by my colleague from Calgary Shepard, the government said that the pension board's job is to focus on return on investment, but I believe that the government should hold our pension board to basic standards of morality.

As the grandson of a Holocaust survivor, I cannot accept the government's blasé attitude toward our pension fund's participation in the construction of mass detention and concentration camps in our own time. This is precisely the kind of Islamophobia that the government should be seized with.

We are seeing the escalating persecution of Tibetans, including the continuation of a long-standing policy of repression of religious, cultural and linguistic freedoms. One of the latest developments is the effort by China's government to control the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. Essentially, the atheist, materialist, Marxist government purports to be able to determine the Dalai Lama's succession by knowing and identifying his reincarnation. This would be comical if it was not deadly serious. Indeed, we have seen this before with the real Panchen Lama being disappeared and the Chinese government advancing its own candidate instead. This is one of many serious violations of religious freedom that we see in Tibet.

We must not neglect the escalating devastating persecution of Christians in China. Violations of religious freedom can take two predominant forms. One form is the old Maoist way of trying to explicitly eradicate religion. The more common current model is where religious movements are allowed to maintain the external ceremonial aspects of religion but are required to always conform their teaching to the state doctrine. Essentially, they say that it is fine to be a Christian as long as the teachings and attributes of Xi

Jinping are put ahead of the teachings and attributes of Christ. Christian movements that refuse this conformist approach face repression.

• (1610)

We see repression of individual believers as well as the violent destruction of churches, such as the Golden Lampstand Church, and also the destruction of houses of worship for other faith communities. Efforts to eradicate religion and to co-opt and control religion are a serious violation of fundamental human rights. They are unacceptable in China, in Canada or anywhere else. Our defence of religious freedom must always include the freedoms of Christians, an aspect often left out.

Let us talk about the situation in Hong Kong. Hong Kong entered into the one country, two systems framework in 1997. The Government of China has repeatedly violated this agreement in so many respects, undermining the autonomy of Hong Kong. People in Hong Kong have highlighted to me how police there seem to have taken on the attributes of mainland military police instead of Hong Kong's own separate police force.

Protestors in Hong Kong are concerned about violation of the one country, two systems framework and have five concrete demands: the withdrawal of the extradition bill; stop labelling protestors as rioters; drop charges against protestors; conduct an independent inquiry into police behaviour; and implement genuine universal suffrage for the legislative council and the chief executive. We support these objectives and especially we wish to highlight the importance of meaningful universal suffrage.

Many of Hong Kong's legislators are elected in so-called functional constituencies, whereby essentially a few insider companies get to pick the legislators. On this side of the House, we stand with the people of Hong Kong and we support universal suffrage. I asked the minister twice today if she supports universal suffrage and real democracy in Hong Kong. She talked about the right to protest, but she refused twice to answer my question on the issue of universal suffrage.

I have many concerns about the state of freedom of speech at universities in Canada, but this challenge is made significantly worse when foreign governments act to undermine freedom of speech on Canadian campuses. The dependence of many universities on the revenue associated with international students and the dependence of academics studying China on visa access to China are points of significant vulnerability.

When a well-known Tibetan student, Chemi Lhamo, was elected as president of the U of T Scarborough student union, she faced an orchestrated campaign of harassment. When a student group called McMaster Muslims for Peace and Justice at McMaster University organized an event to highlight Uighur abuses, efforts were made to disrupt the event. The Chinese consulate in Toronto praised this action, saying, “We strongly support the just and patriotic actions of Chinese students.” There was no response from Canada to this gross abuse of our sovereignty by the consulate.

More recently, ahead of a visit to the Chinese embassy in Ottawa, members of the Carleton International Relations Society were asked not to raise controversial topics.

University students must embrace a role that they have traditionally occupied as thoughtful provocateurs for justice. We think of the freedom riders of the civil rights movements or the students who faced down tanks during the 1989 pro-democracy protest in Tiananmen Square.

University campuses and the presence there of many international students from China should create opportunities for free and open dialogue, dialogue which, when free and open, will lead to the advancement of freedom and democracy, human rights and the rule of law. However, this dialogue cannot happen if universities and student groups are subject to foreign pressure and manipulation. Preserving the integrity of our academic institutions is something in which there is a pressing national interest, and I hope this special committee would specifically take on the situation at our universities involving Canadian and international students who are studying there.

Taiwan, a free Chinese democracy, is a beacon of hope in the region. Taiwan is the example of all that China could be, a free and open society which preserves and celebrates China's ancient and beautiful civilization. However, unfortunately the Chinese government increasingly tries to interfere in the domestic affairs of Taiwan. Last year, Air Canada caved to a demand by the Chinese government to list Taiwan as part of its territory, with no response from Canada.

I have spoken frequently about the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China and particularly about the issue of organ harvesting and trafficking, which requires urgent action.

Finally, the colonial policy of the Chinese government throughout Africa and Asia is a pressing concern of many people in those countries and many Canadians from various backgrounds. It is ironic that China's government is actually using a similar colonial approach that colonial European powers used in China in the past. The Chinese government is imposing multi-decade leases on vital infrastructure, which gives it ongoing leverage over internal affairs.

The Liberal government, by pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into the Chinese government-controlled Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, is not only failing to oppose this program; it is actively funding it. The government's response to our proposal of a cross-cutting committee focusing specifically on this problem is to suggest that parliamentarians or the House are ill-suited to respond to this problem. I believe that the government is ill-suited to re-

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spond to this challenge, and that is why parliamentary scrutiny is required.

We reject any admiration about basic dictatorship and we believe in the principle of parliamentary scrutiny over the executive. Thankfully, in a minority Parliament where the government got only one-third of the votes, we as the opposition have the power to assert that principle of parliamentary sovereignty and we will.

• (1615)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member's speech was very information and he went over a lot of different topics.

We are debating a topic today that people across Canada care about deeply. This is something that is concerning Canadians, so it is important to be thinking about these issues.

Despite that, I would like to ask the member opposite whether he actually believes that going with the route of having this type of a committee struck would actually be helpful and sensitive to all of the people involved.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, yes, I do. It is self-evident that it is.

The lines coming from members of the government suggesting that these are very sensitive topics so they need not be discussed in Parliament or by parliamentarians are profoundly disrespectful to this institution and to the people who sent us here to advocate for them.

Parliamentary committees have a vast range of options and tools at their disposal. They can hear testimony in camera. They can very reasonably assess the challenges and the sensitivities, whether in camera, travelling or selecting certain agenda items or not. The suggestion by members opposite is that it is not legitimate to have parliamentary scrutiny of the actions of government on the most important foreign affairs file.

Let us remember that in some countries around the world, such as the U.K., the government has the intention to engage in military operations and then decides not to after being directed to by Parliament. I think we should have a stronger Parliament, a Parliament which stands up to the government. We have a minority Parliament. Part of working and having strong institutions is our being able to direct the government as parliamentarians and acting responsibly as we do that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to ask my question on several occasions today, and I look for a response from the member opposite. It is in regard to the importance of recognizing the independence of these committees.

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We have consistently said that standing committees do a lot of fantastic work for Canadians. Whether it is a standing committee or a special committee, committees provide the opportunity for parliamentarians to work together and produce some really good things. Part of their responsibility is also determining who they would call for witnesses. The Bloc believes that paragraph (k) should have been deleted from the motion that has been proposed.

Does the member opposite feel that the House of Commons should dictate to standing committees or a special committee who should appear, or should it be the special committee and the standing standing committees that determine who should appear before them?

• (1620)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, in the last Parliament that member and his colleagues voted in favour of many motions that delivered explicit instructions to committees to undertake particular studies and to do so within specifically prescribed timelines. That member has voted in favour of those initiatives many times.

This motion is about creating a committee. I believe in the independence of committees, but it is hard for a committee to be independent if it has not yet been created. This motion brings a committee into existence, which could then exercise its independence over its agenda. Paragraph (k) in our motion gives the committee the power to call certain ministers and the Prime Minister to appear as it sees fit. It retains the authority of the committee.

During the election, the Munk School wanted to have a debate about foreign policy. All of the other party leaders agreed, but the Prime Minister refused. He did not want to have a debate about his approach to foreign policy. It is therefore very legitimate in this Parliament to have the committee hearings and the discussions that the Prime Minister was unwilling to have during the election, and to force the Prime Minister to answer difficult questions about this vital foreign policy file in a way that he was unwilling to during the election.

These are vital issues, and this Parliament is very much the place where those things can be discussed. We can direct committees to have the tools to do it. We are not prescribing which ministers will be called and when. However, we need to be clear in this motion that when the committee asks for a minister or for the Prime Minister to attend and testify, it is not acceptable for the Prime Minister or the minister to simply refuse to show up. That has happened in the past, when ministers and the Prime Minister have been unavailable to the needs of the committee to hear information from them.

This section gives the committee the flexibility, but it also empowers the committee, so that when the committee says that it needs to hear from the Prime Minister, he cannot do what he did during the election for the Munk debates and just refuse to show up. He would actually need to show up and answer the challenging but important questions members of Parliament would put to him.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to rise and join in this debate. This is my first opportunity in the 43rd Parliament to thank the good people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola who have expressed their faith in me and want me to continue my work here on their behalf.

As this is our first official opposition day motion in this hung Parliament, it is important that the opposition pick an important topic, and this one is 100% appropriate. The government right now is struggling with its ongoing engagement with China, so is important that Parliament weigh in on this in this hung Parliament.

I would like to share with this place some of the reasons why I am supportive of the motion in the hope that all members will ultimately support it.

All must take heed that voters wanted to see more collaboration when it came to resolving the challenges our country faces. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, whom I will take a moment to congratulate on his appointment, takes the reins at a difficult and challenging time.

The minister has said publicly that the government needs a new framework when it comes to its engagement with China. This motion is a timely response to the minister's observation. A special committee can hear the concerns and the competing interests and recommend such a new framework to the government.

The government in its previous incarnation was unable to find its feet, and we are in a position in this Parliament, one where a minority government is not always in a position to lead from on high, where Parliament with its respective Houses can share one of its greatest strengths: its ability to deliberate. In the House of Commons, we can seize an issue, ground it in the day-to-day concerns of the people and make concrete recommendations to the government in this regard.

Before I go any further, let us step back several years to how things have changed and why we are debating this committee's creation today.

In 2012, one year after I was first elected to this place, former Prime Minister Harper returned from a visit to China with the diplomatic gift of two giant panda bears. At the time, some liked to mock this bit of diplomacy, but let us all recognize that today we would be very fortunate if the only problems we had with Canada-China relations were visits from panda bears.

Today things have deteriorated significantly since 2015. There are many reasons for this. However, pointing fingers of blame at this point is less helpful and not extremely constructive.

Let us instead focus on some of the challenges. We have bans or restrictions on some of our exports into China. The Liberals refuse to make a decision on what to do with Huawei. Agriculture and farming sectors have suffered significant financial consequences. The Liberal government meanwhile looks the other way and pretends as if there is nothing to see here.

In my own riding I have a seniors care home that is ultimately now owned by the Chinese government. The seniors in care in this home are not receiving the care they deserve. When I have raised this issue in this place, the Liberals point the finger of blame somewhere else. There is no accountability for the seniors in that care home, but that is not a surprise.

In the last Parliament, the Liberals blocked a proposed committee investigation into claims of inappropriate pressure on ex-China diplomats. One former Liberal cabinet minister, who the Prime Minister appointed as the ambassador to China, stated that, "Anything that is more negative against Canada will help the Conservatives, [who] are much less friendly to China than the Liberals." This nudge, nudge, wink, wink approach from a former Liberal cabinet minister was never explained by the Prime Minister, who was finally forced to fire him. This meant we lost a significant amount of time with that failed approach.

Where are we now exactly? Can anyone candidly answer that question with any certainty? I suspect the best we can do is to speculate.

To be clear, I do not want to lay all of the blame for this challenging situation at the foot of the Prime Minister. There are, and always will be, situations outside the control of our federal government. However, we must also recognize that when we have a relationship that is on the rocks so to speak, more of the same approach is just not the solution.

• (1625)

If we are to be candid, who among us can clearly articulate what strategy the Prime Minister is following? I cannot say. At best, it could be categorized as part wishful thinking and part hoping for a magical solution. That is not an effective strategy or approach. I would submit that is why our relationship continues to fail and further deteriorate.

However, here is the thing. In the last election, Canadians sent us here with a new mandate and a desire for a new approach. The Prime Minister can no longer arrogantly dismiss different ideas and approaches as he did in the last Parliament with a Liberal majority.

The future of this important relationship, for the first time in a long time, is collectively in the hands of the House and not the Prime Minister's Office. If the members in this place decide to support this motion to create a new approach and collaborative solution to this problem, we, not the Prime Minister's Office, have the democratic power to make that happen, and what a wonderful thing that is. This motion brings the potential for accountability and transparency to this place on this relationship, to all of us as members.

I would also point out that the motion does disrespect the role of the government. However, it also provides a much greater role for the opposition. If we can work together for the Canadian interest, we have a real opportunity here to potentially reach a consensus. We should not lose sight of the fact that there are positives to a new and more prosperous relationship.

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An example in my riding is the ability to export fresh cherries into China. It has been of significant benefit to many local fruit growers.

From an environmental perspective, many point to the potential of much cleaner-burning B.C. liquefied natural gas being used to generate power in China instead of coal power. If we could find ways to work together to lower emissions that benefit Canadians' interests and world interests, that is a win for all of us. We know that there is no carbon tax in China.

To summarize, the current relationship is somewhat broken. There are serious challenges that need a different approach. At the same time, there are also opportunities if we can find the ways to work together. I know I am up for the challenge. I know my colleagues on this side of the chamber are up for the challenge. The question, at the end of this vote, will be whether the other caucuses, government and other opposition parties, are up for that challenge?

I would like to think that collectively we are and would therefore support this special committee and help the Minister of Foreign Affairs develop a framework that is grounded in the concerns of everyday Canadians; that deliberates our national interest; and, most important, is not just another junket with irresponsible rhetoric about building ties, but a serious undertaking by the House to a more collaborative hung Parliament for the benefit of our country and its broader interests. If we work together on those terms, we can succeed together. That is why I will be voting in favour of the motion.

I would like to congratulate all members on their successful election and sincerely appeal to them to support the motion. There is so much that we can do in this country and there is so much this Parliament can do to help discern these things to make a case for a different approach.

• (1630)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for those who may be following the debate, it is important to recognize that the government has been addressing the issues talked about today on many different fronts. Many different ministers have been engaged on the issue also. We understand what is taking place and there is a great deal of ongoing communication. The foreign affairs committee had the opportunity prior to the election to at least delve into some of the related issues. I am sure a future foreign affairs committee would be quite capable and able to do the same.

