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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, February 8, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 8, 2017

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

BOMBARDIER

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government announced an investment to keep Bombardier's Toronto facility up and running. Ottawa found a way to use one of the jewels in Quebec's manufacturing crown to help Toronto more than Montreal. That takes the cake.

Ottawa's contribution to the C Series, Quebec's biggest technological undertaking ever, amounts to peanuts. We designed and developed it on our own, and the federal government did not lift a finger when it was in trouble.

Bombardier was on the brink of bankruptcy. Ottawa did nothing. Quebec injected over \$1 billion to take on part of the risk.

Because of the federal government's could-not-care-less attitude, the company had to outsource operations and cut 15,000 jobs. The Bloc Québécois's thoughts go out to those 15,000 people today.

As Jacques Parizeau used to say, we must never underestimate Canada's ability to disappoint us. That is exactly what it did yesterday.

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[*English*]

PEEL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was honoured this past Thursday to attend the Black History Month kickoff celebration hosted by the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton,

in partnership with the Oakville Museum and Sheridan College in my riding of Oakville.

The event featured traditional and contemporary Black art forms, commemorating the rich cultural heritage of Black Canadians. We saw exhibitions of Oakville's early Black history, African-Canadian art, and a poster exhibit by Sheridan College students.

The CCAH celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Veronica Tyrrell, long-time president, believes in actively promoting unity and diversity, unbiased inclusion, and the capacity to value differences.

I was delighted to have been part of the kickoff celebration of Black history and arts activities in my community of Oakville. I look forward to the various celebrations and activities that will take place throughout the month.

Congratulations to Veronica and the CCAH.

* * *

CHARLES MANN

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour a true Canadian hero. Charles Mann, a veteran of World War II, passed away this January.

Charles joined the military in 1940 at the age of 18, and two years later volunteered for the Devil's Brigade. He fought bravely in Italy and in southern France, and a few years ago was awarded the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal.

Charles was also one of Canada's first nuclear operators. Charles served the community of Kincardine with distinction for over 20 years on municipal council and 13 of those years as mayor.

He was named the Kincardine citizen of the year and a recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal. He was a passionate advocate for veterans, serving on the National Council of Veterans Affairs and his local Kincardine Legion.

Charles was a true gentleman. He loved his family, his two dogs, and his community.

We thank Charles for his lifetime of service to this country. We will miss him. God bless.

Statements by Members

● (1405)

[Translation]

STATISTICS CANADA

Mr. David Lametti (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today Statistics Canada provided Canadians with a first glimpse of the latest national statistical portrait with the results of the 2016 census count on population and dwellings.

I am proud to be part of a government whose first action was to restore the mandatory long form census.

We made a commitment to bring back the long form census, and we kept that promise. This means that Canadians once again have access to reliable and accurate data.

[English]

Without this data, our communities could not plan ahead. Everything from transit planning to housing strategies, to support for new Canadians was made more difficult.

Results of today's release show that over 35 million people now call Canada home. This is 10 times greater than in 1871, when the first census after Confederation recorded 3.5 million people in Canada.

The information gathered through the census is central to our evidence-based—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksasing.

* * *

EATING DISORDERS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week I hosted an event in support of the national initiative for eating disorders. This not-for-profit coalition works to increase awareness and education for the chronic situation facing sufferers of eating disorders and their families.

Misunderstood, inadequately treated, and underfunded, eating disorders are considered the deadliest of mental illnesses since they are 12 times more likely to lead to death than any other mental illness.

Recovery starts with understanding. Seeking help is a courageous step, and there is a big role for parents, families, and significant others to play.

[Translation]

It is important for parliamentarians to contribute to the fight against negative body image and improve awareness, research, and best practices for the treatment of eating disorders.

[English]

For these reasons, I was happy to reintroduce the motion that calls on Parliament to work with the provinces, territories, and indigenous communities to develop a coordinated Canadian strategy on eating disorders. It is my hope that Motion No. 117 will receive broad support from all sides of the House.

HOMELESSNESS

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to pay tribute to an organization called Raising the Roof which is providing national leadership on long-term solutions to homelessness in Canada.

Homelessness is not a choice. Safe shelter is a human right. The homeless are often women fleeing abuse, immigrants and refugees with nowhere to go, youth at risk, and individuals suffering from mental illness and addiction. Once homeless, people find themselves trapped on the streets in a vicious cycle.

Yesterday, Tuesday, February 7, marked the 20th anniversary of Raising the Roof's toque campaign. Fifty communities across the country will be selling toques as a fundraiser to support at-risk people in their time of need.

I encourage everyone to take part in this national initiative. Buy a toque, wear a toque, raise a roof.

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CALGARY SIGNAL HILL

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize two outstanding Calgarians who were both members of my board, and unfortunately passed away all too soon recently.

Hugh Fergusson was a businessman, a volunteer in the community of Bowness, and unfortunately died in his sleep while on a cycling vacation in Greece.

Bev Reynolds was a public relations icon in the city of Calgary. She recently died peacefully, after a long struggle with cancer. While her PR career spanned more than 30 years, working with the homeless through the Knox United Church was probably one of her most satisfying accomplishments.

Both will be missed.

As members of Parliament, we make decisions which hopefully result in a better life for Canadians, almost every day. But Bev also wanted each of us to know that in this place, on occasion, we also make decisions which make facing death much more dignified.

* * *

[Translation]

CARLETON-SUR-MER

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Carleton-sur-Mer, a community in my riding, is hitting a special milestone in 2017.

Carleton-sur-Mer is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year. Two hundred and fifty years ago, Acadian families settled in this magnificent area of eastern Quebec nestled between the ocean and the mountains. Over the years, those men and women, along with other newcomers, built and shaped this community, which has always been known for its vitality.

Statements by Members

With its beautiful landscapes, high quality of life, and residents and businesses that care about their town's development, Carleton-sur-Mer serves as an example for any community that wants to grow and develop while protecting its natural assets. I want to take this opportunity in the House to wish all Carleton-sur-Mer residents and visitors a wonderful year filled with joy, happiness, pride, and community-building activities.

Happy anniversary, Carleton-sur-Mer.

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• (1410)

[English]

PEEL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is great day for my riding of Brampton South. Until today, we only had one hospital for the ninth-largest city in Canada. My downtown riding serves as the new home for the Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness campus.

It will have state-of-the-art care, including mental health, addiction services, dialysis and senior care units, and a family health focus. This facility is a great example of innovation in our health care sector, and a sign of good things in Brampton.

Congratulations to the William Osler team, including Joanne Flewwelling, Dr. Naveed Mohammad, Dr. Frank Martino, Dr. Ron Heslegrave, Marlon Rhoden, Ann Ford, and all those involved, especially in supporting this through fundraising and community organizing.

I look forward to working with them.

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CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour Mr. Harold Chapman. Harold is the author of *Sharing My Life: Building the Co-operative Movement*. Harold will be recognized with the Order of Canada in May 2017.

Harold is only 99 years young. He has been a leader of this co-operative movement for seven decades. He established the Co-operative College of Canada, where he was principal for 18 years. The college is a national centre for co-operative education and research.

Harold was also involved in the development of the Saskatoon Community Clinic. It was my honour to present Harold Chapman with the Saskatoon—Grasswood Canada 150 citizen pin at McClure Place, where he currently lives.

The pin is in recognition of his contributions to Saskatoon—Grasswood, to the province of Saskatchewan, and the country of Canada.

* * *

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 21 years ago, the hon. Jean Augustine moved a motion in the House recognizing each February as Black History Month.

I stand here on the shoulders of great political leaders who have represented my riding, leaders like the hon. Alvin Curling, who was the first black speaker in a House in Canada; the Hon. Mary Anne Chambers, former provincial minister of education and colleges; the Hon. Margaret Best, former Ontario minister of consumer affairs; and the Hon. Mitzi Hunter, the current provincial Minister of Education.

I am also very proud of the work undertaken by many black-focused organizations, such as the TAIBU Community Health Centre, Tropicana Community Services, the Jamaican Canadian Association, the Jamaican Canadian Association of Nurses, and the Ontario Black History Society. I want to thank these individuals and organizations that have worked so hard to open doors for people like me and that continue to serve our country.

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SENIORS

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are facing a dramatic aging of our population. Seniors in Nickel Belt, greater Sudbury, and across the country expect us to improve their quality of life.

[Translation]

Today, Canadians 65 and older represent 15% of the population and account for nearly 45% of health care costs.

[English]

I rise today to call attention to the seniors, caregivers, and medical practitioners I have visited at places like Au Château, in Sturgeon Falls; Capreol Seniors' Assisted Living Complex; St. Gabriel's Villa, in Chelmsford; Finlandia Village, in Sudbury; and the Elizabeth Centre, in Val Caron.

I am proud to have tabled my private member's motion to develop a pan-Canadian national strategy for seniors.

[Translation]

I encourage my colleagues to take part in this important debate for our seniors by going to www.demandaplan.ca.

• (1415)

[English]

I encourage all Canadians to participate in this important seniors debate by visiting and engaging at demandaplan.ca.

[Translation]

Thank you, *meegwetch*.

* * *

[English]

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this evening we will be debating the jobs crisis taking place in the oil and gas sector right now. On the same day we learned that the Prime Minister will give Bombardier a \$400-million bailout, we will also be debating the 100,000 jobs lost across this country because of where the oil and gas industry is today.

Statements by Members

From Newfoundland to British Columbia, I have talked to hundreds of youth across this country who are very concerned about the jobs that are disappearing from coast to coast to coast. Whether it be geology, engineering, math, or any of the skilled trades, the oil and gas sector has provided good-paying, full-time jobs for Canada's young workers.

The Prime Minister promised to create 40,000 new jobs for youth in 2016, but this month, Statistics Canada came out with its numbers and says that only 9,000 net new jobs were created for young people this past year. Because of Liberal inaction, Canada's youth have lost the best-paying jobs available in this country.

* * *

LINCOLN ALEXANDER

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that this month we acknowledge the first black man to sit in this Parliament, a man I was proud to call a friend, the Honourable Lincoln Alexander.

I was a radio reporter covering the 1968 federal election in Linc's campaign office the night he won the seat in Hamilton West. At his victory party, the music was provided by none other than Oscar Peterson. His life was a series of achievements: an RCAF war veteran; a successful lawyer; the first black member of Parliament; a cabinet minister; the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario; chancellor of the University of Guelph; and, let us not forget, the recipient of the famous Canadian phrase, "fuddle duddle".

When Linc passed at age 90, I stood beside him, as mayor, as he lay in repose in Hamilton City Hall. For three days, an endless line of citizens, young and old, rich and poor, of every race, colour, and creed, came to share their respects and share personal stories that reflected the incredible man he was.

It is an honour to pay tribute to Lincoln Alexander today, a Hamilton hero, a Canadian hero, and a legacy to remember during Black History Month.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is critical that women who have been sexually assaulted are protected, believed, and have confidence in the justice system. I am very concerned to learn that in London, 30% of sexual assault cases have been considered unfounded, a rate significantly higher than for any other serious crime.

In response, the London Police Service has announced that it will review more than 690 sexual assault cases going back to 2010. I appreciate that it has recognized that the unfounded rates are much too high.

The London Police Service has shown leadership over the past 30 years in addressing woman abuse, and I have every confidence that the police force will again show that leadership by changing how it addresses sexual assault complaints.

I call on our justice minister to take immediate action and ensure that all our police forces have the resources to appropriately handle sexual assault complaints. We need a national action plan to end

violence against women that addresses the needs of survivors and provides training and support for those working in the justice system. Without federal leadership, women are tragically being re-victimized and dismissed.

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INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to recognize an outstanding member of this House. The member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa was recently recognized as the International Legislator of the Year by Safari Club International. SCI is an organization composed of hunters dedicated to promoting wildlife conservation worldwide and to protecting the freedom to hunt.

My friend and mentor is a lifelong hunter, angler, and avid outdoorsman. He works tirelessly for his constituents and all Canadian hunters, anglers, and trappers. He was instrumental in establishing the recreational fisheries conservation partnership program, helped end the useless long gun registry, and has fought valiantly against every attack on the hunting, fishing, and trapping community. His unflinching devotion to protecting our way of life is not just respectable, it is admirable. He is a conservationist, first and foremost, and a common-sense environmentalist.

In summing up this man in a few words, I have this to say: his mind belongs to his work, his heart belongs to his family, and his soul belongs in the woods.

Congratulations to my friend. May his line always be tight and his aim always true.

* * *

●(1420)

[*Translation*]

LYNN LEGAULT

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, did you know that I came to Ottawa 29 years ago to attend university? I was not nervous about my first day at university, but I was nervous about my first day as a parliamentary page.

Fortunately for me and all the other parliamentary pages who have served here during her 32-year tenure, Lynn Legault, the page supervisor, was there to welcome us, train us, and guide us. I rise today to point out that Lynn Legault will be retiring very soon.

On behalf of all members, I sincerely thank "Lynn for her remarkable and tireless service to the House of Commons over the course of more than 10 Parliaments and to about 1,333 different members. Since arriving here, she has supervised more than 1,240 pages in the House of Commons."

*Oral Questions**[English]*

If you will permit me, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say directly to Lynn, “Lynn, you have conducted yourself with great dignity, discretion, and the highest sense of professionalism. You did more than mentor a generation of pages. You made this place a better place, and that is no mean feat. Thank you, Lynn, for your service to Parliament. On behalf of all members of Parliament, enjoy your well-deserved retirement”.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[Translation]***AEROSPACE INDUSTRY**

L'hon. Rona Ambrose (chef de l'opposition, PCC): Mr. Speaker, in March 2016, the vice-president of Bombardier's C series program said that any federal support would be just an extra bonus that would be helpful but is not required.

Can the Prime Minister tell us why his government is going ahead with this loan when the company has said that it is not necessary?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we have been working with Bombardier for several months to talk about how the government could help Canada's aerospace industry, create jobs, and increase research and development.

That is why we decided to lend the company approximately \$400 million in order to create jobs in the aerospace industry across Canada and improve the competitiveness of this market, which is important to the world.

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, has the Prime Minister thought through the message he is sending to Canadians across the country when one favoured business, Bombardier, receives hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer handouts while he is punishing others with higher taxes and a carbon tax?

My question is very simple. Does he plan to also bail out the dry cleaning shop in Fort McMurray, or a diner in Stratford that has gone out of business because of his bad decisions?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were elected on a commitment to create good middle-class jobs across the country and help those working hard to join the middle class. That is why we are pleased that this loan of almost \$400 million to Bombardier is going to create thousands of good quality, middle-class jobs across the country.

We are also pleased that by approving the Line 3 replacement, we are creating 7,000 full-time middle-class jobs. By approving the Trans Mountain expansion, we are creating over 15,000 new middle-class jobs. We are working right across the country, including investing \$1.3 billion in Alberta infrastructure alone, because we know creating good jobs and growth matters.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said he would borrow \$10 billion a year to pay for his promises. Now that total is close to \$25 billion, and

last night we learned he is borrowing another \$370 million to send to one single company, Bombardier. His current plan is not creating any jobs, so my question is this: Exactly how many jobs will this \$370 million create?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the aeronautics industry across the country is responsible for thousands of strong middle-class jobs, and multiple small businesses right across the country earn spinoffs from the high-quality manufacturing that goes on as Canada is a leader within aeronautics in the world.

We will continue to believe in a strong future for our research and development in aeronautics, but also in a broad range of industries. That is why we are being thoughtful about how to create good middle-class jobs across the country in many different industries.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, wait a second. The Prime Minister wrote a cheque for \$370 million to a single company, and he did not get assurances from them that they would hire one single new worker. I really hope he gets a new negotiating team before he sits down with President Trump and talks about NAFTA or we are screwed.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will make note that the Prime Minister was speechless.

Let us be clear about what is happening today. The Prime Minister is handing a giant corporation \$370 million and forcing taxpayers across the country to pay for it with a massive new carbon tax. He is making life easier for a multi-billion dollar corporation that said it did not need the money, while making it harder for people, ordinary taxpayers, families, and business owners.

Could he please explain to us, one last time, how this makes any sense?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, by making a loan to Bombardier of close to \$400 million, we are investing in research and development here in the country, creating thousands of good, new middle-class jobs in a growth industry that is going to continue to demonstrate how competitive Canada can be in the world.

We continue to be focused on innovation and research that is going to lead to good jobs for Canadians. In a world that is changing, we need to make sure that Canadians can continue to compete at the highest levels, because I know we are capable of it, and we are demonstrating it every single day.

*Oral Questions***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last weekend, 22 refugees crossed the border from the United States seeking safety in Canada. Some walked 12 kilometres in -20° weather. Under the safe third country agreement, any refugee who sets foot in the U.S. is blocked from coming to Canada and is therefore forced to resort to these extreme measures.

Can the Prime Minister explain why he is defending this agreement with the U.S. when he knows that it is causing further harm to vulnerable refugees?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Immigration along with the Minister of Public Safety are very concerned about the situation in Emerson. Indeed, we need to make sure that we are protecting the integrity of the Canadian border and the strength of our immigration and refugee system, and demonstrating that we are there for the security of communities and individuals.

Canada will always be welcoming to vulnerable people. We need to make sure that we are doing it the right way to protect them and to protect our country.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if he is very concerned, why is he not doing anything?

[*Translation*]

A Canadian family was recently stopped at the United States border. These Canadian citizens, residents of Brossard, just happen to be Muslim. They were questioned on their religion and their opinion of Donald Trump before being told that they could not enter the United States.

Trump's decisions are affecting Canadians now.

Why will the Prime Minister not stand up to defend them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day, 400,000 Canadians cross the United States border. We are working with the American administration. Our ambassador, my office staff, and several ministers, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs who is in the U.S. today, are talking about how we can improve the way things work between our two countries and how we can protect the rights of Canadians. That is an issue that everyone here is concerned about and we are doing something about it.

* * *

● (1430)

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Minister of Democratic Institutions was informed of the government's decision to break its promise just one day before she was forced to announce it.

The Prime Minister did not make the announcement himself. He hid behind his new minister. He refused to take responsibility for his deceit.

I have a very specific question for the Prime Minister: When exactly did he decide to break his promise?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to taking responsibility, everyone knows that it is in the mandate letters, which are available to the public on the website. These letters from the Prime Minister to the ministers explain what they will be responsible for during their time in office. It is very clear, it is transparent, it is open, and my signature is on every single mandate letter.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the only problem is that this particular letter was well hidden. The minister herself had to unveil it once it was clear that the Prime Minister had broken his promise.

[*English*]

The Prime Minister said just a few weeks ago, "I've heard loudly and clearly that Canadians want a better system of...choosing our governments". It sounds like consensus to me. He also said, "I make promises because I believe in them". It is more like he makes promises when they help him win an election.

Will the Prime Minister apologize to Canadians for so blatantly misleading them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been clear that they want improvements to our democracy, and that is exactly what we are working on, whether it is protecting political parties or political systems from cybersecurity threats, whether it is ensuring better transparency around fundraising, or whether it is improving by undoing changes made by the previous government that make it harder for Canadians to vote.

There are many things we are working on to improve our democracy, and that is what Canadians expect.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a number of government ministers are in Washington today. Of course, we are getting used to extravagant visits to Washington. There will be a big dinner with all kinds of photo ops. We welcomed the President of the United States here on June 29. Once again, there was a big show and a big party, but with zero results.

Are the ministers who went to Washington actually going to bring anything back for Canadians?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs met with her American counterpart, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, today. The two political leaders discussed priority issues and areas of co-operation between Canada and the U.S. They emphasized the importance of the economic relations between the two countries, which account for millions of jobs for the middle class. They also discussed the balanced and mutually beneficial trade relationship that exists between Canada and the U.S., as well as softwood lumber. We will vigorously defend our natural resources.

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, several of my parliamentary colleagues and I met with a delegation of mayors from the Union des municipalités du Québec.

The Prime Minister just said that the ministers' mandate letters should be taken as gospel. Not a single one of the letters talks about the need to resolve the softwood lumber issue. That is quite worrisome.

How can these politicians who believe in the future of the forestry industry in Quebec and across Canada hope to gain support when we have seen nothing but talk and no results?

When will we finally see results?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continue to be committed to protecting Quebec's forestry and will continue to include it in all our negotiations.

We continue to work closely with the workers and producers in the softwood lumber sector, the provinces, and the territories because we are looking for an agreement that is good for Canada and Quebec, not just any agreement.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the \$170-billion Liberal Green Energy Act has inflated electricity prices, forced the poorest to the food bank, and left Ontario with the highest poverty rate of any province in Canada.

Because poor households spend a larger share of their income on gas, groceries, and heat, they will suffer the most from this new federally mandated carbon tax.

The government is censoring data on the harm the tax will do to the poorest Canadians. Why?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after a decade of inaction on climate and the environment, we are taking serious action and we are doing it with the provinces and territories, but we are also supported by labour organizations, by business, and by environmentalists across the country.

This consensus includes all five major banks. It includes major energy companies. It includes major consumer goods companies, and I was heartened to see that elder statesmen of the Republican Party today just announced that they support putting a price on carbon pollution.

When will the party opposite understand that it is the right thing to do?

• (1435)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the member is very proud that millionaire CEOs and U.S. Republican wealthy elites favour a carbon tax. We on this side of the House of Commons are actually fighting for working-class Canadians.

Oral Questions

Yesterday we learned that Kathleen Wynne will use proceeds of the carbon tax to give rebates for \$150,000 Teslas.

This is another prime Liberal example of welfare for the wealthy. When will the Liberals finally stand up for the hard-working men and women who pay the bills in this country?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a big surprise to hear members of the party opposite talk about caring about the working class, given the Conservative Party's policies, but maybe I will just quote MPP Patrick Brown, with whom the member may be familiar. He said, "Climate change is a fact. It is a threat. It is man-made. We have to do something about it, and that something includes putting a price on carbon."

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question to ask you: what is the Prime Minister's word worth? Earlier, the Prime Minister did not respond to the question of the Leader of the Opposition.

Last week, at almost the exact same time, the Prime Minister told the House, and I quote, that they are not going to tax health and dental insurance.

Yesterday, we introduced a motion that quoted the Prime Minister and it was no surprise that he voted against the motion containing his very words. My question is very simple.

Has the champion of broken promises become the champion of empty words?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to investing in the middle class and those working hard to join it.

It is our party that cut taxes for the middle class and it is the party opposite that voted against this motion. It is also our party that established the Canada child benefit, which is more generous and will help Canadians raise their children.

We are moving forward with our plan to support the middle class and we are proud of it.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is beginning to have some competition when it comes to not answering questions. The question was very simple, yet once again, we see that this government is saying one thing but voting the opposite way.

Will the government commit right now to protecting the tax credits that directly affect thousands of Canadians, namely those related to public transit, volunteer firefighters, and registered education savings plans?

Oral Questions

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government supports the middle class and those working hard to join it. It was our government that lowered taxes for the middle class. It was also our government that created the very generous Canada child benefit, which will help 9 out of 10 families by putting more tax-free money in their pockets.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government left things with Bombardier hanging for more than a year only to disappoint us now. The federal government's loan is not even in the same league as the Government of Quebec's contribution. To top it off, the government seems unable to guarantee the jobs at the Mirabel and Dorval facilities.

What is the minister doing to maintain and create jobs in Quebec's aerospace industry?

[English]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to say that it is an honour to work with 40 outstanding MPs from Quebec who helped drive this file, who made sure that we made this investment. This investment is about workers. It is about Canadian families.

This investment will help secure 4,000 good-quality jobs. It will help create an additional 1,500 jobs. That is what the government is committed to doing. We are focused on middle-class Canadians. We are focused on good-quality jobs. We are going to support the aerospace sector for years to come.

• (1440)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government took 16 months to make a move to protect our aeronautics sector and the thousands of jobs at stake: it came up with a loan. The NDP, the Government of Quebec, and the Machinists Union all leaned on the government, but it chipped in only about a third of what was expected. Everyone is disappointed. No details have been provided.

Did the government obtain assurances that jobs will be maintained and created in Quebec and Canada, or did it give the company carte blanche? My question is simple. Did the Liberal government make sure those jobs will stay here? We want proof.

[English]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we have received assurances. The assurance is that these jobs are going to make sure that we have good-quality jobs across the country and in Quebec as well: 4,000 jobs will be secured; 1,500 additional jobs will be created; thousands of indirect jobs will be created to help small businesses across the country.

The aerospace sector is so important to our economy. It contributes 211,000 jobs and contributes \$28 billion to our national

economy. We will make sure that we continue to invest in this sector for years to come.

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have had multiple occasions to help out Bombardier, without spending taxpayer dollars. For example, they could have allowed the expansion of the runway at Billy Bishop Airport. If the Liberals had done that, then Porter Airlines would have bought more C-Series planes from Bombardier, and Bombardier could have made its own money, which it said it could.

How can the Liberals responsibly give over \$372 million of taxpayer dollars when other options were there, and Bombardier, itself, said it did not need the money?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised to hear the comment from the member opposite. She was at the cabinet table in 2008 when the Conservatives signed a \$350 million cheque to Bombardier.

I want to make one thing very clear. Our contribution is to strengthen the aerospace sector. Our contribution is about supporting a very important sector across the country. Two-thirds of the jobs will be in Quebec, but the remaining jobs will be across the country.

We are committed to the aerospace sector. We are committed to good-quality jobs that, on average, pay 60% more than the average manufacturing job. We are going to grow the economy, and help our workers.

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada does have a great aerospace industry, no question. There are also lots of small and medium-sized enterprises—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. We need to hear the question. The hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk might want to start over.

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, in spite of the Liberals, Canada does have a great aerospace industry, with lots of small and medium-sized enterprises. However, like the big players, they have to compete internationally as well.

Will the Liberal government stop making the situation worse, and actually start helping these small businesses to compete by lowering their taxes, as was promised, and giving them a fair and level playing field?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this investment is about innovation, and innovation is going to help not only the company but its supplier base. It is going to help the small businesses. It is going to make sure that these small businesses create the value so they can be part of the global supply chain, so they can continue to grow and create jobs for years to come.

That is our strategy. It is about making sure we have long-term sustainable growth. That is why we are focused on innovation. That is why we are focused on research and development. That is why we made a significant investment. It will create good-quality jobs because of such an incredible investment.

*Oral Questions***REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my Alberta colleagues and I have spent the last months meeting with everyday Albertans to discuss the worsening job crisis in our province. Their stories are truly devastating.

Madeline told us, “I can't afford my mortgage. I feel depressed and forgotten”. Carla said, “We need help if we are to keep a roof over our heads and food in our stomachs”.

Albertans cannot shoulder any more of the Liberals' irresponsible economic policies. Will the Liberals quit making a bad situation worse for struggling Albertans and stop raising taxes to pay for their out of control spending?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last campaign, rhetoric like that was rejected by Canadians. Those members are trying to pit one region of the country against the other.

Our government is committed to Alberta. That is why we put forward stabilization funding of \$200 million. That is why we put forward funding for our universities and colleges in Alberta worth \$240 million. That is why we provided an additional \$500 million to the business development Canada program to help small businesses to grow and succeed in Alberta.

We will continue to invest. Above and beyond that, we have approved three pipelines that will create thousands of jobs for years to come.

• (1445)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the past year, over 200,000 workers in western Canada have lost their jobs. Hundreds of Alberta-based businesses have either downsized or permanently closed their doors. However, the Liberals never offered bailouts to the devastated business owners or families who lost everything in Alberta.

Now the Prime Minister expects these same struggling taxpayers to pay more. Albertans do not even expect bailouts. They just expect the Prime Minister to stop attacking their livelihoods.

When will the Prime Minister stop pitting one region against another and support all hard-working Canadians?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to have a strategy that incorporates all regions of the country. We will have an opportunity later on in the House to debate energy workers in Alberta and across the country. It will be an opportunity for all of us to talk about what we have done and what we can do.

The government will remind all Canadians that the Nova gas pipeline will create 3,000 jobs. The Line 3 replacement will create 7,000 jobs. The Trans Mountain pipeline expansion will create 15,400 jobs. That is laying the foundation for long-term, sustainable jobs, good jobs, jobs people can raise—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, twice the human rights tribunal issued non-compliance orders to the government for not fully implementing Jordan's principle. The Liberals continue to say they have committed new funding but only a fraction has been rolled out. In the meantime, kids continue to slip through the cracks. The minister says one thing but the Liberals do the opposite.

Will the government stop misrepresenting the facts and immediately roll out the money for first nations kids at risk?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is absolutely committed to the full implementation of Jordan's principle and to making sure that no child goes without care. Because of that, we have invested \$383 million to make sure all kids get the care they need. Since we announced that, we have identified 3,200 children who are now going to get the care they need, 3,200 children who were not getting care a year ago today.

We will keep going, and I will keep pushing until all children have the care they need.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal family seems to be suffering from a terrible epidemic of broken promises.

[*English*]

The minister likes to repeat that her government will be adversaries no more. Well, she needs to explain why her government, after announcing negotiations for a national settlement on the Sixties Scoop, is still fighting in court, even trying to stall the decision in the Marcia Brown case.

These survivors have already fought for eight years. How can the minister justify more delays?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is deeply committed to renewing the relationship with indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

We remain open to the discussions to explore the options on how to best address the issues faced by those affected by the Sixties Scoop. Our government believes that dialogue rather than litigation is the preferred route for resolving these issues and to right these horrible wrongs.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many people in my riding, Thérèse-De Blainville, work directly in the aerospace industry or in some other related field. Many businesses and families have ties to the aerospace sector. We also have institutions and organizations that are leading research and development studies for the aerospace sector.

My question is for the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. Could the minister tell the House how the government plans to support our aerospace sector?

[English]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, this is a very important subject matter today. Again, I would like to thank the members, the 39 MPs from Quebec, who played a leadership role in the significant investment that we made in the aerospace sector.

This investment is a national investment that will help our sector, which is so significant across the country. However, this investment is about people. We invested in people to secure 4,000 good quality jobs. This is about making sure we have the latest and greatest technologies for our research and development, and to create growth for years to come.

* * *

● (1450)

ETHICS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's friends at Canada 2020 received a substantial amount of taxpayer money from the Minister of Science. We know Canada 2020 is just an extension of the Liberal Party of Canada and the Prime Minister. Yet in a quick search of Canada 2020's website, there is not one scientist as an employee or adviser.

Could the minister advise the House just how many scientists taxpayers hired at Canada 2020?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government values research, science, and scientists and the important work they do. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council has a mandate to share and promote research to Canadians.

As I have said, the granting council is an arm's-length body that is able to issue contracts below a certain dollar value. This contract fell below that threshold. The granting council made a decision. Unlike the previous government, we will not politicize science.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear to everyone that all people have to do to get taxpayer money from the government is be a well-connected Liberal.

Infrastructure projects are stalled. Alberta's economy is taking a beating, but Canada 2020 gets its cash. Canada 2020 employs zero scientists, so how can the Liberal Minister of Science justify giving taxpayer money to an organization that has nothing to do with science but everything to do with Liberal politics?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to hear the opposition is finally taking an interest in science funding after a decade of neglect.

Our government believes in research, science, and scientists and the important work they do. That is why we have made the largest increase in the three federal granting councils in a decade. That is why we have reinstated the long-form census, unmuzzled our scientists, and launched the search for the chief science adviser. I look forward to building on these commitments.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing new here. All you have to do to be in the Liberal Party's good books is have enough cash for access or be a close personal friend of the Prime Minister. Where I come from, we call that special favours for special friends. We have a long list of them, and now we can add Canada 2020, as well as the former chief of staff and the defeated Liberal candidate who were appointed by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

When will this government finally stop putting the interests of the Liberal Party before the interests of all Canadians?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians know, we introduced a new government-wide appointment process that is open, transparent, and based on merit. This approach will help us find high-quality candidates, while promoting gender equality and Canadian diversity. The new selection process reflects the fundamental role played in our democracy by the many Canadians who serve on commissions, boards, crown corporations, organizations, and tribunals all across the country.

[English]

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are not buying these lines from the other side.

Under the Liberal government, Canada 2020 has become an extension of the government. It has received tens of thousands of dollars of taxpayer funds from multiple ministers. Canada 2020 has even boasted about setting up offices in the parliamentary precinct.

Canadians are not buying this, and they are not buying that the Prime Minister should continue to be able to funnel taxpayers' money to his friends. When will the Prime Minister put a stop to this?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am really happy to see the opposition finally showing some interest in science funding after a decade of neglect.

*Oral Questions***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Our government believes in research, science, and scientists and the important work they do. We are proud to have made the largest investment in the three federal granting councils in a decade. We have also reinstated the long-form census, unmuzzled our scientists, and launched the search for Canada's chief science adviser. I look forward to building on those commitments.

* * *

● (1455)

[Translation]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, mayors from Quebec came here to Ottawa to impress on the government the importance of the softwood lumber industry.

A new agreement between Canada and the United States needs to take into account forestry realities that are specific to Quebec. For years, paper mills, sawmills, and business owners have been held back by countless battles. Again, it is the workers who suffer the most.

Does the government have a plan B, such as loan guarantees, for protecting the industry?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the softwood lumber agreement expired under the previous government.

This government is championing the interests of Canadian workers and producers in the softwood lumber sector. We will continue to work closely with the workers and producers in the softwood lumber sector, the provinces, and the territories because we are looking for a good agreement for Canada and Quebec, not just any agreement.

* * *

[English]

SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government promised to improve the lives of Canadian seniors, yet residents in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia are not receiving their old age security, because Service Canada is so under-resourced it cannot keep up. At this rate, Canadians turning 65 will not receive their old age security until they turn 67. This is unacceptable.

Will the government address and immediately fix the OAS backlog in order to stop neglecting our seniors?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful for the question, and I commend the interest of our colleague and his very important question. We want all our seniors to receive not only the benefits to which they are entitled, but also the quality of services to which they are entitled and which they expect from our government.

We announced in last year's budget significant investments in Service Canada. We are going to work on these investments and make sure that all of our seniors receive the respect and the benefits that they deserve.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there used to be order in Canada's once-a-decade election to the UN Security Council. States in the western Europe and others group where Canada competes took turns with candidacy, but no more, and when governments take principled stands on a range of global issues, as our Conservative government did in 2010, less principled countries betray their commitments.

Now we know the Liberals have an unhealthy focus on gaining, or buying, enough votes to win, but just how much are the Liberals willing to compromise to get that seat?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member would know that now more than ever, Canada needs to be heard around the world, and that a seat on the Security Council would be an important avenue for us to share and advance the goals that Canada has for the world. These are goals like inclusive and accountable governance, and respect for diversity and human rights, including the rule of law. This is the world which we are working towards, and a Security Council seat is an important avenue to get there.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Safety.

It looks like Chinese nationals are sneaking into our country in increasing numbers with fraudulent and tampered visas. We are hearing about the criminal elements and others posing a risk to Canada and entering the country under the radar. We know the Liberals are cozying up to Chinese billionaires and the Chinese government, and they are opening up these new visa application centres throughout China.

Can the minister explain where these tampered visas are coming from and what actions he is taking to stop this national security threat?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we take the credibility and integrity of Canadian travel documents with great seriousness. A well-functioning border is essential to Canada's security and to our prosperity.

Alerts and notices pertaining to fraudulent documents are regularly distributed to border services officers and Canada Border Services Agency personnel to ensure that every traveller arriving in Canada has the right to enter in a legal and properly documented fashion, and if the documentation is not correct, then the entry is refused. We want to ensure the integrity of our border.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Border Services Agency issued an alert on February 2, which is not that long ago, on the significant increase in illegal Chinese immigrants trying to enter the country. When asked about this in the House, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness answered that it was important for border services officers to be made aware of this risk and danger. I believe that everyone agrees that all officers should be made aware of this risk and danger.

Can the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness tell us what measures he has implemented since February 2 to resolve this situation once and for all?

• (1500)

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the CBSA officers who are on duty at the 120 border crossing points that provide entry into Canada are well trained. They are professionals in what they do. They protect Canada in a front-line way. They process, quite literally, hundreds of thousands of potential travellers every day. They handle \$2.5 billion in trade going both ways across our border every day. Canadians can count on their professionalism.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a national public health crisis in Canada. Yesterday, Alberta reported it had 343 deaths due to fentanyl overdoses last year, compared to 257 the previous year. This tragic crisis continues to make its way east. Seizures of fentanyl and carfentanil are on the rise across the country.

My hometown of Montreal has decided that supervised injection sites are an appropriate tool for dealing with the situation we are facing.

What is the government doing to address this national public health crisis?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for her important question. She is right, we are facing a national public health crisis. We must continue to provide a global, collaborative, and humanitarian response that is evidence-based.

Supervised injection sites are an important harm reduction tool, and they are central to this approach. This week we approved three applications for sites in Montreal. We will continue our efforts to save lives.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoulu, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Phoenix pay system fiasco has been going on for over a year now and things just keep getting worse. One day, public servants are being paid too much. The next, they are being paid too little. The

worst part is that the Liberal government is going to lose hundreds of millions of hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

I will be very clear. The Phoenix software is not to blame. The minister, who has demonstrated a lack of judgment, transparency, and accountability over the past year, is.

When will the minister take control of her department and stop hiding behind her officials?

[English]

Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working very hard to fix the Phoenix pay system.

The previous government would know that in 2015, there was \$78 million paid out in overpayments, so while this is not an ongoing acceptable practice, we are working hard to resolve it under the Phoenix pay system. First, our priority is to make sure that employees who work get paid for the work performed. We are also making sure we have a system in place so people can make their payments back, in terms of overpayments, in a way that does not cause hardship for those employees.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a Yukon judge has slammed the federal government and issued a wake-up call to Canadian taxpayers. The site of the Mount Nansen mine is now a toxic mess, and the company responsible filed for bankruptcy in 2004.

Judge Veale of the Supreme Court of Yukon said the company is guilty of “raping and pillaging” the land. Now it is up to taxpayers to pick up the tab, which could run into the hundreds of millions of dollars. What is the government doing to offset the costs for this site and others so that polluters pay, not the taxpayer?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, contaminated sites are one of the largest parts of our department. We take this very seriously in making sure that sites like that are returned to the pristine environment that are deserved. We will work with all companies to make sure that they do their part. In this situation where the company is bankrupt, it is a very difficult situation that we take very seriously and are looking to repair.

* * *

[Translation]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians with disabilities face challenges every day that prevent them from fully participating in society. Everyone deserves a level playing field. All of my colleagues who participated in the consultations for an accessible Canada know that we need to reduce barriers to accessibility so that everyone has equal access.

Can the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities tell the House about the measures that have been implemented to make Canada fairer and more accessible?

• (1505)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from St. John's East for his question.

Earlier this year, I announced the approval of 573 projects under the enabling accessibility fund. These projects will be carried out by community organizations from across the country that applied for funding.

[English]

The approved funding will improve accessibility in our communities. These 573 projects are important to help ensure that all Canadians, regardless of their abilities, feel welcome and able to fully participate in society.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2006, Warrant Officer Roger Perreault was injured in an IED blast in Afghanistan. He has had three back surgeries, two hip replacements, and other complications. Now in the process of being released from the military, the Liberals are denying him his critical injury benefit, saying that at age 46, it is just normal wear and tear.