I have a very specific question for my friend across the way. Is there anything specific that he can give as an example that this special committee would be able to do? The foreign affairs committee has a history of dealing with issues related to foreign affairs, particularly China. What additional powers would this special committee have that a standing committee would not have? I am very curious.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his election, on being a willing participant today and on standing up for most of his caucus.

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I would simply say is this. Very early on in the last Parliament, the NDP proposed a special committee to talk about pay equity. Certainly, that could have been done at the HUMA committee. However, Parliament decided that it wanted to have a special committee and have it report back, with recommendations, on a timely basis. As a body, we agreed to that and voted for it. I served on that committee and found it to be a very good experience.

I also served on the finance committee when we received a budget implementation act that had a provision for a DPA, a deferred prosecution agreement. When members tried to express that the finance committee should not be looking at something that would make such a radical change to the Criminal Code and that it should be the justice committee, the Liberals used their majority.

This is a different Parliament, but the same thing should happen here. Parliament and the House of Commons should decide together on what we think is the best approach going forward. I hope we would all discern that together, maybe by using different thoughts and approaches. However, this is the proposal we are putting forward. It is up to us to decide what this hung Parliament will start with.

• (1635)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I recall in an earlier exchange with the member for Winnipeg North that he talked about how it was not good to give this special committee special instructions. As was mentioned earlier, we have often given committees instructions. We have given them very strict timelines to conduct a study, told them how many witnesses we want them to have and so on. Therefore, it is by no means out of the ordinary to have some kind of a parameter with respect to what we want a special committee to study. It has been done multiple times.

This is for my friend from British Columbia, my fellow colleague. At the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, we studied the sudden shut off of the canola market for our farmers. In one fell swoop we had lost 40% of our export market. I remember when we had ministers and departmental officials come before the committee. Often we were straying so close to the territory that came under the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, but we wanted to really keep on going. However, the mandate of our standing committee kept us tied strictly to agriculture.

I would like to hear his comments on the importance of weaving all these different threads together. As he said, this is an opportunity for a hung Parliament to come together, to bring forward a comprehensive report and deliver some clear recommendations on what is a very important relationship in our international relations.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I commend the member for his work as a member of Parliament. I certainly appreciate his re-election and particularly his courage. Very few people from British Columbia will admit that I am a friend. With that in mind, I will simply say this.

He is absolutely right that there are so many facets to this relationship. The minister did not ask for a trade strategy. The minister did not ask for a national security strategy. The minister said that we needed a new framework. A framework means that there are

many parts. It is up to the House of Commons to decide and dictate to committees. All committees are mandated by this place and are servants to this place. When a committee does not come back with the estimates, it is deemed that they have been voted on and accepted.

Therefore, it is completely legitimate for us to task a committee, whether a special committee or regular committee, to do the work we intend it to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the member for Saint-Jean.

I think that multiple factors have contributed to the very real problem with the Canada-China relationship, whether it be in trade or diplomatic relations. One of the most significant of those factors is likely the fact that Canada is having a hard time understanding that China has become a major world power. I think it is important to understand the phenomenon to know how all this began. For a long time, China's national project, as it was called, involved transforming an empire into a country that would continue to integrate more and more outlying areas. That is how it was, historically speaking.

That caused problems for minorities, as we know, but these were basically internal issues that did not really disrupt the international order. China opened its borders to international trade primarily in the 1990s. This process began in the 1980s, but it accelerated dramatically in the 1990s and 2000s. Since then, the country has seen tremendous growth. It has been doing a lot of catching up and is now on the path to technological dominance in certain sectors. It is very important to understand what China's power is based on.

China's case is somewhat unique in that it has a vast pool of cheap labour at its disposal, due to demographic pressures exerted by rural populations, which have been migrating to cities over the past 20 years and more. China's policy basically consists of attracting as much direct foreign investment as possible. Most of the factories built in China produce goods for export to other markets, such as the United States, Europe and some Asian countries.

We are also seeing the emergence of a Chinese middle class that is huge by western standards. It is about 250 million strong. That is humongous. There is something I should clarify, however. China is often portrayed as just a successful example of trade openness. It is worth noting that the aggressive investment-seeking policy that has enabled China to take its place in the world was largely planned out by Beijing, which maintains strict capital controls. This allows it to control the exchange rate and keep it from rising. That is a problem that the world at large will have to address someday.

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As a side note, after the Second World War, monetary matters and trade matters were split up, and two separate institutions were created to control them. After the Second World War, the great 20th-century economist John Maynard Keynes warned the authorities, and it turns out he was right. Now let me get back to China.

The Chinese strategy has always been to combine openness to trade with aggressive state intervention. China's strategy was well planned, and, for the most part, the state controls direct foreign investment within its borders. I also want to point out that there is another issue we need to address. This might be the elephant in the room. If one of our committees can take this on, why not? China's presence on the world stage also serves the interests of many multinationals that benefit from low Chinese wages to put downward pressure on labour costs in other manufacturing countries.

China also offers multinational corporations an excellent opportunity to relocate their businesses within its borders. We are all familiar with made-in-China products. I would not be surprised if many of the products in our parliamentary gift shop were made in China. This affects all areas of activity, such as mass distribution, as in the case of Walmart, as well as biotechnology companies. China is actually accumulating various technologies as Chinese companies acquire licences and by making massive investments in countries rich in natural resources such as rare earth elements. In technology, for example, the U.S. has had a negative trade balance with China since 2007, so for more than 10 years.

● (1640)

In a show of China's regional power, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation held a highly successful meeting in Qingdao, China, the same weekend as the G7 summit fiasco in La Malbaie. One decision at this meeting was to adopt common tools. The Chinese president made one announcement after the other.

This new empire and China's new power policy have increased tensions with other countries. Some examples are tensions in the China Sea, increased control over Hong Kong and a hardened position on Taiwan. At the same time, the regime is centralizing and strengthening.

Canada has not managed to adapt in response to all of these changes. However, Canada and China have traditionally had good relations. Canada recognized that the People's Republic of China was the true government of China one year before the Americans. The Americans continued to claim that the Taiwanese government, post-Chiang Kai-shek, was the true representative of China. Taiwan occupied China's seat on the UN Security Council until 1971.

Just two years ago, relations were still rather good. During the Prime Minister's visit in 2017, the Chinese media gave him a pet name. At the time, there was even talk of undertaking a free trade agreement between Canada and China. That would not have been a good idea. The Bloc Québécois would have rejected the idea, but it is a good indication that relations were far from bad.

Ever since then it has been a series of blunders, gaffes and indecision from Canada, and relations began to deteriorate. They are now ice cold. China adopted a series of retaliatory measures following the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, blocked imports of Canadian canola and in June 2019, suspended all imports of Canadian meat.

That hurt Quebec because the pork industry was exporting large quantities to China. Half of Canadian pork exports come from Quebec.

The Prime Minister tried to call the President of China, who did not return his call. Even the U.S. asked for Ms. Meng's extradition. The U.S. president has said that he is prepared to intervene and release Ms. Meng if this would result in a good trade deal for the U.S. with China. Canada has always defended itself by stating that the judiciary is independent of the administrative branch and that the government would not intervene, a position that was undermined by the U.S. president's comments.

Furthermore, not having an ambassador in China was not helpful. Even if the conflict with China has real repercussions on trade, this is not a trade conflict per se. It is a diplomatic conflict that must be resolved through diplomacy. In this regard, not having a Canadian ambassador in China for almost 10 months is gross negligence and a serious mistake.

Did Canada have a choice in going ahead with Meng Wanzhou's arrest? That may be a matter for debate. The independence of the judiciary is central to the proper functioning of any lawful society. However, Meng Wanzhou's case is rather unusual because she is not accused of a common law offence.

When the United States withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal and imposed harsh sanctions against Iran prohibiting all other nations from doing business with it, Canada, Europe and most other countries condemned the decision and said they would not follow suit. However, by arresting Meng Wanzhou for violating U.S. sanctions against Iran, Canada is endorsing the U.S. decision it condemned.

For years, the Americans imposed a strict embargo against Cuba and even penalized North American enterprises that did business with Cuba. Canada has always refused to co-operate with Washington by enforcing this extraterritorial law, which had a much greater impact on local populations than on the Cuban regime.

Once again, was Canada right to arrest Meng Wanzhou?

● (1645)

That is a legitimate question. We think a special multi-party committee that can take the time to study this issue thoroughly is a good idea.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate my colleague.

This is my first question in French. I hope people will be able to understand me, because I am a little rusty.

Business of Supply

My colleague's speech was very interesting and raised many very important points.

I would like to ask a question about the rights of minorities in China, linguistic minorities in particular. I would also like to discuss the situation of Tashi Wangchuk, a Tibetan activist imprisoned in China, as well as Tibetans' demands for real autonomy and for language and religious rights. This is clearly a very important issue for the Bloc Québécois.

Can my colleague comment on minority rights in China?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that the issue of minority rights is extremely important.

China is not a democracy. We can all agree on that. There is no doubt about it, it is unequivocal, and I think it is clear to everyone. However, should our people suffer because of poor trade relations between the two countries? The answer, of course, is no. If there are human rights violations—which there are—they must be denounced.

However, the boycott approach has never worked in the past and it never does. Take, for example, the embargo against Cuba, which ended up strengthening rather than weakening the regime. Let us also remember that, during the boycott against Iraq, children were dying every month. The boycott approach is not a good thing in itself. In the case of a superpower like China, we would punish not only its people, but also ours.

If we truly want to set an example in our relations with dictatorships, we must also address our arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

• (1650)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to what the member opposition was saying and I want to make sure that I properly understood. When it comes to the issue of detaining Ms. Meng, I am not too sure what the Bloc's position is on that. Does the Bloc believe that we should not have detained her? What is their position in regard to that issue?

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, we just think it is a valid question. If, in such a case, a committee could examine Canada-China relations more broadly, we would welcome that.

[English]

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, National Bank financial analyst Peter Rutledge said in 2016 that Chinese homebuyers occupied 33% of the total housing volume in Vancouver's real estate market and 14% of purchases in Toronto in 2015.

Would the Bloc Québécois welcome that type of Chinese involvement in the domestic Montreal housing market? Would the Bloc Québécois welcome a study of the role of Chinese homebuyers in the Canadian housing market at large?

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, our party is generally very much in favour of economic nationalism.

We will defend our markets, our farmers and our entrepreneurs to the utmost of our abilities. That is a very interesting issue, and one we would be glad to study. I thank the member for suggesting the idea. My colleagues and I find it very intriguing, and we will gladly discuss it. In fact, we have a caucus meeting tomorrow morning.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate, it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Ethics; the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, Forestry Industry; the hon. member for Foothills, International Trade.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues before me, I am going to take a few minutes to thank and recognize some people, since this is the first time I rise in the House for any length of time.

First, I would like to thank the people of Saint-Jean for placing their trust in me. I will work hard to live up to their expectations. I also thank them for allowing me to come home after a short period of exile in Montreal. I thank them for this unexpected opportunity they have given me.

I would also like to thank the Bloc Québécois supporters in my riding, who helped me run an election campaign that favourably compared to, and was even a little bit better than, the campaigns of the other candidates, despite limited resources.

I would like to thank my friends and especially my family who, oddly enough, discovered a passion for politics this year and began to follow the polls and various projections as closely as the hockey stats.

Finally, I would like to thank the polling officials and clerks in Saint-Jean who worked very diligently and quickly so that my election as a Quebec MP was the first to be announced.

That is all I have for acknowledgements.

My colleagues have already delved into the substance of the issue before us, so I would like to focus on the form, on the actual creation of a special committee.

There seems to be a consensus in the House right now about the importance of maintaining healthy diplomatic relations with major international players, such as China in this case. Members also seem to agree that this is a complex issue because it touches on both diplomatic and trade relations, which are inextricably linked.

We all agree on those things, and I think it is important to take the size of this particular trading partner into account along with the substance and weight of the economic issues involved. Everyone agrees that the repercussions are affecting our constituents directly. My western colleagues talked about canola producers, and my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot discussed the challenges facing pork producers. We all agree that this is an important issue.

Bearing all that in mind, what is the role of a committee?

Being new to the House, I took it upon myself to open the big green book, which is such a weighty yet essential tome. I am talking about Bosc and Gagnon, the 2017 edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. I consulted it simply to refresh my memory regarding the relevance and purpose of committees. The authors remind us that committees allow us to dig deeper into complex matters and expand our knowledge of these issues.

In contrast to oral question period in the House, which is sometimes more of a question period than an answer period, committee meetings allow members to gather more information, particularly by calling in outside experts and stakeholders. Committees also make recommendations. Committee work helps the House plan for the future and perform better, while oral question period is more of an exercise in complaining about what has been done in the past.

Creating a special committee to study a particular issue, as opposed to referring it to a standing committee, sends different messages. In this case, the House would be creating the special committee and giving it a mandate, instead of allowing a standing committee to decide whether to study an issue. As has been mentioned already, a standing committee could decide that the issue in question does not fall under its mandate and punt it over to other standing committees. We would avoid this by creating a special committee.

Winston Churchill supposedly said that a camel is a horse designed by committee. If we do not create the special committee, I worry that we might end up with no design and no committee.

• (1655)

We would have no answer, and no committee would be mandated by the House to work on the complex file of the China-Canada relationship.

One of the arguments we are hearing through the grapevine against creating a special committee on the Canada-China relationship is that creating such a committee might jeopardize the safety of the hostages being detained in China. There are two issues with that argument.

First, subscribing to that argument undermines the legitimacy of the House. We would be muzzling ourselves for fear of external reprisals. We would be avoiding doing committee work for fear of what another country might think. Taking this argument to its absurd conclusion, would we have to completely stop talking about the Canada-China relationship during question period? Would we have to stop standing committees from choosing to study the matter? Would we have to stop talking about it now? The argument that we should fear the scrutiny and judgment of the country under discussion does not hold water.

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Rejecting the creation of a special committee would also send the wrong message to two entities, the first being China. Creating a special committee would be a good opportunity to create the first positive consensus in the House, which is one thing Canadians have asked for, given that they elected a minority government. Creating a special committee would send China the message that we want to find a healthier way of practising diplomacy.

Creating a special committee would send a positive message to the public, our constituents and our voters. In this case, we would be sending a message mainly to our farmers, because it would clearly show them that we do not want this to happen again in the future. By creating a special committee, we would be saying that we want to address the issue of diplomatic relations in order to strengthen and improve our procedures for all the businesses we depend on. We would be showing that we want to move forward.

It seems to me that this is a particularly interesting opportunity to work as a team, to improve ourselves and to properly fulfill our role as parliamentarians.