When did the fake promises of supporting our injured soldiers from slipping through the cracks become the policy of the Prime Minister?

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our department is committed to getting our soldiers, sailors, and aviators the care they need when and where they need it. We go through a complex array of systems of care to get them mental health supports and physical supports, whether that is through our 11 OSI clinics, whether it is through our 4,000 mental health care professionals and the like, to go forward, to build a system that ensures they are able to build their lives.

With respect to this particular member's concern, we can go back and look at it as a department.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, at every single law school in Canada, students volunteered, doing research to figure out how they could help refugees potentially affected by President Trump's attempt to stop their flight to safety. Now those same law students, starting at the University of Victoria, picked up on by the University of Toronto, the University of Alberta, and Dalhousie law school, have written the government to ask for the immediate suspension of the safe third country agreement.

Can the Prime Minister, as our Prime Minister and the minister responsible for youth, hear and heed their voices?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are a country of immigrants and Canadians have always acted with compassion to those seeking safety for themselves

Routine Proceedings

and their families. We will continue to welcome people in need of protection. As I have often said, Canada is stronger not in spite of our differences, but because of them. That is why it was such a source of pride that so many Canadians worked so hard to welcome over 46,000 refugees just last year.

We will continue to do everything we can to welcome people to Canada, because we know that makes us better, makes us stronger, makes us better off.

* * *

LYNN LEGAULT

The Speaker: Colleagues, one of the advantages of being Speaker is that I get to know some of the people who help to make things run smoothly in this place. Some of them have had impressive and sometimes long careers at the House and I have known some of them a long time.

[Translation]

This week, one of the page supervisors, Lynn Legault, is retiring after 32 years of service in the House. Lynn has been a pillar of the page program for decades and has helped to train over 1,200 first-year university students as pages.

[English]

I am sure I speak for all of my colleagues, those here today and the hundreds who have come and gone during Lynn's years of service, when I say thank you, Lynn, and enjoy a well-earned retirement.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1510)

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union respecting its participation at the 135th Assembly of the IPU and related meetings held in Geneva, Switzerland from October 23 to 27, 2016.

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The committee advises that, pursuant to Standing Order 92(3)(a), the committee reports that it has concurred in the report of the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business arising that Bill C-324, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (production of or trafficking in substances) should be designated non-votable.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

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

Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations with all parties, and I believe that if you seek it, you will find that there is unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That the membership of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be amended as follows: Ms. Tassi (Hamilton West Ancaster—Dundas) for Ms. Petipas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe), and Mr. Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame) for Ms. Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean).

The Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by campers who stayed at the Rideau Heights Campground in Nepean, Ontario, an urban campground located in the riding of Ottawa West—Nepean.

The petitioners call upon the government to ensure that campgrounds, with fewer than five full-time year-round employees, continue to be recognized and taxed as small businesses.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-316, which was submitted by Mr. Brad Arnold of Calgary. The petitioners are calling on this House to improve the organ donation system in Canada by making the process to register as an organ donor easier.

This would be achieved by adding a simple question to our annual tax returns. Mr. Arnold, a recipient himself, collected signatures from throughout Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, showing that there is indeed national support for this sensible change to our tax forms.

It is also my pleasure to rise today to present a petition in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-316. The petitioners are calling on this House to improve the organ donation system in Canada by making the process to register as an organ donor easier. This would be achieved by adding a simple question to our annual tax returns.

I would like to thank Don Axford for collecting all these signatures from around Calgary. There are 4,600 Canadians awaiting an organ transplant, who stand to benefit from his efforts.

●(1515)

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition gathered by George Sojka and many residents of Burnaby.

The petition concerns the death of Helen Sonja Francis, who was tragically killed by an impaired driver. The driver was not charged because the four-hour time limit for the warrant had expired. Mr. Sojka and those who signed the petition would like the time for warrants to be increased from four hours to six hours.

In the last Parliament, this condition was added to new changes to the Criminal Code. However, that bill was not passed, so the petitioners are calling on this new justice minister to make sure that the time for warrants is increased from four hours to six hours.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition that was submitted to me by a constituent of mine, Mr. Samuel Laldin, calling on the government to assist over 12,000 members of minority groups from Pakistan who have fled that country due to human rights violations and discrimination.

In particular, the petitioner requests that the government show compassion and bring these asylum seekers to Canada, and that in the meantime the Government of Canada ask the government of Thailand to give them the necessary protection they need.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONFEDERATION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions from Canadians who are concerned that the government is ignoring Confederation and history as themes of the 150th anniversary of Confederation due to the current government's war on Confederation.

I have two petitions today. This first petition states that Rideau Township Historical Society has close ties to the Confederation years. They operate Dickinson House in Manotick, Ontario. The site was home to Moss Kent Dickinson, a member of Parliament, and a mayor of Ottawa. He was also a friend of Canada's first Prime Minister, and the house actually served as a campaign headquarters for Sir John A. Macdonald in 1887.

The second petition is from members of the Stayner Heritage Society, who have also committed to the mission of preserving local history.

Originally named Nottawasaga Station, this community was founded alongside a new railway line from Toronto, and developed with its ability to move agricultural and lumber products. Of course, we know how critical the railways were to our founding of Confederation.

The petitioners call on the government to reverse the decision to exclude Confederation as a theme of the 150th anniversary of Confederation, and respect our history by making Confederation a theme of that very important anniversary.

Government Orders

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if supplementary responses to Questions Nos. 674, 678, and 727, originally tabled on January 30, 2017, could be made orders for return, those returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 674—**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:**

With regard to relocation costs for exempt staff moving to a location outside of the National Capital Region, since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the total cost paid by the government for relocation services and hotel stays related to moving these staff to a location outside of the National Capital Region; and (b) for each individual reimbursement, what is the (i) total payout, (ii) cost for moving services, (iii) cost for hotel stays?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 678—**Mr. Harold Albrecht:**

With regard to relocation costs for exempt staff moving to the National Capital Region since October 19, 2015, excluding costs revealed in the government's response to Q-258: (a) what is the total cost paid by the government for relocation services and hotel stays related to moving these staff to the National Capital Region; and (b) for each individual reimbursement, what is the (i) total payout, (ii) cost for moving services, (iii) cost for hotel stays?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 727—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to the government's response to Q-258: what are the finalized amounts for all relocation costs referred to in the initial response to Q-258?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1520)

[English]

CANADA-EUROPEAN UNION COMPREHENSIVE
ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT
IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.) moved that Bill C-30, An Act to implement the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union and its Member States and to provide for certain other measures, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today. There has never been a more important time in our history to talk about trade. Therefore, I am going to talk about Bill C-30. I would invite all my colleagues on both sides to really take this opportunity to rise to the challenge that we are facing.

Twenty years from now we will remember the moment that we seized as parliamentarians to really move forward on trade. The world is waiting for us to ratify this agreement. This is going to be great for Canada. This is going to be great for Europe. This is the gold standard of international agreements.

[Translation]

Obviously, I am delighted to rise in the House today to speak to a very important bill, Bill C-30, an act to implement the comprehensive economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union, or CETA.

As Minister of International Trade, CETA is one of my top priorities. Many ministers have worked on this free trade agreement in recent years and, thanks to their efforts, the Prime Minister was able to sign this agreement in Brussels at the end of October 2016.

CETA negotiations began in 2008. It took many years of hard work to reach an agreement that addresses issues that have never been covered in Canada's other trade agreements, including NAFTA.

It is now up to us, as parliamentarians, to complete the legislative process and bring CETA into force so that all Canadians can finally benefit from it. This agreement is the result of a historic initiative to promote the prosperity of our country, and I would venture to say that Canadians in each of the 338 ridings represented in the House of Commons will benefit from it.

By signing this agreement we are gaining market access and improved trade conditions that go beyond the NAFTA provisions. What is more, we achieved this in a progressive and responsible way. This agreement will provide Canada with the growth and jobs it needs, while fully upholding Canadian and European standards in areas such as food safety, environmental protection, and workers' rights.

Government Orders

CETA will open opportunities for Canadian businesses in the EU's estimated \$3.3-trillion government procurement market. Once CETA enters into force, Canadian firms will be able to supply goods and select services to all levels of EU government, including the EU's 28 member states and thousands of regional and local government entities. Imagine the opportunities for all the SMEs here at home.

Under CETA, consumers will benefit from lower prices and a wider range of choices. This agreement will also be beneficial for workers, since it will create more high-quality jobs associated with exports. It will also be beneficial for our businesses, no matter their size, as they will see lower costs resulting from the elimination of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers.

This is a progressive trade agreement that prioritizes the middle class, opens new markets to Canadian producers, and means greater prosperity for Canadians from one end of our great country to the other.

I would like to talk about the importance of trade. Canada's participation in international trade is vital to the entire nation's prosperity. Canada has always been a trading nation. Exports are key to our economy. They contribute to growth, productivity, and, of course, employment. Taken together, they represent about 30% of Canada's GDP. One in six Canadian jobs depends directly or indirectly on our export activities.

The small and medium-sized businesses in all of our ridings play a leading role in our economy. Employing some 10 million Canadians, they account for nearly 90% of private-sector employment in Canada.

• (1525)

Small businesses alone make up 90% of Canadian exporters and, in 2011, were responsible for \$68 billion, or 25%, of the total value of exports. Creating new commercial opportunities for SMEs is therefore essential to growing our economy, because job growth and opportunities for the middle class depend on those businesses.

In 2015, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada released a report profiling SMEs and their characteristics as Canadian exporters. The report found that 10% of Canadian SMEs exported goods and services in 2011, with export sales accounting for about 4% of total company revenues.

The report also points to superior financial performance by exporters compared with non-exporters. Specifically, exporters generated higher sales, pre-tax profit margins, and returns on assets, on average, compared with non-exporters.

In addition, the report indicated that exporters are more research and development intensive than non-exporters, spending 8% of annual revenues on R and D, on average, compared with 6% for non-exporters.

Lastly, exporters are also more growth oriented than non-exporters. Indeed, the sales of 10% of exporters grew by 20% or more per year between 2009 and 2011 compared to only 8% of non-exporters.

I know that my colleagues in the House already appreciate the fact that trade and, in particular, the role of small businesses within all our ridings, is important to Canada's economic growth.

SMEs clearly play a major role in fostering the future prosperity of the country, and Canada firmly believes in the importance of helping our SMEs to be successful because this will create jobs and strengthen the middle class across the country. Concrete tools such as CETA are important as they motivate businesses and encourage them to seize opportunities in major foreign markets such as the European Union.

I will now turn to the government's role and the impact of the positive trade policy on Canada's businesses. The findings of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's report support our government's continuing commitment to stimulating growth of SMEs and advancing an export agenda by entering into new trade agreements. These agreements help our SMEs because they ensure access to export markets abroad and they create conditions conducive to the competitive participation in these markets.

This is especially true in the context of current global value chains because international production requires goods to cross many borders. It is especially important to facilitate the flow of goods across borders to ensure the success of our businesses today and tomorrow.

The European Union is a key market for global value chains. It has more Fortune 500 companies than any other place in the world, including the United States. Broader access to these value chains provides a large number of Canadian SMEs a major opportunity to realize their goals and aspirations on an international scale.

I know that every member of the House would like to help the SMEs in their ridings conquer those markets, and CETA is another tool in the toolbox for our SMEs. Canada's SME exporters continue to focus predominantly on the U.S., with 89% of exporters selling to the United States and 74% of the value of exports generated by U.S. sales.

With CETA, we will see SMEs diversify their exports and pursue opportunities in the European Union, the world's second-largest market for goods. The EU's annual imports alone are worth more than Canada's entire GDP.

• (1530)

In this period of slower economic growth and of growing protectionist and even anti-trade tendencies in many areas of the world, it is particularly important to implement agreements such as CETA.

I will give an overview of CETA for all of my colleagues in the House. CETA represents many firsts for free trade in Canada and the European Union. CETA sets new standards in trade in goods and services, non-tariff barriers, investments, and government procurement, as well as in other areas such as labour and environment.

Government Orders

It offers preferential access to the large, dynamic European market.

It creates tremendous opportunities and gives Canadian businesses a real competitive edge.

It gives Canadian businesses a first-mover advantage compared to their competitors from other markets, such as the United States, which do not have trade agreements with the European Union.

CETA is a comprehensive trade agreement. Once it comes into force, it will cover almost every sector and aspect related to trade between Canada and the European Union. Of the EU's some 9,000 tariff lines, approximately 98% will be duty free for Canadian goods as soon as the agreement comes into force, as compared to the current 25%. An additional 1% will be cut over a seven-year phase-out period.

This agreement is vital to create growth in Canada and, as we know, growth means jobs for the middle class.

[*English*]

The elimination of tariffs under CETA creates immense opportunities for many of Canada's exports to the EU, where tariffs remain high. Let me give members a few examples: fish and seafood, which secures an EU tariff of up to 25%; wood, with an EU tariff of up to 8%; information and communications technology products, with EU tariffs of up to 14%; and machinery equipment, with EU tariffs of up to 8%.

Canadian services providers will also benefit from the best-quality market access the EU, the world's largest importer of services, has ever provided in a trade agreement, as well as the most ambitious commitments on temporary entry the EU has ever been granted.

Beyond increased market access, CETA includes many other significant achievements.

A protocol of conformity assessment will allow Canadian manufacturers in certain sectors to have their products tested and certified in Canada for sale in the EU. This is a significant innovation that will save companies time and money and will be particularly useful to small and medium-sized businesses.

This is also the first bilateral trade agreement in which Canada has included a stand-alone chapter on regulatory co-operation, which is forward looking and promotes early engagement as measures are being developed.

As well, CETA includes a detailed framework for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, a key aspect of labour mobility.

Canada is one of the largest exporters of services in the world. It exported \$16 billion in services to the EU in 2015 alone. CETA gives Canadian service suppliers the best market access the EU has ever granted to any of its free trade agreement partners. CETA will ensure that Canadian service suppliers compete on an equal footing with domestic providers, in certain sectors, and receive better treatment than most competitors from non-EU countries.

Provisions set out in the chapter on cross-border trade in services will provide for better market access assurances in many sectors of

interest to Canada's economy, including professional services, environmental services, technical testing and analysis services, and research and development services. This is great news for all Canadian entrepreneurs.

CETA's labour mobility provisions will also enhance the ability of Canadians and EU business persons to move across borders. CETA provisions will make it easier for short-term business visitors, intra-company transferees, investors, contract service suppliers, and independent professionals to conduct business in the EU.

● (1535)

Investment also forms a substantial portion of the Canada-EU economic relationship. In 2015, the known stock of direct investment by Canadian companies in the EU totalled \$210 billion, representing 21% of known Canadian direct investment abroad. In the same year, the known stock of direct investment from European companies in Canada totalled \$242 billion, representing over 31% of known total foreign investment in Canada.

These numbers are significant. Canada needs more investment. More investment means more jobs for Canadian workers and more growth for our economy and a stronger middle class, something that each and every member in this House would be able to support. CETA provides greater incentive for EU companies to choose Canada as the attractive destination in this world for their investments.

CETA includes provisions to facilitate the establishment of investment, to protect investors against such practices as discriminatory treatment, uncompensated expropriation, arbitrary or abusive conduct, and to ensure that capital may be freely transferred. CETA's obligations are backed by a mechanism for the resolution of investment disputes, which includes both a first instance tribunal and an appellate tribunal.

Let me tell the House about the progressive nature of CETA, and that should make every member of this House very proud. Investment and dispute resolution are some of the themes that have been discussed at length here in Canada and across the EU. Canadian and EU citizens have voiced views and concerns on these important issues, and others, such as environmental protection, workers' rights, consumer health and safety, and a government's right to regulate.

One of the most important things that our government did right after taking office was to listen to the critics of CETA, critics who were gaining steam both in Canada and in Europe, and to understand some of the legitimate concerns people had. We worked with Canadians, including industry and civil society alike and, I would say, members and critics on the other side as well. Together with the EU, we responded to ensure that the economic gains from implementing this agreement would not come at the expense of these vital elements.

Government Orders

This includes making changes during the legal review of the agreement, as well as publishing a joint interpretative instrument with the EU at the time of the signature of CETA. It provided a clear and non-ambiguous statement of what Canada and the EU and its member states agreed with respect to a number of CETA provisions, including those in areas of public concern. CETA cements the paramount right of democratic governments to regulate in the interests of citizens on the environment, on labour standards, and in defence of the public sector. This is even more important in today's world, where we are faced with increasingly challenging times for trade and the global economy.

Let me tell the House about CETA in the world, the context we are living in today, in conclusion. We are seeing many nations now turning more inward and pursuing more protectionist measures following decades of ever-increasing openness. Many people are feeling that globalization has left them behind. People are faced with income inequality. They are suffering from economic hardships. They are worried about their jobs and future prospects. These are real and legitimate concerns.

That is why, at my first WTO meeting, I said to all the ministers, "Let us have a WTO for the people. Let us always make the people first in whatever decision we are taking." It is all about people.

However, closing borders is not a solution. Doing so will decimate economic growth and make us all poorer as a result, especially for a trading nation like Canada, for which participation in global commerce is key to our prosperity. This path is clearly a perilous direction.

In conclusion, that is why it is important that Canada stands up to this protectionist trend and continues moving toward an open society for free and open trade. We must do so in a way that puts the middle class at the centre of our ambitions and at the heart of any deal. Not only is this the right thing to do, it is in our national economic interest to do it. I urge every member to speak in favour of CETA, vote in favour of CETA and for decades to come, people will remember what we did, a historic agreement.

• (1540)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am thrilled to see that the Liberal government has followed through on our commitment to put into place CETA.

I am concerned about one part of the agreement. The agreement itself is good, but there are some commitments that our government made that were clear to the supply-managed sectors and to the fisheries investment fund for Newfoundland and Labrador.

I wonder if my colleague would comment and actually commit here today in the House that his government will follow through on the commitment that our government made to the supply-managed sectors, especially dairy, and also to the fisheries investment fund for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, the first thing I will do is acknowledge that this has been an effort that has been made on both sides of the aisle. I am fortunate to be occupying this seat in the ministry at this time, and I do recognize that it has been a joint effort in getting us to where we are.

I met with the dairy industry yesterday. I meet with people every day, and I can reassure the member that we will protect supply management. I have said that publicly and also to our farmers.

With respect to Newfoundland and Labrador, I am aware of the situation. We will respect our commitment, because it is in the best interest of all Canadians. I want to make sure that all Canadians, wherever they live in Canada, see the benefit of CETA for themselves and their families.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his passionate speech about trade. I share a passion for trade with him as the critic for our party, and we are strongly in favour of trade, but fair trade.

We need trade agreements that address all issues. Unfortunately, I did not hear the minister bring up the very real issue in CETA about the cost of pharmaceutical drugs. Twenty-five per cent of the implementing legislation in CETA are changes to the Patent Act that will extend the cost of pharmaceutical drugs for all Canadians.

I certainly heard the minister speak passionately about average people, average Canadians in our country feeling left out of trade deals, and it is largely because the governments of the day refuse to address the real issues and how they will impact Canadians in their everyday lives. I would like to speak to the minister about that and say that Canadians have very serious concerns about the cost of pharmaceutical drugs in CETA due to the patent changes that I mentioned.

Mr. Verheul, the lead negotiator for CETA, visited the trade committee and said that they do not really have an analysis on the increased cost of drugs due to the patent changes. We know that Health Canada was required to provide one to the PBO study.

My question is simple to the minister. Do you have internal studies projecting the cost of drugs to Canadians, yes or no?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will remind the member to address the question to the Chair and not to the individual member.

The hon. Minister of International Trade.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, first, I would like to extend kind words to the NDP critic. We already spoke on a number of issues, and I am blessed to have colleagues like her on the other side who are looking at progressive trade agreements in the same way that we are.