• (1700)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member is very much aware, I have been talking a lot about the standing committees and the important role they play in Parliament. There have been over 20 standing committees for years, and I believe the Prime Minister has been very consistent over those years.

We have a lot of faith in those committees. In a minority situation, opposition parties have that much more control over standing committees. There is nothing within this proposal from the Conservative Party that could not be done by the foreign affairs committee, for example, if it wanted to deal with it.

Having confidence in our standing committees is important and sets the tone going forward. Would my colleague not agree that it is important that we send a strong message to our standing committees that if there are issues they believe are important for debate, dialogue and study, we have trust in them as committees, and that includes identifying their own witnesses?

This is something that the member's own colleague pointed out in item (k), where this House is trying to dictate to a special or standing committee who the witnesses should be. We believe we should have confidence that the special committees and standing committees are able to determine who their witnesses should be. Would the hon. member not agree with that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. He actually asked me several questions.

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I am asked what would prevent a standing committee from addressing the issue. Absolutely nothing would prevent it. The key word to remember is “may”. A standing committee of any kind “may” address the issue, but is not required to do so. However, if the House creates a special committee, the committee will have a clear mandate to do so and will not be able to come to the House without recommendations and without having studied the issue.

I understand my colleague's comments. He seems quite open to discussing the need to improve our diplomatic relations with China. Let us do it properly, without shifting the responsibility for it. We will have a special joint committee to do that. The committee will have, like all other committees, the flexibility it needs to select which witnesses it invites or does not invite.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, listening to the debate today, I think everyone agrees that the issue is an important one.

What I am hearing from the Liberals as their defence for not supporting this motion is that the foreign affairs committee could do it, but I would like to remind members of an example, a motion by the current Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations for a study into murdered and missing indigenous women. That was a parliamentary committee that went for a whole year because the matter was important. It could have been studied by the indigenous committee, but there was a motion by the Liberals in this House to study this issue. They had suggested witnesses and thought it was important, so this is not something new or unique. The Liberals' argument against this motion does not really hold water when it sounds like it is a study they would agree to.

I would ask my colleague to speculate on why the Liberals are objecting in this case, but so many other times have supported this type of committee in the House.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the question was addressed to me or to the government, but I will pick up on that anyway. This is truly a great opportunity to provide a clear mandate to a committee that can study the issue, rather than allowing it to bounce from one standing committee to another.

[*English*]

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin on the issues of this opposition day motion today, I just want to take the opportunity to thank the constituents of Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner for their overwhelming support that returned me to the House. My thanks to the many volunteers who worked on my campaign. I hope I will do justice in Ottawa for them and the Conservative team. I want to thank my friends and family as well for their continued support.

Before I get into the issues I wanted to make you aware, Mr. Speaker, that I will be sharing my time today with my friend the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

I rise today to address the motion put before the House, a motion that is timely and one that I wholeheartedly support. That is the matter of China.

This is an issue that has been mismanaged by the Prime Minister and the entire Liberal government to date. While all international issues are complex, and there are certainly deep connections in our industries to China as suppliers, manufacturers, consumers and more, there are principles and values that should always be respected.

All members of this House have taken an oath to ensure the safety and security of all Canadians. We cannot ensure that safety and security if we ignore our duties and defer difficult choices. It is for that reason, and for the fact that the Liberal government has completely failed to act or lay out any strategy, that the Conservatives have brought forward a motion for the House, not the Prime Minister but the House, to determine the truth and way forward on Huawei, on China and on ensuring that Canada can stand up for its values and its rights.

The evidence on why there is a security threat from China is public and available for all Canadians and parliamentarians to understand. The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security heard from experts on threats facing Canada. To quote Ray Boisvert, the former assistant director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, on whether there is a threat from China, he said:

There's also the issue that China is now in the age of self-admitted “sharp power”, and they exercise that power with very little reservation anymore. There's no longer even a question of hiding their intentions. They are taking a very aggressive approach around resources and intellectual property, and they also are very clear in dealing with dissidents and academics. They've arrested some of them, and they punish others, including academic institutions in North America, at their will, so I think there's a value challenge that Canadians have to consider along with the economic opportunities discussion.

The “sharp power” that Mr. Boisvert referred to has been reported in the news and highlighted in a number of articles. For example, Beijing has openly organized pro-Communist regime protesters in Canada. One such protest was led by a former Ontario Liberal cabinet minister, whom CSIS had raised concerns about given his close ties to China.

China has created pro-Communist regime lobby groups like the Canadian Chinese Political Affairs Committee, which publishes pro-China and pro-Huawei articles, suggesting that there was a wave of anti-China hate crimes and that Chinese Canadians were living in fear. These claims were made with the support and direction of the Chinese Consulate General in Toronto.

These are not the actions of friends or allies, but rather raise serious concerns about the intent and trust between our countries. Not only are they working to undermine the truth and publishing falsehoods in our newspapers, but we know that Communist China has state-sponsored actors actively working to undermine Canadian economic interests.

In 2013, the former Nortel campus was taken over by the Department of National Defence. There were numerous delays in moving to the new location, no doubt hampered by the discovery of listening devices throughout the building.

Nortel was studied by cybersecurity experts who directly linked the demise of Canada's largest technology company, Nortel, to state-sponsored attacks to steal intellectual property. This information was used by foreign competitors to undercut Nortel, and investigators into cyber-attacks on the firm pointed the finger directly back to Huawei, the same firm now wanting to profit from and build our mobile telecommunication networks.

China has also been linked to the theft of our research discoveries and to pressure tactics on Canadian university researchers.

● (1710)

Through researchers sent by China, as well as through funding agreements, China can exert pressure on Canadian academics, steal research and direct more opportunities back into its own institutions.

In 2019, Huawei funded \$56 million in academic research here in Canada. This prompted a direct warning from CSIS that there was a serious security concern over this partnership and the theft of research and intellectual property. As far as I know, there are still no guidelines from the federal government on how those research agreements with Huawei and the Chinese Communist government organizations should be managed.

It does raise the question, though, that if our national security and intelligence service can be concerned about research agreements, surely the infrastructure that will carry sensitive commercial, economic and social information for the next 20 years is even more critical to protect.

Why has the Liberal government not been able to come to a decision in the last four years? Is the theft of research at academic institutions more sensitive than the daily banking information, phone calls, text messages, emails and more that travel through our work and personal telecommunications infrastructure on a daily basis?

Are we willing to trust that the Communist regime in China will not attempt to do what it has done for decades, to use technology and cyber-espionage to benefit its own companies and the state?

It was not China's repeated violations of Canada that disrupted our relationship with the Communist regime. Canada's relationship with China had been declining for many years, not just because of the threats they issue on our soil to Chinese-born Canadians with family back home or China's outright attacks on Canada through cyber-based espionage, but through its open threats toward Canada's economic interests, our social systems and the human rights and values our country cherishes.

Former Chinese ambassador Lu Shaye warned Canada to “stop the moves that undermine the interests of China.” He suggested that the arrest and detention of Huawei's CFO in Vancouver was backstabbing a friend, and warned of repercussions if the federal government banned Huawei.

I have to say China's Communist regime certainly does not act like a friend. It steals from us, abuses us, threatens Canadians and detains our citizens in that country. That is not how our friends act.

What kind of repercussions could China exact on us? How about what China has already done, namely blocking canola by two of

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our largest producers, Richardson International and Viterra, with false claims of pests, and blocking exports of soybeans, peas, pork and beef? The economic value of our agriculture exports to China is in excess of \$5 billion. Clearly, China knows that it can hurt Canada.

Our response to date has been almost nothing. Farmers are losing their homes, some are selling their farms and some are taking their lives. The response from the government is nothing.

There is endless evidence of the threat that the Communist Chinese government poses to Canada by exerting its “sharp power” and overt attempts to hurt our economy, to push us to accept its way of doing things without question. We would be fools to accept the Chinese government's abuse in the hopes that it might one day turn into a good relationship.

The proposal to strike a new committee would allow all parties in this House to work together, something I know the Liberal Prime Minister wants because he said so in his Speech from the Throne. He said that Canadians were expecting this of us in the House.

Now it is time for the Liberals to put their words into action. Striking a special committee would let us look at all aspects of the issues. Economic, diplomatic, legal and security issues would otherwise span many committees. We cannot allow another year to go by without action and a plan for Canada to deal with these issues.

I urge all members of the House to support the creation of a special committee and to establish it quickly so that we can get to work and address the long-standing issues between our two countries.

● (1715)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as it is my first time on my feet in this Parliament, I would like to congratulate the hon. member who just spoke on his re-election and thank the voters of Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke for sending me back for a third term here in the House. Like the hon. member, I am ready to get down to work in this minority Parliament.

The member raised a very good point, that this Conservative motion on China provides one of the first opportunities for us to demonstrate as a Parliament that we can work together on important challenges that face Canada.

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On international Human Rights Day, I would like to point out that one of the arguments being made on the government side is that any committee could deal with China. We have a whole list of human rights concerns, from the ongoing occupation of Tibet and suppression of Tibetan culture to the so-called re-education camps of the Uighur Muslims in China.

We have a whole list of those things that might get dealt with in a human rights committee, but they really should be part of our overall approach to China. By having this committee, we can bring those human rights issues along with trade issues into the same committee.

I thank the Conservatives for putting forward this proposal because it will give us the chance to work together and it will give us a chance to address the overall relationship of Canada and China.

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I too want to congratulate my friend on his re-election.

I too would agree that striking a special committee would allow a new Parliament, a minority government, to demonstrate to Canadians our willingness to work together on issues that are critical for all Canadians, not just Canadians in parts of Canada. Human rights is one aspect that we absolutely have to address.

The concept behind this opposition day motion is that it is a timely response. It does not wait for four, five or six committees to try to address things at a time and on a schedule when it might fit in with other things. We could get at it immediately, and that is the key.

We need to get at this sort of work immediately, because the problems that we are experiencing, the challenges we are facing, are not new and they are not going to go away in a hurry. Addressing them, coming together collectively as Parliament, is what Canadians want us to do. This is a perfect opportunity for us to demonstrate to Canadians that we are serious about working for them in a collaborative fashion.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member just said it. The issues at hand are not new and they are not going to go away. One thing for sure is that 20-plus standing committees will be convening in a relatively short time period and parliamentarians will be afforded the opportunity to sit on each and every committee and determine what sort of issues they want to deal with.

We cite the foreign affairs committee because that committee has already started to have some dialogue on this issue. There will be some background information within that committee from a historical perspective.

I am having a difficult time trying to understand what this proposed committee, if it were constituted, would be able to do that the current standing committee would not be able to do. I do not quite make the connection.

Whenever there is going to be an international issue with another country, are we going to anticipate that a special committee will be requested, or can we say we have confidence in our standing committees and the membership on those committees?

• (1720)

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, it is important. These issues are not new. They are ongoing, but the critical thing is that they are escalating. They are getting worse, and they require a response that we have not been able to accomplish to date. We have had four years and vast committees studying various issues, and obviously we are not getting to a point where it is making things better.

It is also important to note that having a special committee that focuses on China issues would amalgamate our efforts rather than being disjointed and disconnected with a multitude of committees and then trying to bring those together in a concerted fashion.

We would do an injustice to the importance of this study without having a very capable group of individuals from all parties to focus solely on this issue and not be distracted by other issues of government that we have to deal with in each of our committees.

I hope that my friend across the way would see that this is something we can work on together. It would improve the expectations Canadians have of us as well as what we are trying to accomplish, which is to care for Canadians, their security and their economic stability, as well as trying to improve relations where we can.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the good people of Wellington—Halton Hills for returning me to the House to represent them, and I hope I am able to work as hard as I can to represent their interests and their concerns here on the floor of the House of Commons.

I support the motion, and I encourage all members of the House to do so, because things have changed with China. In the last year, we have seen the detention of the two Michaels, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. We have seen an increasingly hostile and aggressive government in Beijing that has put trade sanctions on the export of Canadian beef, pork and canola to China. We have seen a Chinese ambassador to Canada accuse the Canadian government of being white supremacists. That is just here in Canada.

Internationally, we have seen China intimidate and export its suppression of free speech and human rights by using economic blackmail. We have seen how they handled the issue when the Houston Rockets general manager spoke out on Hong Kong, or when a video game maker, Blizzard, encountered a gamer who expressed his views on the issue of Hong Kong.

We have seen what they have done with productions like *South Park*, which made a satire of the policies in China, and we have seen what they have done more recently with big business in this country, when they threatened Air Canada because it would list Taipei as being in Taiwan rather than as being part of mainland China. They are taking an increasingly aggressive and hostile stance and using economic blackmail to export values that run contrary to the values this country is based on, such as the rule of law, human rights, free expression and so many of the things that we cherish here in this country.

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They have been acting belligerently in the South China Sea, in the construction of new islands to extend their sphere of sovereignty and in failing to recognize the treaty to which they are a party, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to which they are a signatory, as is Canada, and under which process of the United Nations their territorial claims in the South China Sea were denied, yet they fail to acknowledge those rulings.

More broadly, as a Christian, I feel quite strongly that people of all faiths should be able to enjoy religious liberty, whether they are Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims or people of any particular religious faith. In recent months, information has come to light about the shocking concentration camps of Uighurs in western China. It is now being reported that up to one million Uighurs are in concentration camps. I use that term deliberately, because that is what they are. They are camps that are housing families and individuals separated under austere and harsh conditions, and they are using torture techniques to deprogram them and to reprogram them as the Chinese state sees fit.

As a western country that 75 years ago fought on the beaches of Normandy, that fought for the liberation of Europe against the tyranny of totalitarianism and Nazism, we cannot stand silently by, when, because of this information, we are witness to the largest human rights abuse taking place today on this planet. That is no longer speculation; it is an incontrovertible fact. There are satellite images of these camps. There is now well-documented evidence from people who have fled, and we now know that up to one million Uighurs are in these concentration camps. We cannot ignore that fact any longer.

That is why we need, as a country, a new approach and why the Government of Canada needs to take a look at the Canada-China relationship, why it needs to reset the relationship and why a parliamentary committee, a legislative committee of Parliament, should be established to take a look at resetting this relationship.

● (1725)

It is clear from the government's actions in the last year that it is not interested in resetting the relationship. In fact, reading through the tea leaves of the government's actions, it is clear that it wants to continue business as usual. It is clear in the appointment of the Minister of Foreign Affairs; it is clear in the appointment of the Minister of International Trade; and it is clear in the appointment of Ambassador Dominic Barton. All three of those appointments are pro-business appointments that the pro-China business lobby wants. That is a strong signal to Canadians and to the world that the Canadian government believes that we can continue as usual and that the events of the last year or so have not made a difference in its view on how to deal with China.