I cannot exactly address the member's question, but I promise to get back to her on that.

Government Orders

I can say that, in my first mission as the minister of international trade, everyone I met at the WTO said that this agreement is the gold standard in the world. It is the model for the world. Just about every minister who was at this WTO conference in Davos, Switzerland came to me and said that we have crafted with Europe the gold standard, whether we are talking about the environment or workers' rights. I explained to them that we want to be a leader in progressive trade.

I am sure that the NDP critic will work with me to make sure that everywhere we go in the world, whether together or individually, we will promote Canada as the champion of progressive trade in every instance that we can around the world.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my friend on the other side for his appointment as Minister of International Trade.

There is no doubt that an agreement with an economy that is about eight times bigger than Canada, the European Union, is great news for Canada. It is always great to have trade and to establish trade relations.

The hon. member mentioned something about supply management and how it is effectively working for the European Union, which I know we practise here too. In comparison, does the hon. member have any idea how that works best for us compared to the European Union, and are we on a level playing field in this case?

• (1545)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, the member and I have the pleasure of sitting on the finance committee together. He has always been a constructive member in whatever we did.

Let me just remind members of the benefits of CETA. I mentioned a number of them obviously in my speech. We are going to be touring across Canada to explain the benefits of CETA because in every riding of this nation people are going to benefit from this agreement.

There are some things that we need to remember for Canadian businesses. CETA would reduce red tape and reduce barriers to trade. It would provide access to public contracts at all levels of government in the European Union. It would improve access to trade in services and would improve labour mobility. These are just a few examples.

I would like the critic and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us in explaining CETA to Canadians as well as its benefits to them and their families.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, a week or two ago I was visited in my office by representatives of the IOWU and the Seafarers International Union of Canada, who have been closely following CETA since it was negotiated. They expressed very loudly their well-founded concerns about the impact of CETA on cabotage rules in Canada, specifically on the rules that will allow European ships for the very first time in Canadian history to ply internal Canadian waters and engage in the dredging of our ports. Beside the obvious impact on security in our country by having foreign-flagged, foreign-crewed vessels plying our internal waters, something the U.S. has never allowed and to this day will not

allow under the Jones Act, these representatives are concerned about the loss of the good, well-paying jobs of longshore union members and seafarers.

I wonder if my hon. colleague could answer their concerns. What can he say to them when they say the minute the government signs CETA, Canada will lose good paying jobs on its internal waterways?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, I want my hon. colleague to convey to the members of the unions that he just referred to that my door is always open to meet them. Since my appointment, I have sent a message saying that I will be happy to sit down with them. The member may know that my riding is close to the St. Lawrence River. I meet these people regularly. I would be happy to meet individuals from across the nation if they want to come and see me to discuss the issue. My door is always open.

We want to make this work for all Canadians. I am sure members appreciate that this is the gold standard of trade agreements.

I am certainly willing to meet with those individuals and I hope my colleague will convey that message. I will listen to them and we will work together to improve the situation for all Canadians through CETA.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the minister on his new appointment.

Would you also agree with the B.C. minister—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member to address his question through the Chair.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Sorry, Madam Speaker.

Would the minister also agree with B.C. trade minister Teresa Wat, who said that compared to NAFTA, CETA is Canada's most historic trade agreement?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Madam Speaker, there has never been a better moment to be the minister of international trade, because at every forum I have attended people have looked at Canada because of its progressive trade agenda.

I want to stress that we achieved this because we worked with people in the NDP and the Conservative Party. We worked with everyone in the House and also with our European colleagues to make sure that this agreement would be the gold standard.

Honestly, everywhere I have been in the world people refer to Canada and the EU as beacons of free and open trade. People are looking at our agreement and saying it should be the basis of all future trade agreements. I could not be prouder.

The member is totally right.

We will continue to push forward. I invite all members to do the historical thing and that is to vote for CETA.

Government Orders

● (1550)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join the debate on Bill C-30, an act implementing our latest free trade agreement with the European Union. I was very glad to hear the minister speak on the subject. I congratulate him as well on his appointment to the ministry. For all those who did not make it, their time will come I am sure, when the minister faces tough questions and will be unable to answer them in the House.

As I have done before, I have a Yiddish proverb, and I love using them. “Words must be weighed, not counted”. I know when it comes to counting words in the House, two members will disagree with me that they should be weighed. The member for Winnipeg North and my dear colleague, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, might disagree with me in their race to the top. However, weighing the words is far more important.

I know many members have come to the House to talk about the details of the bill, the different sections they agree with or agree less with, and the impact it will have on Canada's economy. I want to take it back just a little to talk about the meaning of free trade, the meaning it has had for Canada, and the impact it has had on our history.

Canada has been a trading nation from the very beginning, since pre-Confederation, by our forefathers and those who came here early on when beaver pelts were considered the currency of our country.

In the earliest debates on Confederation at the time, when Canada was founded, there were great debates on how Canada would become a true country. They were about the maritime customs union. That is what the early pre-Confederation politicians of the day were debating. It took Sir John A. Macdonald, taking charge of the situation and hijacking these meetings, to turn it into a discussion about how they could form Canada, a country devoted to trading, both within the British Empire and with our neighbours to the south. From that moment on, the great debates in our country have truly been about how we can make free trade work for us.

At the time, those debates were called reciprocity. The reciprocity treaty had been annulled the year before, in 1866, and that was the great foundation of our country. That impulse that we no longer could trade as easily with the United States, formed a great need among politicians to come together, create Canada and be able to trade more openly with our British motherland, the great mother parliament.

It was Alexander Mackenzie, the second prime minister of Canada, a great Liberal prime minister, a great believer in free trade, who said that reciprocity was really what Canada was all about. It was very important to him and to his party that it be implemented and returned to what it was.

As I mentioned, it has been a foundational debate in Canada: how and with whom can we trade, and as freely as possible. It has never been about how the government can trade with another government, but how people can trade. People create corporations and enterprises. They are entrepreneurial. They look for the best deals, and it is not just about price. It is about the product people want. It is about obtaining the type of product and not looking at only the price, but the quality, its origins, whatever country it comes from, and being

able to obtain it freely in a country without government interference telling them, through a tariff or regulation, or imposition of a ban, they cannot obtain it.

In a previous decade, it was a Conservative government that negotiated many free trade agreements, with 46 different countries, which brought the total up to 51 in Canada. That was 4.6 agreements per year.

Sometimes when I speak with students, especially students of history, I like comparing Canada to the Hanseatic League. It is in ancient Europe. We are about to embark on a great free trade agreement with Europe, including many of the countries whose cities were formerly with the Hanseatic League of ancient Europe. Canada is on the cusp of achieving a vast free trade empire, of which Prime Minister Harper used to speak. We have this great opportunity. Free trade will reshape our country and Europe as well. It is that combination of sharing a common history and common culture for many of us. It is an opportunity to shape the future for the next 20 to 50 years. It is not just for ourselves. It is also for our children and grandchildren, who will have opportunities that we did not have when we were much younger.

Other agreements have gone onto the wayside, like the TPP. It is my great hope the government will take up the TPP negotiations again and ensure we sign it with the partners that are still willing to go ahead with it. It is a great loss for the United States not to be moving ahead with the TPP at this time. I still have great hopes that Congress will change its mind and actually move on this. Again, it puts Canada right in the middle between CETA and the TPP and our free trade agreement with the United States.

● (1555)

We have an amazing opportunity to become the hub country through which goods can move, corporations can come and not just create good paying middle-class jobs, but also reshape our country and provide new opportunities and new ways of doing business, and creating wealth for the government to tax and pay for the public services Canadians have come to expect.

While TPP is a great loss for the United States, CETA is a great loss for the United Kingdom. A great many politicians in Europe and the United Kingdom have said this will be a loss for the United Kingdom, but they still look forward to negotiating free trade agreements both in Continental Europe and Canada, and finding opportunities to increase trade and to make it possible.

Government Orders

I like to quote from Daniel Hannan, a politician. Sometimes I also look at his videos and his speeches. He is now a former member of the European parliament, and was one of the big promoters of Brexit. He said that the union between the United Kingdom and the European Union was not some great utopia of free trade due to the regulations that were imposed on them. He said that the goal of a great many politicians in the United Kingdom still was to achieve free trade with Europe, Canada and with as many countries as possible to give this great opportunity for their citizens to trade freely with others. It is still good to aim high as much as possible. I am glad the government is pushing forward the legislation to implement the treaty and then to move on from there to other negotiations, to other perspective countries and regions with which we could achieve some type of free trade agreement and provide opportunities for Canadians to trade.

On January 24, The European Union trade committee voted 25 to 15 with one abstention. The rapporteur for the CETA said that this was a strong response to growing protectionism and that trade would enable them to continue to bring wealth to both shores of this trans-Atlantic friendship. That is a great way of looking at it. It is not just about the business component. It is also about this great friendship we have had, which predates NATO and the British and French influence on this continent. It is a long-standing relationship that America in the very broad sense, America, Canada, Mexico, has been able to enjoy with Europe. We have a shared history. Our histories and politics are intertwined. We participate in international bodies together. Although we can disagree, and sometimes very profoundly, we maintain that friendship, and that agreement does not turn into rancour, warring among each other anymore, thankfully. Now we have an opportunity, through free trade, to mutually reach an agreement between ourselves that will be beneficial for our citizens and our residents.

Both Canada and the European Union recognize in the deal the right to regulate domestic rights, and both will remain intact. That is found in section 7(d) of the legislation. This should allay the concerns that multinationals will somehow gain more influence and be able to pit one government against another, or pit a regulation in order to try to indicate that it is unnecessarily targeting them in some way. Section 7(d) tries to allay some of the fears of some people who no longer support free trade, the great pull internationally toward more protectionism that we saw 100 years ago. We need to push against that. It is a good sign from the Liberal government that it is moving ahead with the European free trade agreement. It says that we are open for trade and business. We want to find ways to trade more freely with others. We want to reach an agreement to reduce tariffs, to align our regulations to give those opportunities to Canadians to trade freely with them.

CETA will not remove barriers on four specific areas: public services, audiovisual, transport services, and a few agricultural products, including dairy, poultry, and eggs. The European Union expects the trade between its bloc and our country to rise by 20% when the agreement is fully implemented.

If we look at some of the numbers from 2015, according to the European Union, if we count just the imports from Canada, they totalled just about \$40 billion. If we look at the exports to Canada, it was \$49.5 billion. This is just a rough conversion from the euro.

● (1600)

We could also look at the Observatory of Economic Complexity, which is a website I highly recommend to people interested not only in numbers but to have them visually explained, to visually show what the numbers actually mean in real trade and to convey the numbers in a way that is catchy and attractive to the eye. For Canada, if we have a rough comparator, it means in value.

We exported \$45.2 billion in cars in 2014. If we compare that to the exports we got from Europe, it was \$49.5 billion. Therefore, we can see the opportunity we have. The car industry in Canada is a sector of the economy. It is very big in Ontario and not so very big in Alberta, but it is an opportunity if we just compare these two numbers. The top imports to Canada were vehicle parts, \$20.4 billion, which is about twice as much as our EU trade; refined petroleum was \$17.9 billion; and delivery trucks were \$12.7 billion. Again, we expected the boost to Canadian trade would be somewhere in the area of \$12 billion. Therefore, that boost alone would be like doubling the delivery trucks we import.

Again, it would be like almost doubling the vehicle parts sector of our economy. It is a huge opportunity, a chance for Canadians and Canadian companies to find ways to meet the needs and wants of people overseas and, likewise, for those people in other countries, such as the European Union, to find ways to meet the needs of Canadians without having the government necessarily interfere in that free exchange of goods and services.

The 751-seat European Parliament will be holding a vote on February 15. Therefore, it is very timely to be having this debate and passing the bill. It would be a good signal to send to the European Parliament that we are onside and that we want to proceed as quickly as possible to pass this bill in both the House and the Senate so Canadians can start to do the legwork needed on the ground to prepare themselves to trade with our partners in Europe. I am sure European companies and European residents are getting ready to trade with Canadians.

Sending the message that we still believe in free trade is more important today than it has ever been before. As I mentioned before, there is a great rise in protectionism across the globe. A great many people have seen, for the past 30 years potentially, in their own individual cases the lack of opportunity. They have not been able to obtain the jobs they wanted. The free trade in their countries perhaps was not as successful as they had hoped, or the sector of the economy they were in, perhaps for extended periods of time, suffered from an agreement where someone else with a comparative advantage was able to trade at a lower price or for different quality goods.

Government Orders

Again, we are always trying to find opportunities to help Canadians retrain and find new sectors of their economy to go into, to find entrepreneurial routes to create wealth. Although there are those situations, we have to support this renewal through this agreement, this renewal of our faith in free trade that it is good for Canadians and that it has been part of our history. We can broaden this transatlantic friendship and with that, protectionist sentiment notwithstanding, we will make this work. It will not be perfect. Every sector of the economy may not profit as equally as another, but we will find opportunities to make it work. Where it does not work, we can always make an agreement with our European partners to get it done.

I will go back to my example of the Hanseatic League. That league was based on trade in Europe, especially around the Baltic Sea. It dominated trade for almost 400 years. Yet Hansa societies were working to remove restrictions on trade, especially regulatory restrictions on trade. Permitting and restrictions were a big deal in those countries, in those cities. It was very difficult at the time to freely trade among all regions there. The Hanseatic League, basically, made it possible to trade freely almost among themselves, to provide and ship goods to other areas that needed them.

The opportunities that the league found profoundly reshaped the Baltic states and cities. We can still see it today in the city from which I come. I was born in Danzig, Gdansk in Polish. After 1466, it became the leading grain port and made Poland the dominant exporter of grain through the association it had with the league. I lived in that city for four and a half before my family came here in 1985. It is marked by that profound association it had with the Hanseatic League. The entire port areas are either shipyards or old grain ports. The most historic well-known heritage buildings are old Hansa society buildings. They are all grain storage facilities. Those are the things people mostly recognize.

• (1605)

Even though there was such awful destruction in World War I and World War II and during the many riots and uprisings in Poland during the 1800s during the partitions, those buildings still stand today. They stand as a kind of reminder to generations that have come afterward of the opportunities trade has given cities like Danzig and cities like Hamburg, which greatly profited from the ability to associate with others freely and to trade freely with them.

I am convinced that CETA will reshape Europe and Canada for decades to come in a positive way, a better way. We will find opportunities to trade and will find, perhaps, wants and needs that we did not know existed in Europe. Likewise, they will do it here. We will grow that relationship we have with them, both in trade imports and exports but also in the friendship we enjoy. We will come to a better understanding of what our countries require or do not require. People perhaps will be able to move across to other areas of the world, again seeking opportunities, chances to create wealth for themselves and for their families to live, work, and play as they wish.

The freedom to associate has to also mean the freedom to trade. "Free trade, one of the greatest blessings which government can confer on its people, is in...every country unpopular". Perhaps members think that was said in 2017, but it was not. It was actually

said in 1824, by Thomas Babington Macaulay, the first Baron Macaulay, a British historian and politician, a Whig, no less. At the time, he was looking at continental Europe and saying that he saw a great rise in protectionism and a great rise in people no longer seeing the benefits of free trade and the opportunities they received from engaging in trade with others.

Again, it is the great paradox of our time that those who have gained the most from the liberalization of trade, especially since 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union, no longer believe in its ability to reduce extreme poverty. They no longer believe in its ability to reduce extreme deprivation in housing and energy. They no longer believe that it is as effective. We know that all the stats prove it. We can see with our eyes, when we travel to certain areas, that trade has benefited immensely countries in Asia, in Africa, and in Latin America. Things are better today than they were 100 years ago or 50 years ago. Since 1989, countries like Singapore, South Korea, and Poland have immensely benefited, and their middle class has benefited, from the ability to trade freely with others, and so have we.

The trade relationship we have with the United States is the one we know best. It is the one sometimes we take for granted as well. We do not do enough to nurture the relationship we have with our American friends to the south. Sometimes we take it for granted, and we should not, because just as Baron Macaulay said in 1824, the rise of protectionism can always return. We are seeing that today.

What we have to be doing with an agreement like this is passing it as quickly as possible through this House, with judicious debate here and in the Senate. We have to give ourselves the opportunity to at least move it along further so that when the European Parliament, on February 15, has its vote, it will see that Canada is ready to take advantage of this agreement we have negotiated in good faith with the European Union and that we want to follow through on it and deepen the relationship we have had.

The great reductions in poverty and deprivation we have experienced and seen with our own eyes over the past 60 years were not the result of status or socialist command economies. They did not lift more than a billion people out of poverty. It was free trade, free-market economies that succeeded.

Why are people opposed to it today? I will maybe leave off with a quote from Daniel Hannan. He mentions two things that are the problem between protectionism and free trade and the pull between the two: "dispersed gains, concentrated losses".

We can see that in industries that are protected, that enjoy some type of grant from the government, a monopoly or oligopoly system, such as in sugar and tires. It goes on and on.

Government Orders

On one side, the gains of free trade are dispersed across the population, and it is hard to say, “This is why I have gained over the past 20 years and have been able to obtain a job that feeds my family and gives me the sense of hope and opportunity I have always looked for”. On the other side, concentrated losses, those who lose from it can sometimes lose very profoundly.

My family came to Canada not just because they were fleeing political persecution but because of the opportunities Canada provided. The free trade agreement is deeply embedded in that, and I urge the House to pass this bill as soon as possible.

• (1610)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, I share with my colleague a passion for trade and the importance of understanding that we are a trading nation, and I appreciate his global perspective.

When we look at what is happening across the globe right now, certainly there are implications for CETA. When we look at what has happened in the U.K., with Brexit, it is something we have to address. It is not something we can simply gloss over. If we sign CETA, we now have an unknown in the U.K., and 42% of Canadian exports are to the U.K. The Canadian concessions in CETA were based on the premise that the U.K. would be in the agreement. However, after Brexit, the Liberal government failed to re-evaluate the net benefit of CETA without the U.K. If the U.K. triggers its exit from EU, and also leaves CETA, is the member comfortable with the concessions Canada has made in CETA, given that the U.K. represents nearly half of Canada's exports to the EU?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I want to be respectful in my response, because I will disagree in principle.

I think the government has made the right move to push ahead with this agreement, because eventually there will be a Brexit. It is not perhaps; it is definitely when. Theresa May, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, has been very clear that there will be an exit. However, the U.K. will be signing some type of agreement with continental Europe. It will be the best position for Canada to be in to already have an agreement ready to go with continental Europe and from there to negotiate an agreement with the United Kingdom. I do not see a reason not to move ahead with it, when we know that our partners in the United Kingdom want to negotiate an agreement with us, which will be to the advantage of Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, trade is critically important to Canada. We are a trading nation. Many of the jobs we have today are directly linked, and many thousands more are indirectly linked, to it. As the minister indicated a little while ago, CETA is the gold standard. This is no doubt something that will assist Canada's middle class, and by helping Canada's middle class grow, we are helping the economy. That is good news for Canada.

Does the member recognize that one bonus is that the European Union is looking to Canada to continue to demonstrate leadership, especially on the trade file? We have a wonderful opportunity to be the linchpin between the U.S. and Europe. By using this agreement, there could be some additional benefit for Canada to move forward

in opening new markets for our many manufacturers, services, and so forth.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I think the member is right in some part. CETA offers an opportunity for our manufacturers and Canadians to do business more easily in Europe. It is one piece of the puzzle in the long term. I say that because the previous Conservative government had started exploratory discussions on launching free trade negotiations with other countries. I think it is important to remember that agreements are being signed bilaterally and multilaterally by many other countries. Canada can place itself in the best possible position if we look at CETA as one part of the puzzle. As we negotiate with others, we can say, “We have access to the European Union. How about you negotiate an agreement with us and you can use us as a flowthrough for logistics or transportation?” Those exploratory discussions the previous government had were with Thailand, the Philippines, and Mercosur, including Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. It is an opportunity, and we need to take advantage of it.