I could not disagree more strongly. That is why we need a special legislative committee of this House, which is not under the authority of the executive branch of government, to take a look at this relationship, to call expert witnesses, in camera and in public, and to come forward with a report for the floor of this House to consider a reset in that relationship.

I will finish by saying that the Chinese government needs to understand that the approach it has been taking with Canada, and with countries like Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, is not

working. In fact, recent polls show that a majority of Canadians are opposed to having Huawei build Canada's 5G network. The Pew Research Center in the United States has done polling of China's neighbouring countries and found negative and declining favourability ratings for China in Southeast Asia. It finds the same results here in North America and in Europe, and the European Union has listed China as a systemic rival.

All this bellicosity and belligerence on the part of China is not working, but it seems to me that the current government in this country is completely naive and oblivious to this changing reality. That is why we need a committee independent of the PMO and the executive branch of government to study these issues and to take a serious look at resetting this relationship with a view to considering decoupling our relationship with China and reorienting Canada away from China and that part of the Pacific, toward parts of the world that not only share our values but have large economies that we can broaden and deepen trade ties with.

● (1730)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member well, in the sense that he was here in 2012 when then prime minister Stephen Harper took a trip to China. John Baird, the foreign affairs minister at the time, did a lot of background work for that particular visit.

There was actually an agreement, and I believe it was the Canada-China agreement for the promotion and reciprocal protection of investments. It led to millions of dollars coming to Canada, through China buying specific natural resources in certain areas.

I am wondering if the member could give his thoughts as to what has changed since 2012, without stating the obvious. Our hearts go out to the two Michaels and we want to see their case resolved. I do not think there is a person in this House who does not want to see that issue resolved with them coming home as quickly as possible.

Maybe the member could highlight what he believes are the most significant changes from 2012, when Stephen Harper was in China and he came back saying that we had this wonderful agreement.

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Speaker, I think a lot has changed, setting aside the issue of the two Canadians detained in China. What has changed is that China has increasingly used economic blackmail, whether with respect to the National Basketball Association and the general manager of the Houston Rockets, or with respect to video game manufacturers or producers of Hollywood content, or with respect to Air Canada, which was threatened by China when it listed Taipei as being in Taiwan on the signboards at Pearson airport. China has done other things in this country. It has clearly attacked Canadian farmers on the issue of pork, beef and canola. Since 2012, it has acted in an increasingly belligerent manner toward its neighbours in Southeast Asia. It has embarked, at a cut-throat pace, on building a blue-water navy.

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Most important, we did not know in 2012 that up to a million Uighurs were in concentration camps. There is a systemic campaign by Beijing to wipe out the Uighurs in western China in a genocidal manner, and I use that term deliberately because it is systematic and it is comprehensive. That truly—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, there has to be time for one more question, which I am sure the member is anxious to hear.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to give my colleague an opportunity to share some thoughts.

Here we are in a new Parliament. We are in a minority setting, with the same Prime Minister and many of the same players in the government, with a chance to speak of Canada having a broken relationship. Coming from western Canada, I am deeply concerned about the billions of dollars' worth of agricultural products that are no longer being sold in China, the kinds of opportunities for our economic well-being that are no longer being acted upon and the way in which the government has allowed a key relationship to be broken, something that is having a devastating impact on people in my part of the country.

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I would say this in response to the economic concerns that have been voiced by many about our relationship with China. More important than economic concerns are the principles and values on which this country is founded, principles such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Those are the very principles we risk undermining and doing away with if we continue to focus on the economic consequences of taking a reset and decoupling in our China relationship.

In the long run, our future prosperity will be assured if we get those three foundational principles of this country right and continue to defend them.

• (1735)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to listen to a lot of dialogue on this issue today. I want to try break the issue down into two or three parts, but I will begin by talking about the process. The process is important, because we want to make sure as much as possible that we are getting off on the right foot.

There has always been a great deal of support for our standing committees, and that has been clearly demonstrated over the last four years. Even in the days when I was in opposition, I have always highlighted the importance of the role our standing committees play in the parliamentary precinct and the fine work they do for Canadians in all regions of our country. I think we often underestimate how important that role can be.

I will highlight some of the questions I have put forward to a number of members opposite.

First, I have been trying as much as I could to challenge them to tell me why they believe a standing committee would not be able to

do what this special committee they are proposing would be able to do.

The House will do whatever it wants to do with regard to the motion. We will have to wait for the vote itself, but I am fairly uncomfortable with it, and I will say why.

We are at the beginning of a session, relatively speaking, and when we came out of the last election, there was a fairly clear message that had been sent to all of us. The message was that Canadians want this Parliament to work. They want to see a higher sense of responsibility, co-operation and so forth.

If given a little time, I believe I could identify quite easily a dozen or so issues that I could bring to the fore for the next 12 consecutive days in which we sit. I could say that the issues were so very important that they were vital to Canadian interests, and by God, we should establish a special committee of the House of Commons so that members could give it thorough debate and discussion and call witnesses and so forth. I am actually convinced of it, and that is just on my own. If I were allowed the opportunity and time to sit down with many of the colleagues on both sides of this House, I could more than quadruple that list. I could come up with virtually an endless list of issues for which we could have special committees of this House and ask the special committee, in the name of doing good for Canadians from coast to coast to coast, to debate those issues in the form of a special committee.

However, I would suggest that we do not need to do that, because we have very able-minded parliamentarians on all sides of this House who would be afforded the opportunity to sit down in standing committees, and there are a good number of standing committees. I believe there are 24 standing committees. Maybe someone at the Clerk's office can let me know if I am wrong.

Each one of those committees will have a chair and several vice-chairs. Each one of those committees will have opposition majorities when it comes to setting the agenda. Therefore, if members really believe in co-operation, and I hear a lot of individuals say that co-operation is good and they want to work towards it, does that mean that when it comes to committees, we should then strive to achieve a consensus in a minority situation, as opposed to a simple majority vote? Are members prepared to say that in certain situations, we should be looking for consensus on certain topics as we go into the committee stage?

• (1740)

I suspect that often we will find that this decision will be determined at the standing committee in question. The personalities and the makeup of that committee will ultimately determine how that committee is going to perform into the future, over the next six months, 18 months, three years or whatever the mandate is going to be. I would say to new members and to members who have not participated on standing committees in the past that these standing committees really vary with respect to the types of things they are able to accomplish. I would argue that we have had first-class reports from the standing committees. They have done an outstanding job.

Their scope is very wide. If a committee wants to study x , y and z , even if it is not specifically directed to do so, there might be an indirect link to it, and that committee would have the authority to do so if that is the will of the committee.

One of the first things a committee will do after it elects a chair and the vice-chairs is establish a steering committee or subcommittee. That committee will determine the important issues that it needs to face over the next x number of weeks, months or even possibly years. Some of the debates that are taking place here, in particular the one question I had posed, show that this is not a new issue, nor will it go away. Even opposition members have recognized that they have not clearly demonstrated the urgency. If they believed there was an urgency, I suspect they would be suggesting that there be an emergency debate on the issue. It does not mean it is not important; it is critically important, especially when I think of the Michaels who are being incarcerated.

Yes, China has crossed the line on several occasions. As a government, as a legislative body, the House of Commons does have a critical role to play, but the issue is whether we believe that standing committees of Parliament have that role to play, or are we going to leave it up to the House to be able to trump our standing committees on all occasions by saying that we do not have confidence in that standing committee because we do not believe it will prioritize this issue, so we are going to say what is going to be studied? Further to that, are we now going to tell them who they will call as witnesses? This motion clearly states that the opposition wants to see specific individuals come before that committee.

I would suggest that as parliamentarians and legislators, we have a wonderful opportunity to do something positive with respect to our standing committees. In a minority situation, it really opens the door for building a consensus and for bringing parliamentarians together.

I always find it interesting that while it can get fairly heated inside the House of Commons and the partisanship hats often will come on, if we go to some of those standing committees and watch some of the dialogue that takes place, we find that in many of those standing committees it is not the party hat the members are wearing but the parliamentarian hat.

I like to believe that we all represent our constituents first and we want to do what is in the best interests of Canada at all times, but often there is a different hat that is being worn. If we really want to deal with this issue, which is so critically important, I would suggest that the best venue to provide that opportunity is in fact the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. It does not have to be limited to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. It could be the international trade committee. I will talk a bit about this myself, but we often hear that there are other standing committees that could be dealing with this.

● (1745)

We have an opportunity here in the House to give a vote of confidence to what Canadians want to take place. I believe they want a higher sense of co-operation. They want more responsibility being taken in terms of actions on the floor of the House of Commons.

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The Conservatives and opposition members and some others in the House are saying it has to be in the form of a special committee, and quite frankly, they may be in a majority today. I am appealing to members to recognize that we can accomplish something bigger with this debate today by recognizing just how important those standing committees are.

Let us constitute the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. Let us get that committee and subcommittee or steering committee to meet and make the determination. Does it want to study this issue? I suspect it would. It sets its own hours. If it wants to meet for six hours a day for the next 12 months, five days a week, it can do that. It has a great deal of authority, especially in a minority situation.

It is not fair or appropriate to say what has happened in the past four, six or 10 years. We have had eight years now of majority governments, and now we have a minority government. Those individuals who like to say they are parliamentarians who believe in the fine and good work that Parliament does might want to reflect on what I believe is the backbone of the parliamentary institution, that being our standing committees.

In many ways, when we talk about reaching into our communities from coast to coast to coast, when we talk about bringing the type of expertise that is necessary for us as parliamentarians collectively in the House to make good, solid decisions, a lot of that background work could be done through our standing committees.

When I listen to the debate, I realize it is going to be tough for this motion to fail, and if it passes, it passes. I will accept that. After all, it is a minority situation and I will accept it, but yes, I will be somewhat disappointed, because I believe that we have passed on giving a vote of confidence in a very real and tangible way to our standing committees. I suggest that would be a lost opportunity.

Having said that, I want to talk about China.

China is a dictatorship. We all know that. We all have very serious concerns, and we are not the only parliamentarians to have very serious concerns. This could be dated back all the way to the time when we were a confederation, when we came together as a country over 150 years ago. China is a dictatorship, and all the negative issues related to a dictatorship often will surface at different points in time in history.

It was Pierre Elliott Trudeau who made significant steps toward softening the relationship between Canada as a democratic country and China as a dictatorship, but he was not alone at the time. The United States of America was doing the same thing, and so did prime ministers who followed, such as Brian Mulroney and Pierre Trudeau.

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● (1750)

I remember when Jean Chrétien, I think it was in 1993-94, had the big team Canada mission to China. Liberals, Conservatives and possibly even New Democrats went to China to talk about establishing a healthier and stronger relationship hopefully to deal with some of the issues that go beyond just the economy. Stephen Harper continued it. China does not give a gift of pandas because it does not like someone; the pandas are a gift because it believes there is a relationship. That is what China did with Stephen Harper.

Does it mean that during the times that Jean Chrétien and Stephen Harper were prime minister there were not problems? Trust me, there were problems. There were still problems related to human rights and the rule of law. Issues of that nature still existed even during the 1990s and the 10 years of Stephen Harper's government. In the relationship between Canada and China there will always be tension, because China is a dictatorship and we are a democracy. We believe in the rule of law. We believe in human rights.

From a Liberal Party perspective, we are the ones who brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We understand how important the rule of law and freedom of speech are, all of the principles of democracy. Do we have concerns? Absolutely, we have concerns. Are we happy with many of the things taking place? Absolutely we are not.

I come from the Prairies, and there is a large pork industry in the province of Manitoba. There are more pigs than people in the province of Manitoba, and it relies heavily on exports to Asia. The pork industry is very important to Manitoba. Canola and other agricultural commodities are very important to Manitoba. However, as has been pointed out, Manitoba is not going to sell out for the dollar. We must understand and appreciate the importance of having a balance.

Human rights issues are always hot topics in the Liberal caucus, and I suspect with all political parties in this chamber. I like to think there is a balance for some members, but the balance has gone a little too far one way or the other, and they want to see it rectified. That balance kind of fluctuates depending on which member one talks to, even listening to some of the comments we heard today in the chamber. At the end of the day, where there is consensus is that Canada needs to take action.

Let there be no doubt that Canada has taken action. There is a consequence for what China has been doing. Other countries such as Australia, France, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, those in NATO and more have all recognized the injustice that has taken place between Canada and China and are onside with Canada on the issue. If allowed to continue, this will continue to harm China and its place in the world. Canada and this government, with the support of members, can ensure we have the right balance in protecting and ensuring that human rights always remain a priority for the House of Commons in Ottawa.

To conclude my remarks, I would hope that members across the way would agree with the importance of the issue and that we have within our institution a great opportunity to give a vote of confidence to our standing committees and hopefully a standing commit-

tee will take on this role, because it will not be a one-time thing. This will be ongoing in the years ahead.

● (1755)

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, as I was listening to the hon. member, I was reflecting on the fact that many of us have been here for more than two terms. He described the standing committees as being the solution. He may have served on many different ones, as I have, in both minority and majority governments. When I arrived it was a minority government. Regardless of the ideal situation in a standing committee, there is often much dysfunction because the government's agenda extends through its members in the standing committees. A minority government is different, but I have to say that one of the most hostile situations was the first standing committee that I sat on.

We have an issue here. Let us imagine being one of the family members. The member wants to know why it is urgent that we set up a committee. We need to think of the people that China has detained and think of their families. We have to think of how important that issue is to them. There are all of the other issues that are happening to families who are reliant on their market and many other things such as religious freedom.

Respectfully, if this was to go to standing committees, there would be scattered information coming in without a cohesive group of people doing the work that they should be doing in this—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, I must interrupt the member. I would ask the member to maybe look at the Speaker so that he can see when the time is running out for his question.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I clearly indicated that often it depends on the makeup of the committee itself. I have found some committees to be exceptionally productive. Even in majority situations, they can be exceptionally productive. To say there is a government agenda when talking about committees is a fair comment, but equally there is an opposition agenda too. The opposition agenda is not maybe as wonderful or in Canadians' best interest at all times.

At the end of the day, we are talking about a minority situation. We are talking about a mandate from Canadians saying that they want to see more co-operation. We do not need to have a special committee every time an important issue comes to the floor of the House of Commons. What could happen is I could be asking a member across the way why he or she is not calling for a special committee on some issue or another issue. It would be endless in terms of what we could be doing.

We need to have confidence. We are in a great position to have confidence because of many different factors, especially—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, let me offer my sincere congratulations to you on becoming the Assistant Deputy Speaker.

A common theme in the speech of my colleague across the way was urgency. If we look at the issues affecting the Canada-China relationship, whether it is fentanyl that makes its way to our shores that is affecting our communities through the opioids crisis, whether it is what our canola producers are going through, whether it is the detention of Canadians and the multiple human rights concerns, yes, we see that there is a sense of urgency. A special committee is not struck to study a relationship unless something is going seriously wrong. I would argue that the actions of the Chinese government over the past several years have pushed the House of Commons to this point.

We have confidence in the standing committees, but I think if the House were to pass this motion today and establish this special committee to tie all those threads together into one comprehensive area of study and report, it would send a strong message to the Government of China that we have taken notice of its actions and we say, “no more”. We have to put our foot down in the sand. We have to let China know that we are treating this issue with the seriousness that it deserves.

• (1800)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, equally, one could say that if the House leadership teams of all political parties came together and got the foreign affairs standing committee going and indicated when we would have those meetings so that the committee can set its agenda, it could be just as effective as what is being proposed here and we could give a vote of confidence for our standing committees.

The point is that, at the end of the day, after listening to a lot of debate, I believe there is a lot of common ground. Members from all sides of the House recognize how important it is to have that healthy discussion at the committee level. That is a very strong positive. There are some differing opinions possibly in certain areas, but I am appealing to members at the very least to provide the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs the opportunity. If it wants to do it, great. If it does not, then let us come back.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague across the floor asked why we needed a separate focus special committee. I believe there is an angle that we have not heard tonight, which is that Canadians brought back a minority government with the largest opposition to that minority in our history because there is not a sense of confidence in the Prime Minister's priorities. This is an example of that. In regard to the China relationship, he praises its dictatorship. His new Minister of Foreign Affairs speaks as though there were some kind of an amazing synergy between the two countries.

My friend spoke about the need to set democracy, human rights and the rule of law as the priorities for what we are as Canadians. We have a Prime Minister who has used the PMO to control many of the committees. On human rights he tells us what our values must be, virtue signalling and reducing freedom of speech and thought. When it comes to the rule of law, the executive branch interfered in the independence of our judicial system in the case of SNC-Lavalin.

There is a need in this House, as my constituents have told me, for us to work together. There are multiple reasons for that, and one

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of them is that we need accountability in regard to China. We need it to be done as a whole of government, including this side of the floor, and so we need—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Other people want to ask questions, so I ask individuals to keep their questions and answers a bit shorter.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, one of the member's colleagues talked about the government agenda. The government agenda on this is one of wanting to achieve a consensus, a common ground and to work through this very important issue to all Canadians.

I highlighted in my response that often there is an opposition agenda. The comments that the member put on the record just now seem to not necessarily have the same common ground coming from all political entities. We should be talking about how we can expedite getting the two Michaels back to Canada. We should be talking about how we can ensure we are minimizing the damage to our producers. We should be talking about how we can ensure issues surrounding human rights are being looked at. That is where we should be looking for common ground, as opposed to pointing the finger and assassinating the character of any particular individual in the House of Commons.

Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP): Madam Speaker, it is important to be discussing the issue of China in this context because we are having a lot of different issues with China. Members on the other side have brought this up. In my own riding, there is a seniors home owned by a Chinese state-owned corporation that had to be taken over by VIHA. This is a health issue, so we are dealing with health issues as well. How many different committees do we need to bring China to?

• (1805)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, that would be determined by the standing committee. We could probably have an endless list of very important critical issues across the country. We could talk about the economy in Alberta and what is happening in the Prairies. We could talk about a health care crisis. We could talk about the environment. We could talk about reconciliation. All of that would be wonderful, I guess, but if we are saying yes to this for a special committee, should we not be saying yes to all of those items? Are they not also important?

This is an issue that is ongoing. We should allow the standing committee to deal with it.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on being appointed to the Chair again. The desire you show to be non-partisan and to be fair and equitable is palpable in the way you comport your responsibilities. I congratulate you and I thank for your service to the House.

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Also, a very personal and heartfelt thanks to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, who reminded the chamber today that economics and politics are not the only thing that is important here. Human dignity and solid principle are, as well as the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. I want to thank him for reminding the House that those things are important to Canadians and to this institution.

I want to recap quickly what we have heard today from the Liberal side today and then I will respond to each of them.

The Liberals have said that the foreign affairs committee is the place for this motion to be heard and dealt with. Primarily the member for Winnipeg North has said that. The member for Don Valley West said that this was a complex, important and sensitive issue. He also said that the government was listening to the debate. The member for Scarborough—Guildwood said human rights issues in China were internal issues. Let me address each one of them.

First, let me address the issue about which the member for Winnipeg North continues to speak. He has said that the only place to deal with our motion would be at foreign affairs committee. I would like to quote him from 2015 with respect to a special committee regarding *Carter v Canada*. He said:

I would also make reference to having a special committee as opposed to any of our current standing committees. It is important to recognize that it is not just the Department of Justice or the Department of Health or the Department of Finance. There are a number of standing committees that might have some interest in the issue. The bottom line is that it is important to have a special committee of the House with the same powers a standing committee has. If we agree to that, we will be on the right track in terms of being able to deliver what Canadians really want to see, and that is some parliamentary leadership on this very important issue.

There are a number of committees that would be concerned about this and that is why we need a special committee. The industry committee would be concerned about the Investment Canada Act and intellectual property. The foreign affairs committee would of course be concerned. The committee I serve on, the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, would be concerned. The finance committee would be concerned with the manipulation of the Chinese currency. The public safety would be concerned with Huawei and a number of other issues.

I thank the member for his right and honourable words from 2015.

With regard to the issue being complex and sensitive and the government is listening, if the government really wants to listen to the debate, if it really believes it is complex and sensitive, then why not solicit the expertise of 338 members of Parliament? By the way, it behooves me why the executive does not do this more often anyway. These are individuals. The entire House is elected by the citizens of Canada. To bring about the expertise within this chamber would be good. If the hon. member does not think he has any expertise, he can exit, and that is fine. Forming a special committee on this would be the right thing to do and a timely thing to do, not just for human rights and our own citizens who are incarcerated in China but also for the multiplicity of other things. If the government really wants to listen to this debate, the best thing it could do is agree with the motion to have a special committee.

In regard to human rights issues, the Communist Party of China has persecuted Tibetans, Christians and Falun Gong for decades. We have credible evidence that not only has it persecuted them, jailed them, tortured them, but it has also harvested their organs.

The member for Wellington—Halton Hills rightfully talked about the incarceration and manipulation of over one million Uighurs. The Subcommittee on International Human Rights has done two studies in this regard and found credible evidence that it is going on. I already mentioned our own citizens who have been incarcerated, but a permanent resident of Canada, Huseyin Celil, has been incarcerated as well.

• (1810)

All of these issues are profoundly important. However, I want to bring to the attention of the House an event that happened recently with a Chinese Communist Party defector, who is now in Australia. Wang Liqiang said that he was motivated to defect after realizing the Chinese regime's harm to worldwide democracy. According to a news article:

A man claiming to be a Chinese military intelligence agent has defected to Australia, bringing with him a wealth of insider knowledge that backs up longstanding concerns about Beijing's attempts to subvert and undermine its opponents abroad.

In other words, that means other democracies.

The article continues:

Wang Liqiang revealed an “unprecedented” trove of information on how the communist Chinese regime funds and directs operations to sabotage the democratic movement in Hong Kong, meddle in Taiwanese elections, and infiltrate Australian political circles, according to reports on Nov. 22.

I could go on, but the fact is that this agent has handed over substantial evidence in that regard. China's capability should be very concerning to the Government of Canada, the House and all Canadians.

The fact is that China is weaponizing trade and using it for economic blackmail. Of course China has done that to us as well as other nations. That should be enough of a concern to strike a special committee.

There are credible allegations, and we heard this several times at the subcommittee for international human rights, that diplomats here from the Communist Chinese party have consistently pressured Canadians who are of Chinese origin to go along with their initiatives and to intimidate Uighurs and others who would oppose their regime. However, with a special committee, as I said earlier in one of my questions, should the government want to have some information kept secret, it could easily swear in individuals on that committee to deal with sensitive issues as far as diplomatic things are concerned.

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Finally, the government should answer as to why it appointed the recent ambassador, Dominic Barton, who is a former global managing partner at McKinsey & Company. This firm once held a corporate retreat approximately four miles from a concentration camp holding Uighur Muslims, which my colleague referred to earlier. McKinsey has also advised at least 22 of the 100 biggest state-owned firms in China. The ambassador has no diplomatic experience as well. Canadians should know exactly why the Government of Canada appointed a person with those kinds of connections to state-owned enterprises. Knowing what he knows with regard to the Uighur concerns, why is he our representative in Beijing?

Since 1949, the Communist Party has ruled with an iron fist in China. I have mentioned the people, groups and minorities in China that were dealt with by that iron fist. However, one of the things that we have seen on the subcommittee for international human rights is that if one is prepared to persecute, harm, terrorize and jail one's own people, it is a very small step to export that kind of behaviour.

Therefore, the concerns that have been voiced here by many of our members in regard to China's behaviour, with its so-called international partners, should be enough of a concern for the House of Commons, for the Government of Canada, to ensure we strike this special committee. We should not wait until February when we return and when committees are struck. We should begin to gather evidence so the government can make the best decision on how to deal with the diplomatic, human rights, economic and industrial concerns we have with the People's Republic of China.

I want to make it clear that we have no issue with the citizens of China. We have a lot of Canadian citizens today who have immigrated to Canada and are contributing Canadian citizens. The issue we have is with the Communist Party of China and its behaviour internationally, particularly with the Government of Canada.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 6:15 p.m., and today being the last allotted day for the supply period ending December 10, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question to dispose of the business of supply.

[*English*]

The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

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

• (1900)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 1*)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|--|--|
| Aboultarif | Aitchison |
| Albas | Alleslev |
| Allison | Angus |
| Arnold | Ashton |
| Atwin | Bachrach |
| Baldinelli | Barlow |
| Barrett | Barsalou-Duval |
| Beaulieu | Benzen |
| Bergen | Bergeron |
| Berthold | Bérubé |
| Bezan | Blaikie |
| Blanchet | Blanchette-Joncas |
| Blaney (North Island—Powell River) | Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) |
| Block | Boudrias |
| Boulerice | Bragdon |
| Brassard | Calkins |
| Cannings | Carrie |
| Chabot | Champoux |
| Charbonneau | Chiu |
| Chong | Cooper |
| Cumming | Dalton |
| Dancho | Davidson |
| Davies | DeBellefeuille |
| Deltell | d'Entremont |
| Desbiens | Desilets |
| Diotte | Doherty |
| Dowdall | Dreeshen |
| Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) | Duvall |
| Epp | Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) |
| Falk (Provencher) | Fast |
| Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk) | Fortin |
| Gallant | Garrison |
| Gaudreau | Gazan |
| Généreux | Genuis |
| Gill | Gladu |
| Gourde | Gray |
| Green | Hallan |
| Harder | Harris |
| Hoback | Hughes |
| Jansen | Jeneroux |
| Johns | Julian |
| Kelly | Kent |
| Kitchen | Kmiec |

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|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Kram | Kurek | Guilbeault | Hajdu |
| Kusie | Kwan | Hardie | Holland |
| Lake | Larouche | Housefather | Hussen |
| Lawrence | Lehoux | Hutchings | Iacono |
| Lemire | Lewis (Essex) | Jaczek | Joly |
| Liepert | Lloyd | Jones | Jordan |
| Lobb | Lukiwski | Jowhari | Kelloway |
| MacGregor | Maguire | Khalid | Khera |
| Manly | Marcil | Koutrakis | Kusmierczyk |
| Martel | Masse | Lalonde | Lambropoulos |
| Mathysen | Mazier | Lametti | Lamoureux |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman | Lattanzio | Lauzon |
| McLean | McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) | Lebouthillier | Lefebvre |
| McPherson | Melillo | Levitt | Lightbound |
| Michaud | Moore | Long | Longfield |
| Morantz | Morrison | Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga) | MacAulay (Cardigan) |
| Motz | Nater | MacKinnon (Gatineau) | Maloney |
| Normandin | O'Toole | Martinez Ferrada | May (Cambridge) |
| Patzer | Perron | McCrimmon | McDonald |
| Plamondon | Poileuvre | McGuinty | McKenna |
| Qaqqaq | Rayes | McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McLeod (Northwest Territories) |
| Redekopp | Reid | Mendès | Medicino |
| Rempel Garner | Richards | Miller | Monsef |
| Rood | Ruff | Morneau | Morrissey |
| Sahota (Calgary Skyview) | Savard-Tremblay | Murray | Ng |
| Scheer | Schmale | O'Connell | Oliphant |
| Shields | Shin | O'Regan | Petipas Taylor |
| Shipley | Simard | Powlowski | Qualtrough |
| Singh | Sloan | Ratansi | Regan |
| Soroka | Stanton | Robillard | Rodriguez |
| Steinley | Ste-Marie | Rogers | Romanado |
| Strahl | Stubbs | Sahota (Brampton North) | Saini |
| Sweet | Thériault | Sajjan | Sangha |
| Therrien | Tochor | Sarai | Scarpaleggia |
| Trudel | Uppal | Schiefke | Schulte |
| Van Popta | Vecchio | Serré | Sgro |
| Vidal | Viersen | Shanahan | Sheehan |
| Vignola | Vis | Sidhu (Brampton East) | Sidhu (Brampton South) |
| Wagantall | Warkentin | Sikand | Simms |
| Waugh | Webber | Sorbara | Spengemann |
| Williamson | Wilson-Raybould | Tabbara | Tassi |
| Wong | Yurdiga | Trudeau | Turnbull |
| Zimmer— 171 | | Van Bynen | van Koeverden |
| | | Vandal | Vandenbeld |
| | | Vaughan | Virani |
| | | Weiler | Yip |
| | | Young | Zahid |
| | | Zann | Zuberi— 148 |

NAYS

Members

| | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Alghabra | Amos |
| Anand | Anandasangaree |
| Arseneault | Arya |
| Badawey | Bagnell |
| Bains | Baker |
| Battiste | Beech |
| Bendayan | Bennett |
| Bessette | Bibeau |
| Bittle | Blair |
| Blois | Bratina |
| Brière | Carr |
| Casey | Chagger |
| Chen | Cormier |
| Dabrusin | Damoff |
| Dhaliwal | Dhillon |
| Dong | Drouin |
| Dubourg | Duclos |
| Duguid | Duncan (Etobicoke North) |
| Dzerowicz | Easter |
| Ehsassi | El-Khoury |
| Ellis | Fergus |
| Fillmore | Finnigan |
| Fisher | Fonseca |
| Fortier | Fragiskatos |
| Fry | Garneau |
| Gerretsen | Gould |