• (1615)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, earlier the Minister of International Trade referred to this as the gold standard of trade deals. However, I would like to draw the attention of all hon. members of this House to the fact that all is not well within the European Union. There is a German constitutional challenge against CETA that has garnered 125,000 signatures. There is a recently launched referendum campaign in the Netherlands that has collected over 200,000 signatures. We also know that each individual country of the EU must ratify this agreement.

To pass off these concerns as simple protectionism is too simplistic. There are some very legitimate concerns that people in the European Union share with us here in the NDP. Among those is the investor court system and the uncertainty that surrounds this institution.

My constituents' big concern about any trade deal is that Canada must maintain sovereignty over its ability to formulate policy for the good of Canadians. Would the member not agree that maintaining the ability of all levels of government to pass good laws for Canadians and for Canada is of paramount importance? Would he not agree that the ability of our federal courts to interpret and pass judgment on those laws is also of paramount importance?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I already addressed many of the member's concerns in my speech. I would just like to mention, again, bringing it back to subclause 7(d) of this agreement, that Canada will still be able to regulate different areas that are domestic areas.

Government Orders

I think we need to look beyond this just for a moment and look at the principle. I often hear New Democrats talking about being globalists and looking globally. They seem to be globalists until it comes to free trade, and then they are not globalists anymore.

When I look at this opportunity we have, we just cannot pass it up. It forms a building block of what we are trying to create, where Canada will be right in the middle, taking advantage of the opportunities offered to it. Those opportunities will be taken by Canadians as they see where they can grow their companies, create wealth, and exchange and trade with others.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to touch on a little of what the minister said earlier, that exports are 30% of our GDP. Exports consist of \$16 billion in services to Europe alone.

The hon. member mentioned that it came down to cities and how cities could benefit. He mentioned eastern Europe. Could he talk about a city that has benefited from these trade deals?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, I was born in the city called Danzig, which benefited greatly from the grain trade almost 600 years ago. It really reshaped the city.

I could talk about the city that I call home and that I am proud to represent. The part of the city I am in is called Calgary Shepard. Calgary has become a regional logistics hub. Walmart and Canadian Tire have major centres for distribution to all of western Canada and into the northern United States. It has profoundly affected the shape of the city, how the city has grown over time, and where companies choose to cluster. It has also been deeply impacted by the free trade they enjoy with other companies. It is the proximity and the opportunity that really impact how a city grows and sometimes the people who choose to live there and the professions they practise. We are known for oil and gas, but Calgary, especially, is also known as being a logistics hub.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, we heard from the minister earlier about how all these trade agreements are about the people of Canada. I just want to ask the member how significant increases in the price of prescription drugs for Canadians would benefit the people of Canada through CETA.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member when he predicts that the price of medicine will automatically go up and that it has to go up.

Through free trade, we will find opportunities to obtain the goods we want, including medicine and pharmaceuticals. It is an opportunity.

We should not only see the barriers. That is all I hear, the pessimism on that side. That feeds the image and the protectionism Baron Macaulay talked about in 1824. That protectionist feeling returns time after time, and it is usually hidden behind talk of fair trade.

• (1620)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-30 at third reading today. As we know, Bill C-30 is implementing legislation for the Canada-EU comprehensive economic and trade agreement. This debate is the last

one we will have before the legislation is passed by this House and moves on to the Senate.

The Canada-EU relationship is extremely important, and perhaps it has grown in importance since Canada's relationship with the U.S. faces new challenges.

The New Democratic Party believes Canada should absolutely be deepening trade relations with the European Union. After all, our countries share deep social and cultural ties, and the EU is already our second-largest trading partner. This trading relationship is extremely important. In fact, as I have said before, it is too important to get wrong.

I would like to begin my speech by highlighting some of the testimony received by the Standing Committee on International Trade. After, I would like to revisit some of the New Democratic Party's outstanding concerns with CETA, and the challenges with this agreement, moving forward.

While the trade committee had only four meetings to hear from outside witnesses on CETA, we heard some very good presentations. I wish we could have had more meetings and more witnesses, as I felt they made very valuable contributions.

One of the challenges that is often overlooked in trade discussions is how the government will actually help micro, small, and medium-sized businesses access potential new markets. Only about 10% of Canadian SMEs do business outside of our borders.

It is the job of the Minister of International Trade to develop, and implement a new strategy to support Canadian businesses exporting to international markets. This theme was often raised at the trade committee, as witnesses discussed how the government could support Canadian exporting businesses.

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association testified that it was very supportive of CETA. However, it also highlighted critical issues around the conversion of potential markets into real trade. Canadian meat producers are essentially shut out of the European market, so they welcome the access that CETA may grant them. However, I will point out that for Canadian beef exports, the increased quota would be phased in over six years. On the other hand, EU exporters would have tariff-free, quota-free access to Canada on day one.

Government Orders

The Cattlemen's Association pointed out significant differences between Canada and EU food safety regulations. Its support for Bill C-30 and CETA implementation is contingent on three conditions: first, it wants a commitment from the government to develop and fully fund a comprehensive strategy to eliminate non-tariff barriers to Canadian beef; second, it expects EU beef imports would comply with Canadian food safety requirements; and third, it wants to see government investment in beef processing and beef producer operations to help them comply with the complexities of the EU market.

As we can see, there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that Canadian exporters can access potential new EU markets.

The committee also heard from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, which affirmed that trade agreements are just a starting point. Canada needs a vigorous trade strategy to help smaller businesses take advantage of new opportunities.

I would like to point out some comments provided to the committee by the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses which, as we know, represents over 100,000 Canadian SMEs. Ms. Corinne Pohlmann of CFIB said:

Almost two-thirds of our members in a very recent survey are supportive of international trade agreements. However, nearly one in five small business owners felt they didn't have enough information to answer this question, suggesting that perhaps more needs to be done to inform them about the opportunities trade agreements can bring to their business.

She also pointed out that supply-managed producers have strong concerns and should be compensated for losses they would incur on CETA. According to the CFIB, smaller businesses want more consistency, fewer regulations, standards that are simple to comply with, simpler border processes, less paperwork, and lower costs. These are all principles that the NDP agrees with resoundingly.

This is exactly the kind of trade that we support. It is a shame that CETA includes so much else that we simply cannot support, like extraordinary legal rights for foreign companies to challenge our domestic environmental laws, and IP rules that favour name brand pharmaceutical companies that would drive up the cost of medication for Canadians.

These are the elements of comprehensive agreements like CETA and TPP that we simply cannot support. These elements are not in the best interests of Canadians. Canadians need elected representatives who are willing to stand up and challenge these harmful ideas.

• (1625)

CETA will also hurt Canada's dairy sector, and the so-called investment package offered to dairy farmers falls far short of compensating them for their losses. I would like to read a quote from Yves Leduc of the Dairy Farmers of Canada who appeared before the trade committee:

In regard to the government's announcement of a transition assistance package for CETA on November 10, DFC was pleased to see that the government decided to invest \$250 million in dairy farms as well as \$100 million in funding to help spur investment into updating Canada's dairy processing infrastructure...However, it only partially addresses the damage that will be caused by CETA. For dairy farmers, CETA will result in an expropriation of up to 2% of Canadian milk production, representing 17,700 tonnes of cheese that will no longer be produced in Canada. This is equivalent to the production of the province of Nova Scotia alone. It will cost Canadian dairy farmers up to \$116 million in perpetual lost revenues.

Let us take a look at the math here. Canadian dairy farmers will perpetually lose \$115 million-a-year, while the Liberals' so-called transition plan will provide \$50 million-a-year for only five years. This simply will not compensate dairy farmers for the losses they will incur under CETA, and some farmers will never see a penny of this money.

The government says that it supports supply management, but when it comes time to act, it turns its back on our dairy farmers. There is no action on diafiltered milk, and now the government has sent Brian Mulroney over to the U.S. on Canada's behalf, who just last week openly called for the elimination of supply management.

This is the person the Liberals have sent to the U.S. to supposedly defend Canadian trade interests. I hope the Minister of Agriculture is urging the Prime Minister to send Mr. Mulroney back to Canada, because Mr. Mulroney cannot claim to be fighting for Canada while opining that supply management has got to go.

Supply management is the backbone of our dairy industry, and it provides Canadian farmers with reliable incomes. It keeps prices stable, requires no government assistance, and supplies Canada with healthy, local milk. However, supply management has been eroded under TPP and CETA. It is time the government makes good on its word, and starts standing up for Canadian dairy farmers.

On CETA, the Liberals have completely ignored the issue of compensating Newfoundland and Labrador, which is expected to give up its minimum processing requirements under CETA. These rules are very important to Newfoundland and Labrador. They require that fish caught in the province must also be processed there. This keeps jobs in the local rural economy.

In 2013, a \$400-million fisheries fund was set up, with Ottawa contributing \$280 million and Newfoundland and Labrador contributing \$120 million. Where is the money now? Why has the Liberal government backed away from this pledge? For Heaven's sake, why is every Liberal MP from Newfoundland and Labrador not rising to their feet and raising these concerns?

I would like to read a quote:

The abolition of minimum processing requirements is clearly of great concern to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and your government's support of the CETA was earned, in part, by a promise from the Government of Canada to help the industry adjust to the new reality. That promise should be honoured.

Do members know who said that? It was the Right Hon. Prime Minister, the member for Papineau, in a letter to the former Prime Minister.

Government Orders

I agree, Mr. Prime Minister, the promise should be honoured, but will the government commit today to the promised compensation, or is this just another Liberal broken promise?

There is another Canadian industry that stands to be severely impacted by CETA, and that is our maritime industry, which supports 250,000 direct and indirect jobs. Under CETA, foreign-owned vessels will be permitted to transport goods between Canadian ports. Opening up cabotage to foreign vessels is a first in Canada, and seafarers are rightly concerned that this will lead to Canadian job losses. These European vessels will be allowed to hire non-Canadian workers.

I would like to draw to the attention of my colleagues the issue of flags of convenience, which is a practice whereby a merchant ship is registered in a country other than that of the ship's owners. Owners do this because it gives them many advantages: minimal regulation, cheap registration fees, lower or no taxes, and freedom to employ cheap labour from around the world. For workers, this means low wages, as low as \$2 an hour, as well as poor onboard conditions, inadequate food, clean drinking water, and very poor working conditions.

• (1630)

I hope my hon. colleagues can appreciate the ramifications this may have on Canada's maritime industry. The Canadian Maritime and Supply Chain Coalition, which includes the Seafarers' International Union of Canada and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, among others, is very concerned about CETA. It estimates it could result in the immediate loss of 3,000 Canadian seafarers' jobs from the east coast, to the Great Lakes, to the west coast.

I would like to highlight CETA's impact on one additional Canadian industry. It is an industry that is very important in my riding of Essex. I know it is important in many of my colleagues' ridings as well, including those with ridings in the Niagara region and British Columbia. Of course, I am speaking about Canada's wine sector.

Currently, the EU exports 180 million litres of wine to Canada, but Canada only exports 123,000 litres to the EU. Under CETA, this trade imbalance will be exacerbated.

The Canadian Vintners Association is asking for federal support to help the Canadian wine sector adjust and prepare for the implementation of CETA. I am hopeful the government has considered the implications of CETA on our wine industry, and that it will offer support to help them adapt.

With any trade agreement, there are trade-offs and concessions to be made. Canada made some significant concessions on the assumption that the U.K. would be part of the agreement. We now know it likely will not.

If CETA moves forward, some sectors will also have to make significant adjustments. I urge the government to be a strong partner to affected Canadian industries, and assist them as needed with transition support and compensation where required.

I have been very disappointed in the Liberals' apparent unwillingness to listen to Canadian concerns with CETA. As I

mentioned, we have had a very limited committee study of this legislation, and even sectors that support the agreement had specific conditions and concerns regarding implementation.

This agreement has no doubt had a rocky path, and it is still very unclear whether the EU will ever fully implement it. If the EU parliament ratifies CETA, it still has to be ratified by each individual member state and in some cases, regional parliaments must ratify too.

Last month, the EU trade committee voted 25-15 to endorse the deal. However, this past December, the EU committee for employment and social affairs voted 27-24 to reject the deal. It is clear that there is still a lot of opposition, both in Canada and in the EU, to CETA. The Liberals have been trying to say all progressives in the EU support the agreement, but that is simply not the case.

In addition to political opposition, there is widespread public opposition. Last year, there were several protests with over 100,000 people in attendance at each. A German constitutional challenge against CETA garnered 125,000 signatures, and a recently launched referendum campaign in the Netherlands has already collected over 200,000 signatures.

I do not believe this opposition can be pegged on a rising tide of protectionism. There are very concrete reasons why people are opposed to CETA. Angella MacEwen, senior economist with the Canadian Labour Congress, said to the trade committee:

The gains of these trade deals are never as big as they are projected to be, and the gains for CETA are small. They are among the error bars for what our economic growth is projected to be anyway.

Of the few studies that have been done on CETA, most are based on unrealistic assumptions, such as full employment, lack of capital mobility, and equal sharing of projected income gains. Even with these assumptions, GDP gains from CETA are not projected to be beyond 0.76%. I would also like to point out that after trade agreements are implemented, there is really no way of measuring whether they create any new jobs, or how their benefits are distributed.

Studies based on a different set of assumptions have shown CETA will increase inequality, and could lead to 204,000 job losses in the EU and 23,000 job losses in Canada.

At the end of the day, I do not see a commitment from the government to mitigating these negative impacts. In fact, Liberals refuse to even speak about them whether here in the House or at the committee level. I urge the government to listen to these very real concerns around CETA.

Government Orders

•(1635)

The Liberals have spent over a year consulting on the TPP and still cannot make up their minds, but on CETA, the other Conservative-negotiated trade deal, they essentially did no consultations. They slapped a gold star on it, called it progressive, and are pushing it through Parliament. I see no difference between the trade policies of the previous Conservative government and those of the current Liberal government. With the change in the U.S. administration, Canadians are looking to this government to stand up and fight for Canadian interests. It is time the Liberals showed us what a progressive trade agenda actually looks like.

Today, *The Globe and Mail* reported that a new poll shows Canadians expect our Prime Minister to “stand up to the President’s aggressive America-first strategy even if it leads to a trade war with Canada’s biggest trading partner”. For New Democrats, standing up to the President means standing up for Canadian jobs. Canada must stand firm on protecting its dairy industry, softwood lumber industry, and other trade-dependent industries. If the United States wants to reopen NAFTA, there is also an opportunity for us to push for more stringent labour and environmental standards and to get rid of regressive provisions like investor-state arbitration rules similar to those we see in CETA and the TPP.

I would like to conclude my remarks today by adding a word of caution. There has been a lot of criticism of the previous Conservative government for negotiating trade deals in secret. They did that with the TPP and they did that with CETA. There is a better balance to be struck between protecting confidential negotiating details and informing Canadians of what is on the table.

The Liberals promised Canadians more openness and transparency, but when it comes to trade, I see them slipping into the Conservatives’ patterns. There has been no peep from them on the trade in services agreement, nor have they given Canadians any clarity about what will be on the table in the NAFTA renegotiations.

I urge the government to be up front with Canadians. They want greater transparency and meaningful, honest discussion with Canadians on the potential impacts of any trade deal.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government has actually been very straightforward with Canadians on this. I am sure the member is quite familiar with the fact that, prior to the election, our leader indicated that Liberals are supportive of CETA. In fact, when we talk about trade agreements, the very progressive Liberal Party has looked at how Canada benefits when we have trade agreements. We have been consistent over the years, going all the way back to the Auto Pact days.

When it came to the Auto Pact, of course, New Democrats opposed it, like they oppose CETA today, but there are some strange anomalies. For example, they supported the agreement with Jordan. They voted for the trade agreement with Ukraine, and I applaud them on that.

Could the member opposite explain to the House what was in the Jordan trade agreement that New Democrats voted in favour of, but will now vote against what the vast majority of individuals

throughout Europe and Canada say is a good, solid agreement for both Canada and Europe and that there will be significant gains for all Canadians?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, if the member had listened to my speech he would have heard me say that Canadians have serious concerns with this trade agreement. What we saw from the Liberal government around CETA was a far-reaching campaign into Europe to ensure that this deal would be signed at any cost against major opposition in Europe, which still exists today. It is quite disheartening that members of the House refuse to acknowledge that this deal is far from being done in Europe. There is major opposition to it. A referendum is being called. There is the side agreement, the declaration that exists to the side.

To address the member's question, the NDP supports deals when they are progressive, when they line up with our progressive values, when they line up with what Canadians ask us to do. If we in the House do not listen to Canadians, then we will never stop the cynicism that is happening around trade deals, and we will never be able to sign more progressive trade deals if we do not have an eye toward that.

•(1640)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will start by thanking the member for Essex for that amazing critique of the trade deal. She has raised a number of concerns that are widespread, in my riding as well, one being the impact of this deal on prescription drugs.

I also want to talk about what people generally call supply management, which I have been hoping to get people to think of as food security. Would the member agree with me that one of the possible impacts of this trade agreement would be the undermining of Canadian production, which makes sure that we have Canadian producers producing the food we need, and also makes sure that we have producers who produce the high standards of food that Canadians have learned to expect in our market?

Government Orders

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with the member that when we are looking at opening up our supply-managed sectors, it is a question of food safety and food sovereignty within our own country. It is incredibly important to us that we have a strong supply-managed sector, and lately, trade deals have been attacking Canada's supply-managed sector. We see this in both the TPP and CETA. The compensation package that came forward under the government falls far short. We will see great losses across the provinces. Every province will be affected, because we have a dairy industry that spans our country. Certain provinces like Quebec and Ontario will see great losses. Many dairy producers and dairy farms in the member's province including on Vancouver Island have been there for generations. It is important that we protect our food safety and also protect family farms.

It would be great to see a commitment from the government, particularly under NAFTA, that it would not allow supply management to enter into the renegotiations of that trade deal.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the NDP has not been consistent on the trade file. Let me give a couple of examples. When those members were the official opposition, they supported the agreement with Jordan, and I understand to a certain degree they supported the Korean deal.

The member said that her party consults with Canadians and does its homework, and so forth, yet it opposed the TPP even before any details were released on it. At least we committed to look into it before we took a position, something which we continue to do.

Why has the NDP chosen to oppose this particular agreement given the benefits to Canada's middle class and those who are aspiring to be a part of it? It seems to me that those members have lost touch with reality in terms of the benefits of trade given the importance of international trade to every Canadian. No matter what region of the country, we all benefit from trade. We are a trading nation. Why has the NDP lost touch with this issue saying this particular agreement is not going to advance that whole trade agenda?

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, I find it quite curious that the member has asked what parts of this deal we have a concern with when I just gave a 20-minute speech on exactly those pieces. If he had read the amendments that I brought forward, he would have seen a wide representation of the things that we have concerns about, that Canadians have concerns about. I would encourage the member to read the entire agreement and read the amendments that were brought forward by the NDP, which he voted against yesterday.

I will take no lessons from the Liberals on consistency. When we look at trade and the number of meetings and the amount of attention and the cross-country tour that we took with respect to the TPP and compare that to CETA, no consistency exists from the Liberal side of the House. Four hundred witnesses came forward on the TPP but no decision is being made on TPP. On CETA, I had to fight at committee to have more meetings. We heard from a handful of witnesses. Witnesses from the maritime sector were unable to appear. If the member wants to talk about consistency, we opened up the trade committee to the public with respect to the TPP. Sixty-five thousand Canadians wrote about the TPP. The Liberals refused to allow the same process to take place on CETA. I will take no lessons from the member on consistency.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the member for Essex for the incredible work that she has done on this file. As one of the members of the class of 2015, to be handed this portfolio with all of these trade deals, she really has done an exemplary job.

I, too, will take no lessons on consistency from the Liberals, especially in light of their fundamentally broken promise on electoral reform. I think Canadians are beginning to see that their words really have no weight in this House.

I want to ask my colleague about the fact that the government broke its own policy on tabling treaties in Parliament. As we all know, this was signed on October 30, and the implementing legislation was brought forward on October 31. It violated the fact that the memorandum outlining key components of this treaty must be tabled, and Parliament must have 21 sitting days to consider these weighty implementation bills and so on.

This Parliament is being asked to sign a blank cheque when there is still so much uncertainty surrounding this deal. I would like to hear the member's further comments on that rushed, botched, and ultimately failed process that the government failed to live up to.

• (1645)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, again, the member's question speaks to the Liberals' inconsistency. This also speaks to the fact that average Canadians feel entirely left out of trade agreements. They do not feel that trade agreements have benefited them in their everyday lives.

When we look at this particular deal, we certainly see that if we had had information ahead of time, if this had been tabled in the appropriate manner and not had an exception made after the fact, then all of us as parliamentarians would have been able to fully and properly look at this massive trade deal, the largest trade deal that we are signing since NAFTA.

It is incredibly important, and it is incumbent upon all of us in this House to ensure that we understand what we are signing onto and the implications that it will have on every Canadian in terms of the cost of medication, the seafarer jobs that will be lost, the sectors that will never be able to see the benefit because of non-tariff barriers that have not been addressed, and the investor-state provision which has been changed into a court system that still has no definition, that is giving sweeping powers to the minister to appoint people.

There are grave concerns that Canadians have, and I hope that all parliamentarians will address these issues at some point in this House.

Government Orders

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Joliette.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak here today on this important piece of legislation. It is a privilege to speak in support of the passage of Bill C-30, An Act to implement the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union and its Member States and to provide for certain other measures.

I congratulate the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the minister of the previous government who was involved, as well as the team of negotiators for their diligent and successful work in bringing this international trade agreement to the final steps required for implementation.

There are many reasons to support freer trade. It ensures that consumers, businesses, and government have access to a broader assortment of goods and services. It enhances competition and makes available better quality products at lower prices. In a broader policy context, it provides leadership, with an inclusive, progressive approach to global trade and the development of more sophisticated, effective, and valuable trade agreements. However, most of all, trade leads to economic growth, and economic growth means more jobs, and more jobs means greater opportunities for the middle class and those working hard to join it.

In an uncertain global trading environment, Canada's economy will thrive only if we pursue a market diversification strategy. That strategy requires that we should always be exploring new markets while at the same time improving sales performance in as broad a set of our existing markets as possible. The European Union is the world's second-largest market. To illustrate the scale, 500 million Europeans buy more from the rest of the world every year than everything that Canada produces in a year.

When trying to improve sales, the first place to look is whether there is room for improvement with the customers we already have, like Europe, where we have been doing business for 200 years. Europe is already one of Canada's best customers. The European Union is Canada's second-largest trading partner, after the United States. In 2015, Canada's merchandise exports to the EU totalled \$38 billion.

I represent the electoral district of Kitchener South—Hespeler, in southwestern Ontario. To bring the issue a little closer to home, in 2015 Ontario's merchandise exports to the EU totalled \$19.7 billion, more than half of all of Canada's exports to the EU. Ontario and Kitchener South—Hespeler stand to benefit from increased access to the European market.

Once CETA is implemented, Canada will be strategically positioned to become one of a few developed countries with preferential access to the world's two largest markets, which are the European Union and the United States.

I want to bring this a little closer to home. In my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler, the implementation of CETA stands to benefit advanced manufacturing, which is a big economic driver there. It employs many people with well-paying jobs in my riding.

We are able to achieve that \$38-billion level of sales to the EU despite the fact that 75% of what we sell to the EU is currently subject to tariffs and taxes, which the EU collects on Canadian goods at the border, adding to the cost of our goods for Europeans, making our merchandise less price competitive. CETA would make Canadian goods more competitive and give our goods an edge over goods from countries that do not have preferential access to the European Union markets.

On the first day that CETA enters into force, 98% of EU tariff lines on Canadian goods will be duty free, including the most significant Ontario exports: metals and mineral products, manufactured goods, chemicals and plastics. Within seven years that duty-free percentage will rise by one more per cent to 99%. Virtually all manufactured goods Canada exports to Europe will be duty free.

● (1650)

Similarly, for agricultural and agrifood products, 94% of EU tariff lines would become duty free immediately, rising to 95% within seven years.

The European Union is also the world's largest importer of services. Under CETA, Canada's service providers would benefit from the greatest access the EU has ever provided in an agreement. This is particularly important for the Ontario economy, in which services accounted for 77% of the province's total GDP and employed more than 4.9 million Ontarians in 2015. Once Canadian goods or services have been imported into the EU, CETA provides that they must be treated no less favourably than the locally produced products. For example, they cannot be subject to higher taxes, stricter product regulation, or restrictions on sale than for a similar domestic good.

At the end of 2015, Europe was a venue for 21% of foreign direct investment by the Canadian companies, totalling \$210 billion; and \$242 billion of foreign direct investment in Canada had been made by European companies, representing 31% of all foreign direct investment in Canada.

CETA would provide investors in both Canada and Europe with greater protection while respecting governments' ability to enact legislation and to regulate in accordance with the public interest, such as environmental protection or people's health and safety.

Governments are some of the most substantial purchasers of goods and services. The annual procurement spending by European governments is estimated to be in the area of \$3.3 trillion. CETA would provide Canadian firms with the opportunity to bid on contracts to supply their goods and services to European governments at all levels.

Government Orders

Under CETA, skilled Canadian professionals and business people would find it easier to work on a temporary basis in the EU and to move across borders as required; for example to establish branch offices and to provide services related to goods sold.

I stand here today, enthusiastic about the increased trade agreement with CETA. Trade means more growth. Growth means more jobs. More jobs mean greater opportunity for those trying to enter the middle class. CETA would be good for my constituents in Kitchener South—Hespeler, creating jobs and opportunities, it would be good for Ontario, and it would be good for all Canadians.

• (1655)

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my neighbour from Kitchener South—Hespeler for acknowledging the great work of the member for Abbotsford, who did the lion's share of the negotiations on this committee, and that has been acknowledged by his minister so I thank them for that.

My colleague mentioned the benefit to advanced manufacturing in Kitchener South—Hespeler, and indeed all of southwestern Ontario and I could not agree more, but one sector that the trade agreement would impact greatly is the agricultural sector. We have beef producers, pork producers, and grain and oilseed producers who are ecstatic that this trade agreement has been signed. It would benefit them greatly.

When we were in government, our government made a commitment to the supply-managed sectors of dairy and poultry and also to the fishing industry for some specific commitments. I wonder if my colleague would stand in this place today and commit to following through on the very commitments that our government made to these sectors.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Madam Speaker, according to *Canadian Business* magazine:

The sectors where higher tariffs still exist—agricultural goods; food, beverage, and tobacco; chemicals, rubber, and plastics; and motor vehicles and parts sectors—will experience the largest export gains as a result of tariff elimination under CETA... Overall, we estimate that tariff elimination on goods is likely to result in over \$1.4 billion being added to Canada's product exports to the EU by 2022.

This deal is a historic deal that would benefit all sectors, and many sectors that the hon. member mentioned.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, many Canadians are deeply concerned over the investor court provisions in trade deals, which give foreign corporations more rights than those enjoyed by Canadian companies or ordinary Canadians. Does the member believe that the Canadian court system is not equipped to handle complaints from European companies?

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Madam Speaker, I have full confidence in our justice system to protect Canadians and to protect Canadian jobs. That is why our government and the previous government have worked on a historic deal, one that is equal to NAFTA, or second to NAFTA, and we are looking to protect Canadian interests and Canadian jobs.

I want to quote from a CTV News article. “Stefan Renckens, an assistant professor at the University of Toronto, whose research interests include international trade deals and EU politics, said the

elimination of tariffs on Canadian products in the EU will make Canadian companies more competitive in those lucrative markets”.

There are many experts who have been talking about this trade deal saying that CETA is a historic trade deal that will benefit in many different avenues, many different fields, and a lot of entrepreneurs and companies would benefit from this gold standard trade deal.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member outlined the benefits of CETA. Could he comment on the industry that would be most benefited by this agreement in Canada?

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Madam Speaker, there are many industries that would benefit. As I mentioned, advanced manufacturing in my riding would benefit. On the west coast, it would benefit many forestry industries and many rural areas would benefit in the agricultural sector.

This is a great deal that would benefit many different sectors.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, as things stand, the Bloc Québécois will not be supporting Bill C-30 at third reading. It is with heavy hearts that we will vote against it. As everyone knows, we supported the Canada-Europe agreement in principle. The agreement will benefit Quebec in many important ways.

Right now, our neighbour to the south is fairly unpredictable. Some would even say erratic. The election of Donald Trump reminds us that hitching our wagon to the American star is not good enough. We need more than one partner. Europe is perfectly suited to be that partner.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage was absolutely right when she said yesterday that Quebec is the high-tech heart of Canada. We have an international reputation for the cutting-edge sectors such as aeronautics and artificial intelligence that are part of our economy. Thanks to our creative people, we are considered world leaders in sectors such as video games.

Quebec is also at the head of the pack in research and development despite inadequate federal government support. We have the most highly rated shipyard in North America. Quebec is a world leader in green energy production. In contrast to Canada, which is mired in tar, we will emerge victorious from fossil fuel dependency. Quebec's future is bright.

However, developing a leading-edge product is a long and expensive process. Our high-tech companies, our industries of the future, could not possibly be profitable based on domestic markets alone. We need access to the world. Our high-tech sectors depend on it. Our future depends on it.

The Canada-Europe agreement could have been a great agreement. It had the potential to be tailor-made for Quebec, which in some ways already serves as a bridge between North America and Europe. Approximately 40% of the trade between Canada and Europe is done with Quebec. On top of that, about 40% of European investments in Canada are made in my province of Quebec. The strength of the Quebec economy speaks for itself. Our development model is a little different than that in the rest of North America, but this does not frighten European investors. After all, Germany is much more unionized than we are, and it is doing very well, thank you. Europeans do not mind that our employees are more unionized than anywhere else in North America. The exact opposite is true of American investors, who fear the differences in Quebec, in part because Canada is doing a terrible job promoting and selling Quebec's strengths.

Considering the growing protectionism in the United States, Europe will be looking more and more to Quebec to act as a gateway to North America.

Yes, this agreement presented its share of opportunities, but we cannot support just any old thing. We see what happens all around the world when governments fail to support those on the losing side of trade agreements. The Canada-Europe agreement has its share of victims in Quebec, and Ottawa is neglecting to compensate them. Quebec is a trading nation and we have always played our cards right, despite the fact that Quebec is not independent and must continually fight to ensure that Ottawa takes Quebec's differences into account in trade agreements.

Unlike the government, we will not leave our people behind. We have a very stable dairy and cheese sector thanks to supply management. The Canadian government has chosen to favour the western beef industry at the expense of Quebec's cheese producers. The reality of the European market is quite different from that of Quebec's market. In Europe, producers are highly subsidized, which is not the case in Quebec. They can easily sell their cheese here in Quebec below cost. That is not possible in a system where supply meets demand in order to avoid waste and where farmers are ensured stability. More often than not, Quebec's cheese producers are small artisanal businesses, fragile businesses. The Canada-Europe agreement will open the Canadian market, including the Quebec market, to European cheese products, but the reverse is not true. Under WTO rules, the supply management system does not allow us to export our products. The cheese producers are in a lose-lose situation.

European businesses that receive very large subsidies will be able to sell cheese in Quebec at a very low price. That will put tremendous pressure on our producers. Given that Quebec produces half of Canada's cheese and more than 60% of its fine cheeses, Quebec is most affected by this agreement.

• (1705)

The agreement will give 7% of the Canadian market to Europe, specifically 18,000 tons of cheese. Almost all future imports will consist of fine cheeses. I will repeat that Quebec produces over 60% of Canada's fine cheeses and it will be the first victim of the agreement. It is estimated that cheese producers will lose more than \$300 million year after year.

Government Orders

The government has never committed to compensating producers for all their losses. In fact, it offered the dairy and cheese industry a total of \$350 million over five years. It did not provide any details about the criteria or the allocation. Moreover, it gave no guarantees for the future. All we were asking the government to do was to make a firm commitment to fully compensate producers for their losses. It never wanted to do that.

Quebec's cheese producers are resigned to the fact that the government is implementing the Canada-Europe agreement and is opening up our market to European cheese. Consequently, UPA is requesting financial compensation for the losses that dairy and cheese producers will inevitably incur. The Government of Quebec is also asking for compensation for these producers.

Our cheese producers are concerned, and the Canadian government has not done what is necessary to reassure them by giving them the guarantees they have asked for. Diversifying our markets is a good thing because having more trade partners will make our economy more stable. However, unfortunately, the Government of Canada has once again failed to consider the Quebec market.

Since Quebec is not a country, Canada speaks on its behalf, even though Canada does not understand the Quebec model. Often, the Quebec model is not compatible with the Canadian model. Of course, in those types of situations, the federal government does what is best for the rest of Canada, simply because it is more politically expedient to do so. It is a matter of numbers. That is what is happening again with the Canada-Europe agreement.

If the government had done its homework, it could have proposed innovative solutions, such as allowing artisans and small businesses to get import licences for European cheese. That way, they could have profited from selling European cheese and compensated for any losses incurred because of this agreement. If nothing is done, the large chains will get licences and they will be the ones to profit. That will be even more harmful to our producers. To date, the government has not given any indication that it is sensitive to the plight of our cheese producers.

In short, for all of these reasons, we cannot support this bill. The Bloc Québécois will not abandon Quebec's dairy and cheese producers. We made a firm commitment during the last election. We promised that we would support the Canada-Europe agreement only if the government promised to fully compensate the dairy and cheese industry. Since the government has not made a clear commitment in that regard, we will oppose the bill. The Bloc Québécois keeps its promises, and it condemns the government's insensitivity toward producers. We stand with producers.

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Joliette had a lot to say about agriculture. Agriculture is very often the loser in international negotiations. The parties agree on all kinds of issues, but agriculture is the last thing they talk about.

Government Orders

In Canada, we had the same problem with culture. The World Trade Organization held culture in low regard. Some years ago, Canada decided to push for an international instrument on culture. We wanted to remove culture from WTO negotiations and create an international instrument under UNESCO. We believed that future negotiations should not put culture on the same table as guns, submarines, computers and so on. Culture is the soul of the people, and we felt it had no place in the WTO, so we took it away from the WTO and found a new home for it in an international instrument under UNESCO.

Why not do the same with agriculture?

• (1710)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Brome—Missisquoi for his remarks.

Yes, we must protect culture because it is important. We must protect agriculture as well because it is very important. That is what the Bloc is doing now when we say that our dairy and cheese producers are not being compensated in this agreement.

We pledged to withhold our support if the compensation was inadequate, and we are honouring that pledge. If, someday, the government removes agriculture from international agreements or gives it special status such as that held by culture under UNESCO, we will be happy to work with the government. For the time being, agriculture is in the Canada-Europe agreement, and our producers are not getting proper compensation.

I am thinking of one cheese maker in my riding in particular, a Mr. Guilbault of the Fromagerie du champ à la meule in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. He is the kind of person we are standing up for.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member has any concerns about a couple of areas. One is, of course, with the issue going on in the United States with President Trump and his comments about renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement.

In NAFTA there is a “most favoured nation” clause, which means that if Canada negotiates any other trade agreement with any other country and it contains terms superior to NAFTA, we would then automatically have to give those provisions to the U.S. I wonder if the member has any concerns about that, given Mr. Trump’s aggressive talk that he is looking to put America first and take trade preferences away from perhaps countries like Canada for the U.S.

Does the member have concerns that by signing CETA we will be voluntarily giving the Americans preferences and benefits at the very same time that they want to take away benefits from Canada? Does he have any concerns in that regard?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway for his remarks.

Yes, NAFTA does have a most favoured nation clause. However, to my knowledge, NAFTA goes further than CETA in areas like investment protections, among others. I do not see which items in the Canada-Europe agreement would force Canada to give any concessions to the Americans or items that go any further than

what already exists, such as civil courts for compensation and all those kinds of clauses.

On the contrary, by signing CETA, one of the potential advantages, had our farmers and cheese and dairy producers been properly compensated, is that Quebec could have become the trade hub between Europe and the United States, especially with the Trump administration, which is rather protectionist. For instance, European companies could set up shop in Quebec or Canada and then export to the U.S. This could prove very beneficial from a jobs perspective.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise this evening in strong support of Bill C-30, an act to implement the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union and its Member States and to provide for certain other measures.

It has been a long time coming, more than a decade, and there have been so many people who have been involved on the Canadian side in helping shape CETA. Certainly, much credit is owed to Canada’s world-class trade negotiators, who for 10 years did much of the heavy lifting. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge several hon. members in this House who played an instrumental role in concluding CETA.

Much credit is due to the hon. members for Abbotsford and Battlefords—Lloydminster. Under their leadership, Canada reached an agreement in principle with the European Union in 2014.

Credit is also owed to the hon. member for York Centre, who, as Canada’s international trade minister, commenced the negotiations with the European Union back in 2009, and did a lot of the early heavy lifting, as did Stockwell Day when he was the minister of international trade.

Credit is owed to our current Minister of Foreign Affairs, who, in her previous portfolio as Minister of International Trade, helped get CETA across the finish line.

Finally, credit is owed to former Prime Minister Stephen Harper. It was Prime Minister Stephen Harper who had a great vision when it came to market liberalization and free trade. For 10 years, Prime Minister Harper presided over a decade of success when it comes to trade, including the signing of 46 historic free trade agreements, CETA being the largest of those free trade agreements. Indeed, CETA is the largest free trade agreement since NAFTA.

Canada is a trading nation. Two-thirds of Canada’s GDP is tied to trade. One in five jobs is tied to trade. Since the ratification of the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement in 1988, trade between Canada and the United States has flourished. Each and every day there is some \$2 billion in trade occurring between Canada and the United States. Of course, Canada has preferential access to the U.S. market through NAFTA.

With CETA, Canada stands to gain preferential access to the largest economy in the world, the European Union, which is comprised of 28 member states, has a population of more than 500 million people, and boasts an annual economic activity of nearly \$20 trillion.

Government Orders

What is more the European Union is the largest importer in the world, which complements Canada's export-driven economy. Canada already does a lot of trade with the European Union. The European Union is Canada's second-largest trading partner. Each and every year, Canada does approximately \$80 billion to \$90 billion in trade with the European Union.

Over the years, Canada's economic ties with the European Union have been strengthened. When we look at exports, for example, we have seen exports to the European market increase from some \$17.9 billion in 1997 to \$40 billion today. With CETA, Canada's economic and trade ties to the EU promises to grow even stronger. Indeed, an early Canada-EU joint study projected that bilateral trade between Canada and the European Union stands to gain by some 20%, thanks to CETA.

• (1715)

For my province of Alberta, CETA is nothing short of a big win. The European Union is Alberta's fourth-largest export destination. It is also Alberta's third-largest trading partner. Simply put, what CETA means for Alberta is the elimination of almost all EU tariff lines on Alberta exports destined for the European market.

Under CETA, EU agricultural and agrifood tariff lines will be eliminated, 94% will be eliminated immediately. That number will eventually rise to 95%. With the elimination of those agricultural and agrifood tariff lines, there are tremendous opportunities for Alberta's large and vibrant agricultural and agrifood sectors.