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[Translation]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (A), 2019-20**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)** moved:

That the Supplementary Estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020, be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1910)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 2*)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Alghabra | Amos |
| Anand | Anandasangaree |
| Angus | Arseneault |
| Arya | Ashton |
| Atwin | Bachrach |
| Badawey | Bagnell |
| Bains | Baker |
| Barsalou-Duval | Battiste |
| Beaulieu | Beech |
| Bendayan | Bennett |
| Bergeron | Bérubé |
| Bessette | Bibeau |
| Bittle | Blaikie |
| Blair | Blanchet |
| Blanchette-Joncas | Blaney (North Island—Powell River) |
| Blois | Boudrias |
| Boulerice | Bratina |
| Brière | Cannings |
| Carr | Casey |
| Chabot | Chagger |
| Champoux | Charbonneau |
| Chen | Cormier |
| Dabrusin | Damoff |
| Davies | DeBellefeuille |
| Desbiens | Desilets |
| Dhaliwal | Dhillon |
| Dong | Drouin |
| Dubourg | Duclos |
| Duguid | Duncan (Etobicoke North) |
| Duvall | Dzerowicz |
| Easter | Ehsassi |
| El-Khoury | Ellis |
| Erskine-Smith | Fergus |
| Fillmore | Finnigan |
| Fisher | Fonseca |
| Fortier | Fortin |
| Fragiskatos | Fry |
| Garneau | Garrison |
| Gaudreau | Gazan |
| Gerretsen | Gill |
| Gould | Green |
| Guilbeault | Hajdu |
| Hardie | Harris |
| Holland | Housefather |
| Hughes | Hussen |
| Hutchings | Iacono |
| Jaček | Johns |
| Joly | Jones |
| Jordan | Jowhari |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Julian | Kelloway |
| Khalid | Khera |
| Koutrakis | Kusmierczyk |
| Kwan | Lalonde |
| Lambropoulos | Lametti |
| Lamoureux | Larouche |
| Lattanzio | Lauzon |
| Lebouthillier | Lefebvre |
| Lemire | Levitt |
| Lightbound | Long |
| Longfield | Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga) |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | MacGregor |
| MacKinnon (Gatineau) | Maloney |
| Marcil | Martinez Ferrada |
| Masse | Mathysen |
| May (Cambridge) | McCrimmon |
| McDonald | McGuinty |
| McKay | McKenna |
| McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McLeod (Northwest Territories) |
| McPherson | Mendès |
| Mendicino | Michaud |
| Miller | Monsef |
| Morneau | Morrissey |
| Murray | Ng |
| Normandin | O'Connell |
| Oliphant | O'Regan |
| Perron | Petipas Taylor |
| Plamondon | Powlowski |
| Qaqqaq | Qualtrough |
| Ratansi | Regan |
| Robillard | Rodriguez |
| Rogers | Romanado |
| Sahota (Brampton North) | Saini |
| Sajjan | Sangha |
| Sarai | Savard-Tremblay |
| Scarpaleggia | Schieffe |
| Schulte | Serré |
| Sgro | Shanahan |
| Sheehan | Sidhu (Brampton East) |
| Sidhu (Brampton South) | Sikand |
| Simard | Simms |
| Singh | Sorbara |
| Spengemann | Ste-Marie |
| Tabbara | Tassi |
| Thériault | Therrien |
| Trudeau | Trudel |
| Turnbull | Van Bynen |
| van Koeverden | Vandal |
| Vandenbeld | Vaughan |
| Vignola | Virani |
| Weiler | Wilson-Raybould |
| Yip | Young |
| Zahid | Zann |
| Zuberi—205 | |

Business of Supply

NAYS

Members

| | |
|------------|--|
| Aboultarif | Aitchison |
| Albas | Alleslev |
| Allison | Arnold |
| Baldinelli | Barlow |
| Barrett | Benzen |
| Bergen | Berthold |
| Bezan | Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) |
| Block | Bragdon |
| Brassard | Calkins |
| Carrie | Chiu |
| Chong | Cooper |
| Cumming | Dalton |
| Dancho | Davidson |
| Deltell | d'Entremont |
| Diotte | Doherty |

Business of Supply

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Dowdall | Dreeshen |
| Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) | Epp |
| Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) | Falk (Provencher) |
| Fast | Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk) |
| Gallant | Généreux |
| Genuis | Gladu |
| Gourde | Gray |
| Hallan | Harder |
| Hoback | Jansen |
| Jeneroux | Kelly |
| Kent | Kitchen |
| Kmiec | Kram |
| Kurek | Kusie |
| Lake | Lawrence |
| Lehoux | Lewis (Essex) |
| Liepert | Lloyd |
| Lobb | Lukiwski |
| Maguire | Manly |
| Martel | Mazier |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| McLean | McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) |
| Melillo | Moore |
| Morantz | Morrison |
| Motz | Nater |
| O'Toole | Patzer |
| Poillievre | Rayes |
| Redekopp | Reid |
| Rempel Garner | Richards |
| Rood | Ruff |
| Sahota (Calgary Skyview) | Scheer |
| Schmale | Shields |
| Shin | Shipley |
| Sloan | Soroka |
| Stanton | Steinley |
| Strahl | Stubbs |
| Sweet | Tochor |
| Uppal | Van Popta |
| Vecchio | Vidal |
| Viersen | Vis |
| Wagantall | Warkentin |
| Waugh | Webber |
| Williamson | Wong |
| Yurdiga | Zimmer— 116 |

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that Bill C-2, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020, be now read the first time.

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be now read the second time and referred to committee of the whole.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, in my exuberance to stand, I really wanted to thank the very good and generous people of the riding of Ajax for the opportunity to serve them.

I thank the House for its indulgence in letting me slip that in as I do something that I think the House will appreciate, which is to ask you this: If you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to apply the result of the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting in favour.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the vote and will be voting no.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will vote in favour of the motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees and will be voting for.

Mr. Paul Manly: Mr. Speaker, I am not a whip. I agree to apply, but as the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, I will be voting no.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, as the independent member for Vancouver Granville, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

● (1915)

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

(*Division No. 3*)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Alghabra | Amos |
| Anand | Anandasangaree |
| Angus | Arseneault |
| Arya | Ashton |
| Atwin | Bachrach |
| Badawey | Bagnell |
| Bains | Baker |
| Barsalou-Duval | Battiste |
| Beaulieu | Beech |
| Bendayan | Bennett |
| Bergeron | Bérubé |
| Bessette | Bibeau |
| Bittle | Blaikie |
| Blair | Blanchet |
| Blanchette-Joncas | Blaney (North Island—Powell River) |
| Blois | Boudrias |
| Boulerice | Bratina |
| Brière | Cannings |
| Carr | Casey |
| Chabot | Chagger |
| Champoux | Charbonneau |

Business of Supply

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Chen | Cormier | Trudeau | Trudel |
| Dabrusin | Damoff | Turnbull | Van Bynen |
| Davies | DeBellefeuille | van Koeverden | Vandal |
| Desbiens | Desilets | Vandenbeld | Vaughan |
| Dhaliwal | Dhillon | Vignola | Virani |
| Dong | Drouin | Weiler | Wilson-Raybould |
| Dubourg | Duclos | Yip | Young |
| Duguid | Duncan (Etobicoke North) | Zahid | Zann |
| Duvall | Dzerowicz | Zuberi— 205 | |
| Easter | Ehsassi | | |
| El-Khoury | Ellis | | |
| Erskine-Smith | Fergus | | |
| Fillmore | Finnigan | | |
| Fisher | Fonseca | Aboultaif | Aitchison |
| Fortier | Fortin | Albas | Alleslev |
| Fragiskatos | Fry | Allison | Arnold |
| Garneau | Garrison | Baldinelli | Barlow |
| Gaudreau | Gazan | Barrett | Benzen |
| Gerretsen | Gill | Bergen | Berthold |
| Gould | Green | Bezan | Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) |
| Guilbeault | Hajdu | Block | Bragdon |
| Hardie | Harris | Brassard | Calkins |
| Holland | Housefather | Carrie | Chiu |
| Hughes | Hussen | Chong | Cooper |
| Hutchings | Iacono | Cumming | Dalton |
| Jaczek | Johns | Dancho | Davidson |
| Joly | Jones | Deltell | d'Entremont |
| Jordan | Jowhari | Diotte | Doherty |
| Julian | Kelloway | Dowdall | Dreeshen |
| Khalid | Khera | Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) | Epp |
| Koutrakis | Kusmierczyk | Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) | Falk (Provencher) |
| Kwan | Lalonde | Fast | Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk) |
| Lambropoulos | Lametti | Gallant | Généreux |
| Lamoureux | Larouche | Genuis | Gladu |
| Lattanzio | Lauzon | Gourde | Gray |
| Lebouthillier | Lefebvre | Hallan | Harder |
| Lemire | Levitt | Hoback | Jansen |
| Lightbound | Long | Jeneroux | Kelly |
| Longfield | Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga) | Kent | Kitchen |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | MacGregor | Kmiec | Kram |
| MacKinnon (Gatineau) | Maloney | Kurek | Kusie |
| Marcil | Martinez Ferrada | Lake | Lawrence |
| Masse | Mathysen | Lehoux | Lewis (Essex) |
| May (Cambridge) | McCrimmon | Liepert | Lloyd |
| McDonald | McGuinty | Lobb | Lukiwski |
| McKay | McKenna | Maguire | Manly |
| McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McLeod (Northwest Territories) | Martel | Mazier |
| McPherson | Mendès | McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| Mendicino | Michaud | McLean | McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) |
| Miller | Monsef | Melillo | Moore |
| Morneau | Morrissey | Morantz | Morrison |
| Murray | Ng | Motz | Nater |
| Normandin | O'Connell | O'Toole | Patzner |
| Oliphant | O'Regan | Poilievre | Rayes |
| Perron | Petiipas Taylor | Redekopp | Reid |
| Plamondon | Powlowski | Rempel Garner | Richards |
| Qaqqaq | Qualtrough | Rood | Ruff |
| Ratansi | Regan | Sahota (Calgary Skyview) | Scheer |
| Robillard | Rodriguez | Schmale | Shields |
| Rogers | Romanado | Shin | Shipley |
| Sahota (Brampton North) | Saini | Sloan | Soroka |
| Sajjan | Sangha | Stanton | Steinley |
| Sarai | Savard-Tremblay | Strahl | Stubbs |
| Scarpaleggia | Schiefke | Sweet | Tochor |
| Schulte | Serré | Uppal | Van Popta |
| Sgro | Shanahan | Vecchio | Vidal |
| Sheehan | Sidhu (Brampton East) | Viersen | Vis |
| Sidhu (Brampton South) | Sikand | Wagantall | Warkentin |
| Simard | Simms | Waugh | Webber |
| Singh | Sorbara | Williamson | Wong |
| Spengemann | Ste-Marie | Yurdiga | Zimmer— 116 |
| Tabbara | Tassi | | |
| Thériault | Therrien | | |

NAYS

Members

Business of Supply

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee of the whole. I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole thereon, Mr. Bruce Stanton in the chair)

(On clause 2)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: The House is now in committee of the whole on Bill C-2.

[*English*]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Chair, can the President of the Treasury Board please confirm that the bill is in its usual form?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great empathy that we acknowledge the concern and anxiety felt by the member across the way.

Accordingly, we want to reassure him and confirm that the bill, as submitted, is in the same form as all previous supply bills.

The Chair: Shall clause 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 3 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 4 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall clause 5 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall clause 6 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Shall schedule 1 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall schedule 2 carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall clause 1, the short title, carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the preamble carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Shall the title carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Title agreed to)

The Chair: Shall the bill carry?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill agreed to)

[*English*]

The Chair: Shall I rise and report the bill?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Bill reported)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that the bill be concurred in.

[*English*]

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to apply the results of the previous vote, held before the committee of the whole, to this vote, with Liberal members voting yes.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the vote and the Conservative members will be voting no.

• (1920)

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting yes.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats agree to apply and we will be voting yea.

Mr. Paul Manly: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply, but I will be voting no.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and I will be voting yes.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and I will be voting yes.

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

(*Division No. 4*)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Alhabra | Amos |
| Anand | Anandasangaree |
| Angus | Arseneault |
| Arya | Ashton |
| Atwin | Bachrach |
| Badawey | Bagnell |
| Bains | Baker |
| Barsalou-Duval | Battiste |
| Beaulieu | Beech |
| Bendayan | Bennett |
| Bergeron | Bérubé |
| Bessette | Bibeau |
| Bittle | Blaikie |
| Blair | Blanchet |
| Blanchette-Joncas | Blaney (North Island—Powell River) |
| Blois | Boudrias |
| Boulerice | Bratina |
| Brière | Cannings |
| Carr | Casey |
| Chabot | Chagger |
| Champoux | Charbonneau |
| Chen | Cormier |
| Dabrusin | Damoff |
| Davies | DeBellefeuille |
| Desbiens | Desilets |
| Dhaliwal | Dhillon |
| Dong | Drouin |
| Dubourg | Duclos |
| Duguid | Duncan (Etobicoke North) |
| Duvall | Dzerowicz |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Easter | Ehsassi |
| El-Khoury | Ellis |
| Erskine-Smith | Fergus |
| Fillmore | Finnigan |
| Fisher | Fonseca |
| Fortier | Fortin |
| Fragiskatos | Fry |
| Garneau | Garrison |
| Gaudreau | Gazan |
| Gerretsen | Gill |
| Gould | Green |
| Guilbeault | Hajdu |
| Hardie | Harris |
| Holland | Housefather |
| Hughes | Hussen |
| Hutchings | Iacono |
| Jaczek | Johns |
| Joly | Jones |
| Jordan | Jowhari |
| Julian | Kelloway |
| Khalid | Khera |
| Koutrakis | Kusmierczyk |
| Kwan | Lalonde |
| Lambropoulos | Lametti |
| Lamoureux | Larouche |
| Lattanzio | Lauzon |
| Lebouthillier | Lefebvre |
| Lemire | Levitt |
| Lightbound | Long |
| Longfield | Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga) |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | MacGregor |
| MacKinnon (Gatineau) | Maloney |
| Marcil | Martinez Ferrada |
| Masse | Mathysen |
| May (Cambridge) | McCrimmon |
| McDonald | McGuinty |
| McKay | McKenna |
| McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McLeod (Northwest Territories) |
| McPherson | Mendès |
| Medicino | Michaud |
| Miller | Monsef |
| Morneau | Morrissey |
| Murray | Ng |
| Normandin | O'Connell |
| Oliphant | O'Regan |
| Perron | Petitpas Taylor |
| Plamondon | Powlowski |
| Qaqqaq | Qualtrough |
| Ratansi | Regan |
| Robillard | Rodriguez |
| Rogers | Romanado |
| Sahota (Brampton North) | Saini |
| Sajjan | Sangha |
| Sarai | Savard-Tremblay |
| Scarpaleggia | Schiefke |
| Schulte | Serré |
| Sgro | Shanahan |
| Sheehan | Sidhu (Brampton East) |
| Sidhu (Brampton South) | Sikand |
| Simard | Simms |
| Singh | Sorbara |
| Spengemann | Ste-Marie |
| Tabbara | Tassi |
| Thériault | Therrien |
| Trudeau | Trudel |
| Turnbull | Van Bynen |
| van Koevorden | Vandal |
| Vandenbeld | Vaughan |
| Vignola | Virani |
| Weiler | Wilson-Raybould |
| Yip | Young |
| Zahid | Zann |
| Zuberi— | 205 |