In that regard, the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance projects that Canadian agri-food exports to the European Union will grow by some \$1.5 billion, thanks to CETA.

It is not just the agricultural sector that stands to benefit from CETA, frankly it is all sectors of the Canadian and Alberta economies. That is because under CETA, nearly 100% of non-agricultural tariffs will be eliminated. That presents enormous opportunities for many sectors, including the service sector.

The service sector comprises about 54% of Alberta's GDP; 1.5 million Alberta jobs are tied to the service sector. Under CETA, Canadian service suppliers stand to gain the best market access to the European Union compared to the EU's other free trade partners. What that means is new markets and new opportunities for Alberta and Canada's service suppliers.

Investment is important to the Canadian economy, and it is absolutely crucial in connecting Canada to global supply chains. When we look at, for example, investment, Canadian foreign direct investment to the European Union last year equalled \$210 billion. That is roughly 21% or 22% of Canadian foreign direct investment directed into the European Union.

What CETA promises investors is to help facilitate investment, both for Canadian investors and European investors. Not only that, CETA means more certainty, more transparency, and more protection for investors.

While there is much to be proud of and much to look forward to with CETA, it is not entirely good news, because when our government left office 15 months ago and passed the torch to the

Liberal government, we gave the government, essentially, a free trade agreement with the European Union on a silver platter.

• (1720)

For whatever reason, the Liberals decided that it somehow was not good enough, that they would reopen it. What did that result in?

It resulted in a lesser deal for Canada when the European Union made the commitment to regional governments to put in agricultural safeguards to protect against import surges. When we talk about investment, which is very important and a very important aspect of CETA, there is also some uncertainty surrounding the investor-state settlement dispute process, which will not be part of the provisional coming into force of this agreement, which it was under the deal that was negotiated by our previous Conservative government.

It is not all good news, but that should not take away from the fact that on the whole, CETA is a good deal. In that regard, when we take a step back and look at CETA, and what it means for Canada, one important fact is that it will mean that Canada will have preferential market access to both the United States and the European Union, the two largest economies in the world.

Combined, the United States and the European Union represent about 50% of global GDP. From a strategic standpoint, CETA is a big win relative to the United States, inasmuch as Canada would get first mover advantage in relation to the European Union.

That presents many opportunities for Canada in terms of becoming an investment gateway for European Union investors seeking access to the United States market for NAFTA, and an investment gateway for U.S. investors seeking access to the European Union market.

CETA means more trade, more opportunities for Canadian businesses, and it means more jobs for Canadians. After 10 years of hard work and tough negotiations, Canada is on the cusp of achieving this historic free trade agreement.

For jobs, for growth, and for the long-term prosperity of Canada, let us get it done. Let us get CETA across the finish line. Let us pass Bill C-30.

• (1725)

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would certainly agree with the previous member's statement regarding our shared values with the Europeans and the opportunities for expanding markets.

Does the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton believe, as I do, that this agreement is a positive antidote to the rise of protectionism?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, we have seen over the last year or so a troubling turn in many parts of the world, a turn inward. I would submit, now more than ever, it is absolutely essential that we get this agreement done.

Private Members' Business

The United States is an important ally and an important trading partner with Canada. That will always be the case, but we can no longer have all our eggs in one basket, and that is what CETA provides. It provides an opportunity to open new markets and new opportunities for Canadians. It is why, now more than ever, we must get this deal done; we must implement CETA.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, in the previous Parliament, Prime Minister Harper offered \$4.3 billion in compensation to Canada's agriculture sector for the damage that he acknowledged CETA would do to that industry. One does not offer billions of dollars to an industry if it is not going to experience damage.

Prime Minister Harper offered \$1.1 billion in compensation to the auto sector, an acknowledgement that the Canadian auto sector was going to be damaged by CETA. Why else would he give taxpayer dollars to the auto sector? Of course, he promised \$400 million to Newfoundland and Labrador.

I would ask for my hon. colleague's thoughts on the damage that is going to be done to those sectors, particularly now that we have heard nothing from the Liberal government about honouring any of those promises to those sectors.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, in terms of the compensation package for dairy producers, the compensation package offered by the Liberal government is a pittance compared to the compensation package offered by the previous Conservative government. It is a disappointment and an issue that Conservatives are going to continue to hold the Liberals to account on.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from February 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C-305, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (mischief), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-305 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

• (1800)

[English]

The Speaker: Before we proceed with this evening's votes, I would like to provide guidance to the House on the process respecting recorded divisions on items of private members' business. This is a matter that was raised by the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope on December 6, 2016, for which I thank him.

As members are aware, all votes on private members' business are conducted in reverse order, beginning with the back rows and moving forward. Starting with the yeas, the first vote is cast by the

member who is sponsoring the bill or the motion in question, followed by members in the back row on the same side of the House as the sponsor, and then those members in favour on the opposite side of the House, again, beginning with the back row. The Speaker then calls on those who will vote against the motion in the same fashion.

As indicated in the first report of the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business, an appendix to the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, concurred in on November 4, 1998, this manner of proceeding is intended to “further emphasize that Private Members' Business belongs to private Members, and further distinguish it from other business of the House”.

[Translation]

These procedures have generally been respected since they were established in the 36th Parliament. On occasion however, members are late to rise to record their vote, standing only after their row has already been called. While this can no doubt be attributed in most cases to a brief moment of inattention, standing late can create confusion and should be avoided.

Therefore, I invite all members to pay particular attention when we are proceeding with recorded divisions, whether as party votes or as row-by-row votes under Private Members' Business, so that all members' votes may be recorded in an organized fashion.

[English]

I would like to thank all members for their attention to this matter and for their continued efforts in assuring the proper procedures are respected for recorded divisions during private members' business.

• (1810)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 191)

YEAS

Members

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Aboultaif | Albas |
| Albrecht | Alghabra |
| Alleslev | Allison |
| Amos | Anandasangaree |
| Anderson | Arnold |
| Arseneault | Arya |
| Ashton | Aubin |
| Ayoub | Badawey |
| Bagnell | Bains |
| Barlow | Barsalou-Duval |
| Baylis | Beaulieu |
| Beech | Bennett |
| Bergen | Berthold |
| Bezan | Bittle |
| Blaikie | Blair |
| Blaney (North Island—Powell River) | Block |
| Boissonnault | Bossio |
| Boucher | Boudrias |
| Boulerice | Brassard |
| Bratina | Breton |
| Brisson | Brosseau |
| Brown | Caesar-Chavannes |
| Calkins | Cannings |
| Caron | Carr |
| Carrie | Casey (Cumberland—Colchester) |
| Casey (Charlottetown) | Chagger |

Private Members' Business

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Champagne | Chan | Philpott | Picard |
| Chen | Chong | Plamondon | Poilevre |
| Choquette | Christopherson | Poissant | Quach |
| Clarke | Clement | Qualtrough | Ramsey |
| Cooper | Cormier | Rankin | Ratansi |
| Cullen | Cuzner | Rayes | Reid |
| Dabrusin | Damoff | Rempel | Richards |
| Davies | DeCoursey | Rioux | Ritz |
| Deltell | Dhaliwal | Rodriguez | Romanado |
| Dhillon | Di Iorio | Rota | Rudd |
| Diotte | Doherty | Ruimy | Rusnak |
| Donnelly | Dreeshen | Saganash | Sahota |
| Drouin | Dubé | Saini | Sajjan |
| Dubourg | Duclos | Sanson | Sangha |
| Duguid | Duncan (Etobicoke North) | Sansoucy | Sarai |
| Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona) | Dusseault | Saroya | Scarpaleggia |
| Duvall | Dzerowicz | Scheer | Schieffe |
| Easter | Egliniski | Schmale | Schulte |
| Ehsassi | El-Khoury | Serré | Sgro |
| Ellis | Erskine-Smith | Shanahan | Sheehan |
| Eyking | Eyolfson | Shields | Shipley |
| Falk | Fergus | Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon) | Sidhu (Brampton South) |
| Fillmore | Finley | Sikand | Simms |
| Finnigan | Fisher | Sohi | Sopuck |
| Fonseca | Footé | Sorbara | Spengemann |
| Fortin | Fragiskatos | Stanton | Ste-Marie |
| Fraser (West Nova) | Fraser (Central Nova) | Stetski | Stewart |
| Fry | Fuhr | Strahl | Stubbs |
| Gallant | Garneau | Sweet | Tabbara |
| Garrison | Généreux | Tan | Tassi |
| Gerretsen | Gill | Thériault | Tilson |
| Glada | Goldsmith-Jones | Tootoo | Trost |
| Goodale | Gould | Trudel | Van Kesteren |
| Gourde | Graham | Van Loan | Vandal |
| Grewal | Hajdu | Vandenbeld | Vaughan |
| Hardcastle | Harder | Viersen | Virani |
| Hardie | Harvey | Wagantall | Warkentin |
| Hehr | Hoback | Watts | Waugh |
| Holland | Housefather | Webber | Weir |
| Hughes | Hussen | Whalen | Wilkinson |
| Hutchings | Iacono | Wilson-Raybould | Wrzesnewskyj |
| Jeneroux | Johns | Young | Yurdiga |
| Jolibois | Jones | Zahid — 303 | |
| Jordan | Jowhari | | |
| Kang | Kelly | | |
| Kent | Khalid | | |
| Khera | Kitchen | | |
| Kmiec | Kwan | | |
| Lake | Lametti | | |
| Lamoureux | Lapointe | | |
| Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengary) | Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation) | Nil | |
| Laverdière | Lebel | | |
| LeBlanc | Lebouthillier | | |
| Lefebvre | Leitch | | |
| Lemieux | Leslie | Nil | |
| Levitt | Liepert | | |
| Lighthound | Lobb | | |
| Lockhart | Longfield | | |
| Ludwig | Lukiwski | | |
| MacAulay (Cardigan) | MacGregor | | |
| MacKenzie | MacKinnon (Gatineau) | | |
| Maguire | Malcolmson | | |
| Maloney | Marcil | | |
| Masse (Windsor West) | Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia) | | |
| Mathysen | May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) | [English] | |
| McCauley (Edmonton West) | McColeman | | |
| McCrimmon | McDonald | | |
| McGuinty | McKay | | |
| McKenna | McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | | |
| McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo) | McLeod (Northwest Territories) | | |
| Mendès | Medicino | | |
| Mihychuk | Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound) | | |
| Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs) | | | |
| Monsef | | | |
| Moore | Morrissey | | |
| Motz | Mulcair | | |
| Murray | Nassif | | |
| Nater | Nault | | |
| Nicholson | Nuttall | | |
| O'Connell | Oliphant | | |
| Oliver | O'Regan | | |
| O'Toole | Paradis | | |
| Paul-Hus | Paucé | | |
| Peterson | Petitpas Taylor | | |

NAYS

PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

The House resumed from February 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-274, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (transfer of small business or family farm or fishing corporation), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-274.

• (1820)

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

*Private Members' Business**(Division No. 192)*

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif
 Albrecht
 Anderson
 Arseneault
 Aubin
 Barsalou-Duval
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
 Boucher
 Boulerice
 Brosseau
 Calkins
 Caron
 Chong
 Christopherson
 Clement
 Cullen
 Deltell
 Doherty
 Dreeschen
 Dubé
 Dusseault
 Eglinski
 Falk
 Fortin
 Garrison
 Genuis
 Gladu
 Hardcastle
 Harvey
 Hughes
 Johns
 Kelly
 Kitchen
 Kwan
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Lebel
 Lemieux
 Lobb
 Ludwig
 MacGregor
 Maguire
 Marcil
 Mathysen
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Moore
 Mulcair
 Nicholson
 O'Toole
 Paul-Hus
 Plamondon
 Quach
 Rankin
 Reid
 Richards
 Rota
 Sansoucy
 Scheer
 Serré
 Shipley
 Stanton
 Stetski
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Tilson
 Trudel
 Van Loan
 Wagantall
 Watts
 Webber
 Yurdiga — 145

Albas
 Allison
 Arnold
 Ashton
 Barlow
 Beaulieu
 Berthold
 Blaikie
 Block
 Boudrias
 Brassard
 Brown
 Cannings
 Carrie
 Choquette
 Clarke
 Cooper
 Davies
 Diotte
 Donnelly
 Drouin
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Eyking
 Finley
 Gallant
 Généreux
 Gill
 Gourde
 Harder
 Hoback
 Jeneroux
 Jolibois
 Kent
 Kmiec
 Lake
 Laverdière
 Leitch
 Liepert
 Lockhart
 Lukiwski
 MacKenzie
 Malcolmson
 Masse (Windsor West)
 May (Saainich—Gulf Islands)
 McColeman
 Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
 Motz
 Nater
 Nuttall
 Paradis
 Paupé
 Poilievre
 Ramsey
 Rayes
 Rempel
 Ritz
 Saganash
 Saroya
 Schmale
 Shields
 Sopuck
 Ste-Marie
 Stewart
 Stubbs
 Thériault
 Trost
 Van Kesteren
 Viersen
 Warkentin
 Waugh
 Weir

NAYS

Members

Alghabra
 Amos
 Arya
 Badawey
 Bains
 Beech
 Bittle
 Boissonnault
 Bratina
 Brisson
 Carr
 Casey (Charlottetown)
 Block
 Champagne
 Chen
 Cuzner
 DeCoursey
 Dhillon
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Dzerowicz
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Eyolfson
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Foote
 Fraser (West Nova)
 Fry
 Gameau
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gould
 Grewal
 Hardie
 Holland
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Jordan
 Kang
 Khera
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 Leboutillier
 Leslie
 Lightbound
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 Maloney
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Miychuk
 Soeurs
 Monsef
 Murray
 Nault
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Qualtrough
 Rioux
 Romanado
 Ruimy
 Sahota
 Sajjan
 Sangha
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sohi
 Spengemann
 Tan
 Tootoo
 Vandenbeld
 Virani
 Wilkinson
 Wrzesnewskij
 Zahid — 157

Alleslev
 Anandasangaree
 Ayoub
 Bagnell
 Baylis
 Bennett
 Blair
 Bossio
 Breton
 Caesar-Chavannes
 Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
 Chagger
 Chan
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 Dhaliwal
 Di Iorio
 Duclos
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Easter
 El-Khoury
 Erskine-Smith
 Fergus
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fragiskatos
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fuhr
 Gerretsen
 Goodale
 Graham
 Hajdu
 Hehr
 Housefather
 Hutchings
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Khalid
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Levitt
 Longfield
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
 Morrissey
 Nassif
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Poissant
 Ratansi
 Rodriguez
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Saini
 Samson
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sorbara
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
 Young

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

It being 6:24 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

● (1825)

NATIONAL SICKLE CELL AWARENESS DAY

The House resumed from December 1, 2016, consideration of the motion that Bill S-211, An Act respecting National Sickle Cell Awareness Day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure tonight to speak to Bill S-211, an act respecting national sickle cell awareness day.

The United Nations, the African Union, and the World Health Organization have all recognized sickle cell disease as a public health priority. They also all recognize June 19 of each year as World Sickle Cell Awareness Day. World Sickle Cell Awareness Day has been held on June 19 since 2008. That day was chosen to commemorate the day on which a resolution was officially adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. It recognizes sickle cell disease as a public health concern.

Quite honestly, until last September, I had heard about sickle cell disease but actually had no idea what it was or how serious it could be. I had the opportunity, though, to meet with members of the Sickle Cell Association of Canada, including my constituent in Saskatoon—Grasswood, Mr. Craig Eling. Craig has been a big help in preparing me for my remarks in the House today.

I would like to give some facts about this disease.

Sickle cell disease is the most common inherited blood-related disease. The World Health Organization, the WHO, estimates that up to 5% of the world's population are healthy carriers of the gene for sickle cell disease. It is most commonly found in people from sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Mediterranean countries, and parts of India.

People get one gene from each of their parents. A person with one gene for sickle cell disease is known as a carrier, also known as sickle cell trait. Individuals live normal lives and are very rarely affected by their single gene, but here is where it becomes complicated. A person with two genes has sickle cell disease, also known as sickle-cell anemia, and their lives are greatly impacted by this condition.

Sickle cell disease results in the production of abnormal red blood cells, which are shaped like a crescent moon or the letter "C." Normal red blood cells look like a doughnut without the hole. Sickle shaped blood cells like to get stuck because of the points on either end of the crescent moon shape, which causes many of the issues associated with the disease. The most common place they get stuck is in the organ that cleans the blood. That, of course, is the spleen. Because they get stuck in the spleen, it withers away by the time a child with sickle cell disease is about five years old. Although people

Private Members' Business

can live without their spleens, they are more at risk of certain types of blood-borne bacterial infections.

As soon as children are diagnosed with sickle cell disease, some as early as birth, they are put on daily antibiotics to prevent an infection. At an appropriate age, they will receive extra immunizations. This also means that the presence of a fever in a person with sickle cell disease could indicate a bacterial infection and such situations are considered a medical emergency that requires prompt treatment with antibiotics and sometimes even hospitalization.

A normal red blood cell lives in the body for about 120 days, while sickle cells live for about 10 to 20 days. The body is constantly destroying the sickle cells and working to produce fresh red blood cells. This can lead to chronic anemia, where the blood is unable to carry enough oxygen to all parts of the body. The common effects of chronic anemia are ongoing tiredness, pale skin, weakness, and delayed growth in development in children.

A crisis occurs when enough crescent moon shaped sickle cells jam up in a blood vessel, causing a disruption of normal blood flow. The body tissues downstream of the blockage lose oxygen and begin to die, which causes, in some cases, severe pain.

● (1830)

If not promptly treated, the loss of oxygen can lead to permanent damage to affected areas. The most serious and really the most relatively common outcome of sickle cell disease is a stroke. This can occur in children as young as two years old.

To prevent crisis, people with sickle cell disease must stay well hydrated and avoid rapid temperature changes. Children often cannot play outside in winter. They are also asked to avoid intensive exercise, eat a balanced diet, stay well rested, and avoid smoking.

They are required to take a special medication every day to decrease the number of sickle cells the bone marrow produces and avoid crises. The only cure for sickle cell disease is a bone marrow transplant, which, by the way, does not occur very often because of a lack of an appropriate donor. Even though we have a bone marrow registry connected to worldwide donors, the best chances of an acceptable match would actually be a person's siblings.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to interrupt the hon. member for just a moment. I do not mean to throw him off. There is quite a bit of talking going on and I am having a hard time hearing this very interesting speech. I am hoping that everyone will listen, and hopefully take as much interest as I have in it. I will let the hon. member continue.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, I have this booming voice and usually everybody listens. I guess I will tone it down for the rest of this speech.

Private Members' Business

Some people with very severe sickle cell disease require frequent blood transfusions every three to six weeks. This procedure uses a machine that separates and discards the patient's own red blood cells, while transfusing the non-sickle donor blood into the person. Because they are receiving so much donor blood on a frequent schedule, they require blood that is phenotypically similar to their own blood. This means a person with African heritage requires blood donated from a person with the same heritage. Thus, finding an appropriate donor is often an issue in Canada, although it is improving.

Once patients are started on scheduled blood transfusions, they also have to start medications to decrease the amount of iron that builds up in their body, which is a side effect of frequent transfusions. This treatment, as we all know, is very expensive, and often starts with a pump that releases the medication slowly into people through needles in their abdomens. Unfortunately, they are required to have the pump running, sometimes from eight to 24 hours a day.

One of the biggest challenges for managing sickle cell disease is when a person in crisis or with a fever sees a health care practitioner who is not familiar with the disease. Any delay in treatment can be life-threatening and, unfortunately, often is.