Business of Supply

Business of Supply

NAYS

Members

| | |
|--|--|
| Aboultaif | Aitchison |
| Albas | Alleslev |
| Allison | Arnold |
| Baldinelli | Barlow |
| Barrett | Benzen |
| Bergen | Berthold |
| Bezan | Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) |
| Block | Bragdon |
| Brassard | Calkins |
| Carrie | Chiu |
| Chong | Cooper |
| Cumming | Dalton |
| Dancho | Davidson |
| Deltell | d'Entremont |
| Diotte | Doherty |
| Dowdall | Dreeshen |
| Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) | Epp |
| Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) | Falk (Provencher) |
| Fast | Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk) |
| Gallant | Généreux |
| Genuis | Gladu |
| Gourde | Gray |
| Hallan | Harder |
| Hoback | Jansen |
| Jeneroux | Kelly |
| Kent | Kitchen |
| Kmiec | Kram |
| Kurek | Kusie |
| Lake | Lawrence |
| Lehoux | Lewis (Essex) |
| Liepert | Lloyd |
| Lobb | Lukiwski |
| Maguire | Manly |
| Martel | Mazier |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| McLean | McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) |
| Melillo | Moore |
| Morantz | Morrison |
| Motz | Nater |
| O'Toole | Patzer |
| Poilievre | Rayes |
| Redekopp | Reid |
| Rempel Garner | Richards |
| Rood | Ruff |
| Sahota (Calgary Skyview) | Scheer |
| Schmale | Shields |
| Shin | Shipley |
| Sloan | Soroka |
| Stanton | Steinley |
| Strahl | Stubbs |
| Sweet | Tochor |
| Uppal | Van Popta |
| Vecchio | Vidal |
| Viersen | Vis |
| Wagantall | Warkentin |
| Waugh | Webber |
| Williamson | Wong |
| Yurdiga | Zimmer — 116 |

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos moved that Bill C-2, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020, be read the third time and passed.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe if you seek it you can apply the results of the previous vote to this vote with Liberal members voting for.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply with Conservative members voting no.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote and will be voting yes.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote and will be voting yes.

Mr. Paul Manly: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and I will be voting no.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and I will be voting yes.

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply and will be voting yes.

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

(*Division No. 5*)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Alghabra | Amos |
| Anand | Anandasangaree |
| Angus | Arseneault |
| Arya | Ashton |
| Atwin | Bachrach |
| Badawey | Bagnell |
| Bains | Baker |
| Barsalou-Duval | Battiste |
| Beaulieu | Beech |
| Bendayan | Bennett |
| Bergeron | Bérubé |
| Bessette | Bibeau |
| Bittle | Blaikie |
| Blair | Blanchet |
| Blanchette-Joneas | Blaney (North Island—Powell River) |
| Blois | Boudrias |
| Boulerice | Bratina |
| Brière | Cannings |
| Carr | Casey |
| Chabot | Chagger |

Business of Supply

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Champoux | Charbonneau | Thériault | Therrien |
| Chen | Cormier | Trudeau | Trudel |
| Dabrusin | Damoff | Turnbull | Van Bynen |
| Davies | DeBellefeuille | van Koevorden | Vandal |
| Desbiens | Desilets | Vandenbeld | Vaughan |
| Dhaliwal | Dhillon | Vignola | Virani |
| Dong | Drouin | Weiler | Wilson-Raybould |
| Dubourg | Duclos | Yip | Young |
| Duguid | Duncan (Etobicoke North) | Zahid | Zann |
| Duvall | Dzerowicz | Zuberi— 205 | |
| Easter | Ehsassi | | |
| El-Khoury | Ellis | | |
| Erskine-Smith | Fergus | | |
| Fillmore | Finnigan | | |
| Fisher | Fonseca | Aboutaif | Aitchison |
| Fortier | Fortin | Albas | Alleslev |
| Fragiskatos | Fry | Allison | Arnold |
| Garneau | Garrison | Baldinelli | Barlow |
| Gaudreau | Gazan | Barrett | Benzen |
| Gerretsen | Gill | Bergen | Berthold |
| Gould | Green | Bezan | Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) |
| Guilbeault | Hajdu | Block | Bragdon |
| Hardie | Harris | Brassard | Calkins |
| Holland | Housefather | Carrie | Chiu |
| Hughes | Hussen | Chong | Cooper |
| Hutchings | Iacono | Cumming | Dalton |
| Jaczek | Johns | Dancho | Davidson |
| Joly | Jones | Deltell | d'Entremont |
| Jordan | Jowhari | Diotte | Doherty |
| Julian | Kelloway | Dowdall | Dreeschen |
| Khalid | Khera | Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) | Epp |
| Koutrakis | Kusmierczyk | Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) | Falk (Provencher) |
| Kwan | Lalonde | Fast | Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk) |
| Lambropoulos | Lametti | Gallant | Généreux |
| Lamoureux | Larouche | Genuis | Gladu |
| Lattanzio | Lauzon | Gourde | Gray |
| Lebouthillier | Lefebvre | Hallan | Harder |
| Lemire | Levitt | Hoback | Jansen |
| Lighbound | Long | Jeneroux | Kelly |
| Longfield | Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga) | Kent | Kitchen |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | MacGregor | Kniec | Kram |
| MacKinnon (Gatineau) | Maloney | Kurek | Kusie |
| Marcil | Martinez Ferrada | Lake | Lawrence |
| Masse | Mathysen | Lehoux | Lewis (Essex) |
| May (Cambridge) | McCrimmon | Liepert | Lloyd |
| McDonald | McGuinty | Lobb | Lukiwski |
| McKay | McKenna | Maguire | Manly |
| McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McLeod (Northwest Territories) | Martel | Mazier |
| McPherson | Mendès | McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| Mendicino | Michaud | McLean | McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) |
| Miller | Monsef | Melillo | Moore |
| Morneau | Morrissey | Morantz | Morrison |
| Murray | Ng | Motz | Nater |
| Normandin | O'Connell | O'Toole | Patzer |
| Oliphant | O'Regan | Poilievre | Rayes |
| Perron | Petitpas Taylor | Redekopp | Reid |
| Plamondon | Powlowski | Rempel Garner | Richards |
| Qaqqaq | Qualtrough | Rood | Ruff |
| Ratansi | Regan | Sahota (Calgary Skyview) | Scheer |
| Robillard | Rodriguez | Schmale | Shields |
| Rogers | Romanado | Shin | Shipley |
| Sahota (Brampton North) | Saini | Sloan | Soroka |
| Sajjan | Sangha | Stanton | Steinley |
| Sarai | Savard-Tremblay | Strahl | Stubbs |
| Scarpaleggia | Schieffe | Sweet | Tochor |
| Schulte | Serré | Uppal | Van Popta |
| Sgro | Shanahan | Vecchio | Vidal |
| Sheehan | Sidhu (Brampton East) | Viersen | Vis |
| Sidhu (Brampton South) | Sikand | Wagantall | Warkentin |
| Simard | Simms | Waugh | Webber |
| Singh | Sorbara | Williamson | Wong |
| Spengemann | Ste-Marie | Yurdiga | Zimmer— 116 |
| Tabbara | Tassi | | |

NAYS

Members

The Address

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from December 9 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Monday, December 9, 2019, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the subamendment of the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

• (1930)

[Translation]

(The House divided on the amendment to the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 6)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Angus | Ashton |
| Atwin | Bachrach |
| Barsalou-Duval | Beaulieu |
| Bergeron | Bérubé |
| Blaikie | Blanchet |
| Blanchette-Joncas | Blaney (North Island—Powell River) |
| Boudrias | Boulerice |
| Cannings | Chabot |
| Champoux | Charbonneau |
| Davies | DeBellefeuille |
| Desbiens | Desilets |
| Duval | Fortin |
| Garrison | Gaudreau |
| Gazan | Gill |
| Green | Harris |
| Hughes | Johns |
| Julian | Kwan |
| Larouche | Lemire |
| MacGregor | Manly |
| Marcil | Masse |
| Mathysen | McPherson |
| Michaud | Normandin |
| Perron | Plamondon |
| Qaqqaq | Savard-Tremblay |
| Simard | Singh |
| Ste-Marie | Thériault |
| Therrien | Trudel |
| Vignola— 55 | |

NAYS

Members

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Aboulttaif | Aitchison |
| Albas | Alghabra |
| Alleslev | Allison |
| Amos | Anand |
| Anandasangaree | Arnold |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Arseneault | Arya |
| Badawey | Bagnell |
| Bains | Baker |
| Baldinelli | Barlow |
| Barrett | Battiste |
| Beech | Bendayan |
| Bennett | Benzen |
| Bergen | Berthold |
| Bessette | Bezan |
| Bibeau | Bittle |
| Blair | Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis) |
| Block | Blois |
| Bragdon | Brassard |
| Bratina | Brière |
| Calkins | Carr |
| Carrie | Casey |
| Chagger | Chen |
| Chiu | Chong |
| Cooper | Cormier |
| Cumming | Dabrusin |
| Dalton | Damoff |
| Dancho | Davidson |
| Deltell | d'Entremont |
| Dhaliwal | Dhillon |
| Diotte | Doherty |
| Dong | Dowdall |
| Dreeshen | Drouin |
| Dubourg | Duclos |
| Duguid | Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) |
| Duncan (Etobicoke North) | Dzerowicz |
| Easter | Ehsassi |
| El-Khoury | Ellis |
| Epp | Erskine-Smith |
| Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster) | Falk (Provencher) |
| Fast | Fergus |
| Fillmore | Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk) |
| Finnigan | Fisher |
| Fonseca | Fortier |
| Fragiskatos | Fry |
| Gallant | Garneau |
| Généreux | Genuis |
| Gerretsen | Gladu |
| Gould | Gourde |
| Gray | Guilbeault |
| Hajdu | Hallan |
| Harder | Hardie |
| Hoback | Holland |
| Housefather | Hussen |
| Hutchings | Iacono |
| Jaczek | Jansen |
| Jeneroux | Joly |
| Jones | Jordan |
| Jowhari | Kelloway |
| Kelly | Kent |
| Khalid | Khera |
| Kitchen | Kmiec |
| Koutrakis | Kram |
| Kurek | Kusie |
| Kusmierczyk | Lake |
| Lalonde | Lambropoulos |
| Lametti | Lamoureux |
| Lattanzio | Lauzon |
| Lawrence | Lebouthillier |
| Lefebvre | Lehoux |
| Levitt | Lewis (Essex) |
| Liepert | Lightbound |
| Lloyd | Lobb |
| Long | Longfield |
| Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga) | Lukiwski |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | MacKinnon (Gatineau) |
| Maguire | Maloney |
| Martel | Martinez Ferrada |
| May (Cambridge) | Mazier |

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House. This is my first time outside of question period to be speaking in this session of Parliament and it is a real honour to have the confidence of the electors of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes who returned me to the House.

The work of the last Parliament continues. Following the investigation by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, there was a report that bears the name of the member for Papineau, the Prime Minister. I will go to great lengths to not use the actual name of the report in this House. However, it is the second report bearing the name of the member for Papineau from the Ethics Commissioner. It is very concerning that there was, again, a finding by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner that the member, the first minister, the Prime Minister, contravened the act.

That leads me to the question that I raised in the House during question period. The Prime Minister has great power that comes with his office. With it, of course, comes tremendous responsibility. That responsibility includes maintaining the confidence that Canadians have in their public institutions. When we have the Prime Minister under investigation by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, it is incumbent on the Prime Minister to provide all information, produce documents and witnesses to allow the commissioner to do his non-partisan, important work on behalf of this House and on behalf of all Canadians.

The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner told Canadians and this House in his report that he was not given full access, but was in fact obstructed by the Prime Minister in his attempts to complete his report. That is very concerning.

Not only did that obstruction occur with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, but it also happened when the RCMP undertook an investigation and made inquiries on this matter. I asked the Prime Minister if he would co-operate with the investigation that the RCMP was undertaking. Now that the election is over and now that Canadians have returned us to this place, it is important that we give Canadians the opportunity to have a renewed faith in this institution and in all of us.

Will the Prime Minister allow the RCMP to do its work on behalf of Canadians? Will the Prime Minister lift the veil of secrecy? Saying that it was granted an unprecedented waiver is a word salad. It does not provide clear answers to Canadians. Canadians want the veil of secrecy lifted.

The former attorney general was fired. The Prime Minister's former principal secretary resigned in disgrace. The former clerk of the Privy Council was fired too. It was very much the Saturday night massacre referred to by the member for Vancouver Granville.

Will the Prime Minister stop his obstruction and let the RCMP complete a full investigation into his interference in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin?

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman |
| McCrimmon | McDonald |
| McGuinty | McKay |
| McKenna | McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) |
| McLean | McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) |
| McLeod (Northwest Territories) | Melillo |
| Mendès | Mendicino |
| Miller | Monsef |
| Moore | Morantz |
| Morneau | Morrison |
| Morrissey | Motz |
| Murray | Nater |
| Ng | O'Connell |
| Oliphant | O'Regan |
| O'Toole | Patzer |
| Petipas Taylor | Poilievre |
| Powlowski | Qualtrough |
| Ratansi | Rayes |
| Redekopp | Regan |
| Reid | Rempel Garner |
| Richards | Robillard |
| Rodriguez | Rogers |
| Romanado | Rood |
| Ruff | Sahota (Calgary Skyview) |
| Sahota (Brampton North) | Saini |
| Sajjan | Sangha |
| Sarai | Scarpaleggia |
| Scheer | Schiefke |
| Schmale | Schulte |
| Serré | Sgro |
| Shanahan | Sheehan |
| Shields | Shin |
| Shipley | Sidhu (Brampton East) |
| Sidhu (Brampton South) | Sikand |
| Simms | Sloan |
| Sorbara | Soroka |
| Spengemann | Stanton |
| Steinley | Strahl |
| Stubbs | Sweet |
| Tabbara | Tassi |
| Tochor | Trudeau |
| Turnbull | Uppal |
| Van Bynen | van Koeveerden |
| Van Popta | Vandal |
| Vandenbeld | Vaughan |
| Vecchio | Vidal |
| Viersen | Virani |
| Vis | Wagantall |
| Warkentin | Waugh |
| Webber | Weiler |
| Williamson | Wilson-Raybould |
| Wong | Yip |
| Young | Yurdiga |
| Zahid | Zann |
| Zimmer | Zuberi— 266 |

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1935)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will make two quick comments that I think are important and then provide a personal opinion.

The responsibility of any prime minister is to stand up for jobs across the country while upholding the rule of law. We have been open and upfront with Canadians about all of this. This issue was discussed repeatedly in the last Parliament. Members raised it often in question period, and the justice committee held public hearings and heard testimony from many witnesses. To provide Canadians with the transparency and fairness they deserve, we provided an exceptional waiver to the former attorney general in a way that preserves, rather than undermines, solicitor-client privilege, the right to a fair hearing in cases that are currently active, the integrity of the position of director of public prosecutions, and the rule of law in our country more generally. The Prime Minister has accepted the Ethics Commissioner's report and has taken full responsibility.

Over many years, I have watched different leaders' approaches to the issues of the day, and one thing I would remind the member opposite of is that, when the Prime Minister became leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, one of the first things he did was talk about the importance of transparency and accountability on the issue of proactive disclosure related to members of Parliament and the ways they spend public tax dollars. It took a while, but eventually the Conservatives came on board in recognizing the merit of what the then leader of the Liberal Party was talking about. It took a little longer for the New Democrats to come onside. The point is that, from day one, we have had a leader of the Liberal Party, the Prime Minister, who truly and genuinely believes in transparency, accountability and the rule of law.

These are important issues to the leader of the Liberal Party, the Prime Minister, and this government. If we were to take a look at the bigger picture of what has taken place over the last number of years, we have been very respectful of our independent officers, whether it is Elections Canada officers or the Ethics Commissioner. When recommendations are brought forward, we respect them and we listen. In cases that have been cited, there have been actions by the Prime Minister to ensure things are put in place to prevent incidents from occurring that might be misperceived. The Conservative Party has consistently, over the last years in opposition, taken the approach of character assassination, which is yet another example where Conservatives are more concerned about the character of an individual as opposed to the substance. If they looked at the substance, they would find that the matter has been dealt with fully and extensively.

• (1940)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, the hon. gentleman knows full well that the Liberal caucus was plagued by ethics scandals throughout the last Parliament, whether it was fishing contracts given to families, forgotten French villas, illegal Bahamian vacations or interference in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. It is not always about one's feelings being hurt; one needs to own up and be accountable. That is the message Liberals need to understand. They need to lift the veil of secrecy and let the RCMP and the Ethics Commissioner do their work, because we know that

there is more than just smoke; with the Prime Minister, there is a fire.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will pick up on one of the comments of the member opposite. He talked about a French villa being hidden, and he referenced the Ethics Commissioner. Shortly after the election of the minister in question, virtually weeks after, there was a publication in *The Globe and Mail*, or maybe the *National Post*, that talked about the home located in France. To say that the minister was intentionally trying to hide something when it was widely broadcast to hundreds of thousands of people well in advance, shortly after the election, was maybe a bit of a political agenda and wanting to take shots that were very personal in nature. We have seen that the Conservative Party likes to get into the gutter and take personal shots at members.

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the first question period in the House, I spoke about the softwood lumber crisis in British Columbia and asked the government about its plans to deal with that issue. To be quite frank, the answer was not very satisfying with respect to that or even the acknowledgement of the extent of the crisis.

Hopefully, the government realizes the extent of the crisis, because it certainly has not taken any time to acknowledge it yet. For the people who might be listening, it is a very difficult time, especially in the interior of British Columbia with respect to the softwood lumber crisis.

This was not the first time I have brought it to the government's attention. In June, I talked about the Canfor sawmill in Vavenby, 170 jobs lost; Tolko Industries closure in Quesnel, 240 jobs lost; and the Norbord closure, 160 jobs lost. This has continued at a very rapid and concerning pace across British Columbia. About 20 mills have closed, and it seems to be growing every day. Thousands of workers are out of work in at least 27 communities. It is not just the workers in the mills, this impacts the contractors and many others.

The Canadian Press posted a headline on December 2, which said, "Hundreds of B.C. communities and thousands of workers struggle to survive in forestry industry carnage." That is how people are describing this.

To give an example, a car dealer in one of the communities has repossessed 10 cars in the last while. The dealer said that one person begged him to accept a load of wood for his car payment so he could have his car at least until Christmas.

These are real people, real families and real struggles.

The workers sometimes have benefits that have been afforded to them through the EI or through severance. However, there are also all the logging truck drivers and contractors who do not have those benefits.

Another gentleman came in to see me. He has four young children. He has a logging truck. He has payments on his logging truck and as a private operator, he does not have the safety net that so many others do.

This is an important crisis in British Columbia and what has the government's response been to date?

Four years ago, when the bromance was very strong between the Prime Minister and President Obama, they committed to getting this job done. However, it was not in the mandate letters. The Prime Minister then said that his important responsibility with respect to SNC-Lavalin, which took him to the ethical wall, was protecting jobs.

There has been radio silence with respect to this issue. It has not been in the throne speech. There has not been a plan. We see the recent NAFTA. One of the biggest trade irritants between Canada and the U.S. has been softwood lumber, and that was not even discussed. When we reopened the discussions on NAFTA, that was a time to deal with the biggest trade irritant.

We are looking for a plan from the government.

● (1945)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, hundreds of millions of dollars is what we are talking about. The issue has been at the forefront and a priority for this government from day one.

We are proud of our world-leading forestry sector, which supports over 218,000 good-paying, middle-class jobs for workers and communities across the country. The softwood lumber industry is a key component of our highly integrated forestry sector and the fundamental economic anchor for many communities across Canada.

We are keenly aware that the forest sector has recently been facing significant economic headwinds, which have had serious impacts on workers and communities that rely on this sector. The forest sector is facing a series of challenges including a reduction in the supply of harvestable timber and weaker demand in overseas markets, which is resulting in lower international lumber prices as well.

Another challenge is the duties unjustifiably and unfairly imposed by the United States on Canadian exports of softwood lumber. The Government of Canada is standing by our industry, our communities and our workers, contesting U.S. measures on softwood lumber through five legal challenges under chapter 19 of NAFTA and the WTO dispute settlement system.

Canada considers that the U.S. duties are inconsistent with both U.S. law and the international trade obligations of the United States. In past rounds of the softwood lumber dispute, Canada has always been successful in its challenges of the U.S. duties, as the U.S. claims have always been found to be without basis. We strongly believe that this will once again be the case.

In fact, our legal strategy has already met with success, and panels established both under chapter 19 of NAFTA and the WTO have already found fault with, respectively, the U.S. decision regarding alleged injury to U.S. industry caused by imports from Canada, and

Adjournment Proceedings

also the way the United States calculated its anti-dumping duties. We will continue to pursue these cases intently, along with all of the others.

In the meantime, this government understands the harmful impact that the U.S. duties have on Canadians who rely on this important segment of the forestry industry. We have always shown that we have Canadians' backs. This is why, in June 2017, this government announced a softwood lumber action plan, which includes \$867 million in measures to support affected workers and communities.

The federal government will continue to work closely with provinces, territories and industry stakeholders to protect Canadian jobs and ensure a united pan-Canadian approach to the softwood lumber dispute.

This is an issue that has been ongoing for far too long. The Government of Canada has been taking action where it has seen a number of ministers, including the Prime Minister, get engaged in a very real and tangible way.

The member makes reference to the plight of one worker. There are many workers who are experiencing difficult times as a direct result of what we believe are unfair actions. That is the reason we are not only going to stand tall and stand for our workers, but are also going to provide hundreds of millions of dollars to an industry that is in need. Never have we wavered on the issue of supporting such a vital industry, because it is about people and communities.

If there is anything this government has demonstrated quite well over the last four years, it is that it genuinely cares and it is going to be there for the workers in Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it.

● (1950)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, I would suggest those words are cold comfort. The Prime Minister did not even put softwood lumber in the mandate letters of the ministers for the last four years. He promised a resolution.

The Prime Minister came to Kamloops where people had lost their jobs and he did not even acknowledge this crisis existed. With SNC-Lavalin, he went to the wall and said it was his job to protect jobs, and there has been nothing. The Liberals talked about the money that went to the softwood lumber industry for the transition agreement, but it is predominantly recycled money that has always been there.

We have communities in crisis. What we want to see is a plan for industry, a plan for communities and a plan for the individuals who have been impacted so terribly.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, that is exactly what is happening.

The softwood lumber action plan comprised funding specifically targeted at helping affected workers. This included, for example, \$9.5 million for a work-sharing program for employees affected by the temporary reduction in business activities, and \$80 million for labour market development agreements to help workers upgrade their skills and transition to new opportunities.

Adjournment Proceedings

Furthermore this government allocated, through budget 2019, over \$250 million in additional funds to the action plan programs to help producers tap into new markets and diversify production.

As I indicated, the Prime Minister and the minister are very much aware of the issue, and the Liberals are taking proactive measures to minimize the negative impact and make sure our workers and communities are being well served.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, building on my question from last Friday about the issue with our canola producers across Canada and their inability to access the Chinese market, I want to go back to the throne speech. What was not in the throne speech is a very telling and loud statement on where our agriculture sector stands with the current Liberal government. In fact, agriculture was barely mentioned in the throne speech, which sent a very disconcerting message to our producers across Canada. We have a crisis with our trade embargo to China when it comes to canola, among other products, and it is very clear the Liberal government does not see this as an issue, let alone a priority strong enough to include in the throne speech.

My question on Friday was whether there was a plan or initiative by the government to address the canola crisis with China. I want to build on that and state the extent of this issue in terms of the Canadian economy.

There are more than 40,000 canola producers across Canada. This means more than \$20 billion for the Canadian economy and more than 250,000 jobs are all at risk. This has been the case for almost a year.

When this crisis was first put upon us, we gave the Liberals some very concrete potential solutions they could follow up to try to address this issue with China. They included naming an ambassador to China, which took them more than eight months to do, and filing an official complaint with the WTO, which also took them more than eight months to do.

The WTO itself is now crumbling. The fact that the United States is not appointing judges to the WTO puts this issue in further peril for Canadian canola producers, as there may not be an avenue to resolve it if this judgment body does not exist, which is certainly a possibility in the next few weeks or months.

The other thing we asked the government to do as a potential solution, or at least to show China we meant business and were serious about this issue, was withdraw funding for the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. More than \$250 million from Canadian taxpayers is being given to the Government of China for it to build infrastructure across Asia. This includes pipelines, subsidized by the Canadian taxpayer, to be built in China rather than here at home. Taking at least one, two or three of these measures would have shown a position of force on the part of the Liberal government that we meant business with China.

The government set up a canola working group. Have the CFIA and a canola working group unequivocally ruled out that there are no pests in our canola, which China has claimed or identified as being hazardous? Have they ruled out the idea of pests being a reason for the trade blockade by China on our canola?

• (1955)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today Canada's canola industry contributes almost \$27 billion a year to the Canadian economy, a contribution that has actually tripled over the past 10 years. That is why the canola trade issue with China is a top and very important priority for the Government of Canada.

Canadians take pride in this industry. Canola is a product of Canadian innovation, including by our scientists at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The government continues to work closely with industry to reopen access to the market. In April, we formed an industry government working group, co-chaired by the Canola Council of Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, with representation from the prairie provinces.

The working group continues to meet regularly, with discussions focused on developing strategies to resolve the market access issue with China, supporting the sector and exploring alternative markets. Some of the insights and advice that we receive deal with issues such as monitoring the impact of the market access issue, engaging with China, diversifying markets and supporting the sector during this difficult time.

We are working closely with the Canadian canola industry every step of the way. The member made reference to the throne speech and issues in the Prairies. I know and can appreciate just how important it is, whether it is canola or wheat, that the Government of Canada be engaged with the different stakeholders, in particular, our provinces and the producers and others, to ensure that our product is being treated fairly and being allowed to get to market.

Whether I was on the government benches, within the government caucus sitting down with colleagues or in opposition, I can assure the member that I have been consistent, whether it was canola or wheat. For example, for years, in particular in 2014, possibly going into 2015, we had so much wheat, piles of wheat in the Prairies that went through the winter and that we could not get to market, and we had empty vessels sitting on the coast in British Columbia. The government of the day was having a difficult time getting that wheat out to market. I am very much aware of how important it is that we work with the stakeholders.

Canola is a sense of pride in the Prairies. Many prairie farmers and people in the science community have been affiliated with its whole development because there has been a great deal of work in the science community dealing with the issue of canola.

We have a first-class world product and Canada leads the way. There is a great deal of confidence and so much potential. It is one of the reasons why we have a Minister of International Trade and a Minister of Foreign Affairs who constantly look for other potential markets because we know that we have a good quality product that is being grown in the Prairies.

• (2000)

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, that is not the reassurance that Canadian farmers want. He is telling them exactly what they already know. Absolutely, we have the best-quality canola in the world, and it is a \$27-billion industry for Canada. Unfortunately, 40% of everything we grow here is exported to China, our most critical trading market for canola, a market that we have lost because of Liberal bungling and ineptitude.

The frustrating part is that it was not mentioned in the throne speech. It is just the next level in the things we have lost. Our pulse exports to India are down by \$600 million. We have lost durum wheat to Italy and barley to Saudi Arabia. What does it take for the Liberal minister to meet with her counterpart in China, which she has not done, to try to address this situation?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I want to talk about the work that we have been doing with the stakeholders. Responding to our discussion at the canola working group, we have enhanced the advance payments program and implemented the stay of default, and we have extended the deadline for AgriStability.

These key changes to our programs are intended to help canola producers deal with the impacts of this disruption in the canola

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market. Under the changes, we increased the interest-free cash advances available to canola producers from \$100,000 to \$500,000 for the 2019 program year, and total advances of up to \$1 million are now available for canola and all other commodities, up from \$400,000. This change is permanent and will be available beyond 2019.

With our provincial partners, we also extended the AgriStability enrolment deadline by two months. Looking ahead, we continue to diversify our trade in global markets to give our growers more markets for canola and to help mitigate risks of—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the time is up. I know the hon. member enjoys expressing his views and those of his government. He will be able to continue to do that tomorrow.

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:02 p.m.)

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