I have learned that in Saskatchewan we do not track the number of people with sickle cell trait, although in the last year the pediatric hematology met 14 new children in our province of Saskatchewan with carrier status. They now follow 17 children living in Saskatchewan, and many in my riding of Saskatoon—Grasswood, with the full sickle cell disease, a population, I might add, that has increased by 30% in the last nine months.

In Saskatchewan, sickle cell disease is primarily found in people who have immigrated to Canada or are first-generation Canadians. Many of the new Canadians are actually unaware of their sickle cell status, until arriving in Canada and taking their child into a hospital with a crisis. This ultimately leads to a diagnosis of sickle cell disease for the person in crisis and a diagnosis of sickle cell trait for the rest of the family, even though the family is from a country with high levels of sickle cell disease.

We have many volunteers in my city of Saskatoon. In fact, they are arranging a blood drive targeting people with African, Caribbean, East Indian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean heritage. That will take place this March. We will have a big donate blood awareness.

The Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada is planning to begin advocating for expanded newborn screening in my province of Saskatchewan, which would include testing for sickle-cell anemia. Remember, as the number of people with sickle cell trait increases in Canada, there is more risk of children being born with sickle cell disease.

As I see it, there are three important things we can do to combat this disease. First and foremost, we all agree we can devote more resources to research and finding a cure. We can raise awareness, like we have tonight, through Bill S-211. Last, we can encourage all regular blood donations in our communities.

● (1835)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank my friend from Saskatoon—Grasswood for taking away 90% of my speech, but a very eloquent outline of the issues with respect to sickle cell, and I thank him for that.

Let me begin as always by acknowledging that we are gathered here on the unceded lands of the Algonquin people.

I want to thank Senator Jane Cordy from Nova Scotia for passing Bill S-211, an act respecting National Sickle Cell Awareness Day in the Senate. Her hard work over the years on this issue came to light with the passage of this bill in the Senate. I certainly want to thank my good friend from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for sponsoring it in our House and for his great advocacy on this issue.

Before I entered politics, my understanding of sickle cell was very limited. I must admit that it was on a tour during Black History Month two years ago, with my good friend from Bourassa, of a local community health centre called Taibu that I found out about sickle cell disease. Taibu Community Health Centre is the first and only black focused health care centre in North America, and I would say in the Americas.

I learned that many young people face an uncertain future due to bouts of pain that limit them from reaching their full potential.

There are systemic challenges in accessing medical services and government programs, due to a lack of understanding of the disease. For example, for CPP disability, accessing disability tax credits and those types of facilities that are available to those who have long-term conditions are often unavailable to those suffering from sickle cell disease.

There is a lack of support for family members caring for their loved ones, and the disease disproportionately affects members of the African Canadian community, as my good friend from Saskatoon—Grasswood said. The lack of awareness about the disease often results in individuals being underserved by our health care system as a whole, including in the areas of research.

The fact that treatment and knowledge of the disease vary from province to province, and even from hospital to hospital in a particular region compounds the problem. It is one of the most common genetic diseases in Canada and one that has serious effects upon the lives of those suffering from it. Currently, people with sickle cell disease live with life expectancies as much as 30 years lower than the general population.

Private Members' Business

Let us look at the disease. Sickle-cell anemia is caused by a mutation in the gene that makes an individual's body produce hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is the component in red blood cells that allows them to carry oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. In people with sickle-cell anemia, the abnormal hemoglobin causes red blood cells to become rigid and sickle shaped due to a hardening of the irregular hemoglobin into long rods. Individuals who are sickle cell carriers have only one sickle gene and do not usually experience serious symptoms. However, as carriers of the disease, they are able to pass it on to their children if their partners have the disease or are also carriers.

The symptoms of sickle cell effects are as follows. Sickle cell disease affects each person differently and can manifest in many ways. For example, it may damage the spleen, cause bouts of pain, delay growth in children and adolescents, damage vision.

Around 10% of children with sickle cell disease have suffered strokes, and one in four adults have suffered strokes. It can cause life-threatening chest conditions, high blood pressure, blocked blood flow to kidneys and liver, open sores on patients' legs, gallstones, and priapism among men.

Treatment is often quite complicated. It can be treated in two ways, one by pain management, or through blood transfusions. Unfortunately, both methods of treatment are not without side effects.

I want to share a very personal story, one that involves a very dear friend of mine. My friend and her partner both have the sickle cell trait and therefore are carriers of the disease. Their first child was born in 2005, and at that time there was no mandatory pre-screening process for sickle cell disease in Ontario hospitals. It was not until a few months after his birth that they discovered that he was a carrier.

• (1840)

By the time their second child was born, the process had changed significantly in Ontario. My friend and her partner received genetic counselling, and the process of testing children after birth had become standard in Ontario, as it would in Saskatchewan as well.

This test performed shortly after their second son's birth revealed that he had inherited the sickle cell trait from both parents and thus had sickle cell disease. Early detection provided my friend with the tools and counselling necessary to take control of the situation and ensure that their son receives the care he needs. However, today only six out of 10 provinces require early detection for sickle cell disease.

Today my friend's second son is a relatively healthy boy, and the treatment he has had since his first acute chest crisis, at age one, hydroxyurea and daily amoxicillin, as prophylaxis, have kept most of his symptoms at bay. Despite the young boy faring well for someone with sickle-cell anemia, my friend and her family have nevertheless spent countless nights in the hospital and even more time taking him from doctor to doctor. Due to the seriousness of sickle cell disease, every fever must be treated as an emergency, and any sign of pain is frightening.

My friend is relatively lucky. Her family is a middle-income family. Her mother is happy to look after her son, so she does not have to worry about him during the day as she works. She has a flexible work environment that allows her to take time off when

necessary. While my friend can effectively navigate the health care system because of her advocacy skills, this is not available to most people, particularly those from racialized communities.

On a broader level, sickle cell disease has not been given the level of attention it deserves due to the fact that it primarily affects particular communities. These communities, in particular the black community, often face more than one level of discrimination.

In Canada, second-generation black Canadians face lower wages and almost twice the unemployment rate when compared to other Canadians. This economic disparity makes it more difficult to raise awareness about sickle cell disease inside and outside the health care system, as many people in the sickle cell community are not traditional power brokers in Canada.

If a parent of a child with sickle cell disease were working a minimum wage job, it would be virtually impossible for that person to take time off work to care for a sick child and be able to pay the bills. Attending every shift might make the difference in affording the necessary medication or healthy food that people with sickle-cell anemia need to remain healthy. In fact, in these situations, having a sick child can result in parents not being able to hold down a job.

The lack of awareness about sickle cell disease only exacerbates the problem. Employers who do not understand the disease might also not be as accommodating when staff members must take time off to care for a relative or because of their own pain crises.

One of the major reasons people with sickle cell disease are being underserved by the health care system is a lack of awareness. This is a disease that individuals can die from if not treated appropriately.

Last month was a very difficult month. I saw first-hand the effects of sickle cell disease. I was able to attend a memorial for Kesten Petgrave, who was a client of the TAIBU Community Health Centre. Kesten died on January 7, on his birthday, due to complications associated with sickle cell disease. Kesten was actively involved in advocating for those who live with sickle cell disease through various groups and organizations. He mentored children and youth who attended Camp Jumoke and was active with the sickle cell support group at TAIBU. He was talented and expressed himself through various forms of art, including music. This is the real face of sickle cell disease.

Declaring June 19 national sickle cell awareness day will serve as an annual reminder of the suffering people go through.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the individual victims and their families and all the organizations that have worked so hard on this issue over the years. In particular, I want to call out the TAIBU Community Health Centre, the Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario, the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada, the Sickle Cell Association of Ontario, the Black Health Alliance, and Camp Jumoke for the great work they have undertaken over the years.

Government Orders

•(1845)

If more Canadians were aware of the repercussions and the effects on individuals and families, we would be much more inclined to put research dollars and additional support toward those who need the help.

I want to thank the Senator, as well as my friend, as well as all those who have spoken in support. I ask the House to support the motion unanimously so that June 19 can be declared sickle cell awareness day.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to speak to Bill S-211, an act respecting national sickle cell awareness day. Senator Jane Cordy, from my riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, has worked tirelessly on this important bill, and I commend her for the hard work she has put in to see the bill to fruition. I understand that there is a rumour that she may be nearby.

Bill S-211 has been unanimously supported, without amendment, in the Senate and thus far throughout this House. I would like to thank the many members who have spoken on sickle cell in the House during the process.

Let us recap. Sickle cell predominantly affects those with diverse ethnic backgrounds, including African, Caribbean, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, South American, and South Asian. It is a hereditary genetic disease that features abnormal hemoglobin. The abnormality causes crescent-shaped red blood cells, which have a shortened life span. They clog blood vessels and starve the body's ability to deliver oxygen to its organs.

This disease is debilitating. Sufferers experience extreme pain, are often bedridden, and have reduced life expectancies. Those with sickle cell routinely have 10 to 20 blood transfusions a month. This disease does not have a cure, and over 5,000 Canadians are living with the disease every day.

There is a serious lack of awareness of sickle cell, and as I mentioned, sickle-cell anemia disproportionately affects minorities. Just this week, I met with members of the Black Health Alliance, who told me that Canada lacks nationwide race-specific data and that diseases affecting minorities are often not as researched as others. I firmly believe that a bill like Bill S-211, which promotes awareness and gets people talking, will help this important cause.

Sickle cell disease affects almost 100 million people worldwide, yet many members and constituents have come up to me since I sponsored the bill and let me know that they had no idea what sickle cell disease was.

Sickle cell is the most common genetic disease in the world, and the lack of awareness is astonishing. Many Canadians are currently unaware that they are living with the sickle cell trait, meaning that they are hereditary carriers of the disease. Greater awareness and consistent newborn screening in all provinces and territories would help. The Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada is currently advocating for a national newborn screening program, which would also help identify carriers of this trait.

Some unknowing sickle cell sufferers have been dismissed as would-be patients looking for pain killers. When left untreated, sickle cell disease is often fatal.

June 19 has been recognized as World Sickle Cell Day since 2008. By joining me in passing Bill S-211, we can increase public knowledge and bring awareness to the struggle sickle cell disease sufferers live with every day. Better awareness leads to better research and understanding, and better research will lead to more compassion and better health care for those with sickle cell disease.

I ask all members of the House to join me in supporting Bill S-211 to establish June 19 as national sickle cell awareness day.

•(1850)

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 (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, February 15, 2017, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, February 2, the House shall now resolve itself into committee of the whole to consider Motion No. 11 under government business.

[*English*]

I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

JOB LOSSES IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 11, Mr. Anthony Rota in the chair)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Before we begin this evening's debate, I would like to remind hon. members of how the proceedings will unfold. Each member speaking will be allotted 10 minutes for debate followed by 10 minutes for questions and comments.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Members may divide their time with another member. The debate will end after four hours or when no member rises to speak. Pursuant to the order made on Thursday, February 2, the Chair will receive no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent.

[*English*]

We will now begin tonight's take note debate.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That the House take note of the job losses in the energy sector.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar for initiating this important debate. No member from any party can be indifferent to the effect that lower oil prices have had on Albertans.

[*English*]

As a government, we know the challenges workers and their families in the energy sector have faced over the last three years. While there are some encouraging signs, such as higher commodity prices, increasing investment in the energy industry, and President Trump's endorsement of the Keystone pipeline, there are more steps to be taken before these developments translate into more jobs.

This does not just affect Alberta. As the hon. member knows, the slowdown in the oil patch has rippled across the country, affecting workers from British Columbia to Newfoundland and Labrador. When Alberta's energy industry is hurting, the entire country feels the pain. Our government understands how vital the Alberta energy industry is not only to the people and the economy of Alberta but to all of Canada. That is why we have focused on creating the conditions that will lead to good, middle-class energy jobs. One of our government's key responsibilities is to help get Canadian resources to market. With our major customer, the United States, producing more and more of its own energy, it is essential that Canada build the infrastructure to get our oil and gas to new global markets. We are acting, doing more in one year than the previous government did in a decade: protecting our oceans, pricing carbon pollution, and putting middle-class Canadians back to work by approving the pipelines we need to reach those new markets. That is the best way to ensure jobs and opportunities in the energy industry right across the country.

When we came to office just over a year ago, we were faced with a loss of confidence among Canadians. They had lost trust in the way major energy projects were assessed, and they knew that engagement with indigenous communities was not just a platitude but a must-do if we were to approve new major projects. More broadly, Canadians expect their government to take the environment seriously and regain our reputation as a conscientious player on the world stage.

In our first budget, we invested in the people of Alberta and their future by providing millions of dollars to build infrastructure, promote clean energy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the oil and gas sector. Our government also brought certainty to projects already under review through an interim strategy that included more extensive public consultations, meaningful indigenous engagement, and broader environmental criteria. The next step is to modernize the

National Energy Board to ensure that Canada's regulator serves the needs of Canadians into the future.

All of these initiatives, rebuilding trust, re-engaging with indigenous Canadians, and revamping the regulatory process, are being carried out with a single goal in mind: to create the conditions that will allow us to get Canada's resources to market sustainably and ensure good long-term jobs in the energy sector.

In the midst of these efforts, global commodity prices collapsed and we took immediate steps to help those most affected in the west, the north, and in Newfoundland and Labrador. Our government extended employment insurance benefits by five weeks, up to a maximum of 50 weeks for those who were eligible. Next we provided an additional 20 weeks of EI regular benefits to long-tenured workers in key areas, up to a maximum of 70 weeks. While focusing on the hardest-hit regions was essential, it was not enough, so we improved the EI program across Canada, extending the maximum duration of EI work-sharing agreements from 38 weeks to 76 weeks to help employers retain skilled employees and avoid the costs of recruiting and training new employees once business returns to normal levels.

● (1855)

Our first budget was widely praised for being progressive and helping Canadians. That is the record of this government. That is how a caring government responds when its people are hit by unforeseen events, like a drop in world oil prices.

Even as we provided immediate support, we also kept our eye on the bigger picture: the need to get job-creating infrastructure built. In just over a year since forming government we have been able to do what the previous government could not get done in a decade. We have approved the infrastructure projects that will create tens of thousands of jobs for Canadians, many of them in Alberta: the Arnaud apatite mine, 910 jobs; the Woodfibre LNG project, 700 jobs; the Black Point granite quarry project, 100 jobs; the Pacific NorthWest LNG project, 4,800 jobs; the NOVA Gas pipeline, 3,000 jobs; the Line 3 pipeline replacement, 7,000 jobs; and the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, 15,440 jobs.

Government Orders

These projects mean 30,000 jobs and more than \$26 billion will be injected into Canada's economy. That is delivering for Canadians in the energy sector. That is laying the foundation for good, long-term, sustainable jobs, jobs that one can raise a family on and plan a future around. After a decade of idle talk and empty promises, our government is making real progress.

As Premier Notley put it so well on the day we announced the approval of two major pipeline projects:

It has been a long, dark night for the people of Alberta.... Today, we are finally seeing some morning light.... We're getting a chance to sell to China and other new markets at better prices. We're getting a chance to reduce our dependence on one market, and therefore to be more economically independent. And we're getting a chance to pick ourselves up and move forward again.

The approach of our government from day one has been forward looking to not only the jobs and opportunities of tomorrow, but also to ensuring support for workers affected today by events beyond their control. That is why we provided enhanced EI benefits when and where they were needed most. It is why we have worked so hard to restore confidence in how major resource projects are assessed, including re-establishing a nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous communities. It is why we are investing in clean technologies, the job generators of today and tomorrow.

● (1900)

[Translation]

Workers in the energy sector in Alberta and across Canada know that they have a champion in Ottawa.

[English]

It is an ally that will not run when the tough times hit, a champion that will work to ensure a future of jobs and opportunities for all Canadians from coast to coast for generations to come.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Chair, the people who have just listened to the minister could be forgiven if they thought we were having this take-note debate because things have never been better for energy workers. Quite frankly, I found it insulting. We are here to talk about job losses in the energy sector and what we can do about it, and all we heard was a self-congratulatory pat on the back from the minister about what the government has done. All the Liberals have done is issue press releases using the processes that the Conservative Party put in place when we were in government.

I want to ask a question about the change that has happened as a result of the U.S. election. While President Trump is certainly unpredictable, we do know a few things. One is that he will not increase regulations on the energy sector. He said very clearly that he is looking to cut regulations on that sector. He also said that he will not be bringing in a national carbon tax that kills jobs.

I would ask the minister, given that our closest competitor is not bringing in a job-killing carbon tax and is reducing regulations, how will his policies do anything but kill more jobs in the energy sector?

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Chair, I want to start by thanking the member for Chilliwack—Hope for accompanying us to Mexico City last week. There was a delegation of 37 business leaders and four indigenous leaders, so that we could engage in a constructive

dialogue with our Mexican friends on energy and on mine development. His participation was productive, and I welcomed it.

The member knows that we are all adjusting to the new administration, and a very productive use of our time is to expand our network, to deepen our contacts, to talk to congressional leaders, to those who will be serving. We all know that Governor Perry has not yet been confirmed as the American cabinet secretary, but as soon as he is, we will be requesting a meeting, and I am confident that will happen at an early moment.

We believe that the key to a relationship with the future administration is to find those areas of convergence where the American interest and the Canadian interest can be aligned. We think that energy is one place where that is possible and even likely. We were encouraged by one of the first executive orders of President Trump, giving his approval of the Keystone XL project, which we have supported all along. We will watch that very carefully.

We also understand that competitiveness is very important. We know that there are literally trillions of dollars of international investment looking for a place to land on renewable sources of energy, on clean technology. We want to position Canada to be a leader to attract that investment, because the objective is to use the energy we have today to finance the transition to tomorrow.

● (1905)

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the minister for painting such a rosy picture, but reality is different.

People are losing their homes. Families are living in cars. I had a chance to meet a family, a young father and mother with a young child, who are living in a car and couch surfing. They go to Alberta Works, and there is no help.

When the minister is saying the government is creating all these jobs, what is it going to do for the people who are suffering right now? What do we tell these people? The government is not helping them. People go for help, and they are refused.

What is the federal government going to do to help the people who are suffering at this moment? We are seeing billions of dollars going outside of our country to help other countries, but we have people who are homeless and not one penny, not one commitment is coming from our federal government.

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Chair, we are not trying to distort the reality nor diminish the suffering being felt by Alberta families. Alberta families are not alone in their suffering because of this downturn in commodity prices in the energy sector. We know there are families in Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, and elsewhere that are dependent on a vibrant economy in Alberta.

Government Orders

I do not think it is fair for the member to say that the Government of Canada either does not care or has done nothing. That does not give any appreciation at all to all of the measures that I outlined in my speech. It comes, not because anyone is demanding that the government do it, but because we believe it is the right thing to do. When a region of Canada suffers, the rest of the country responds. Canadians have a responsibility to look after each other.

The record is clear on what we have been able to accomplish. The long-term strategy and the transformation of the energy sector is also a part of this government's policy. We are proud of those 30,000 jobs that will be created by these approvals.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Chair, I know we are having a Kinder Morgan love-in here, but let me express a position from a different province. British Columbia feels absolutely betrayed by how the minister and his government said they would review the whole pipeline review process, but then the Liberals broke their word. Throughout the election campaign, they said they were going to review the process and allow British Columbians to have a say. Then, of course, they break their word and ram this thing through.

The minister had the audacity to say that he would bring in the army to force this pipeline through—

Hon. Jim Carr: I did not say—

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: You said it. Absolutely.

I think British Columbians feel betrayed about this. The minister gets up and talks about 15,000 jobs, which he knows will be filled by temporary foreign workers, when the company's own website says it is only 90 full-time jobs.

The company will make \$2 billion a year off this pipeline, and we are getting nothing. You shut British Columbians out. I think you should apologize.

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Chair, we all know that major energy infrastructure decisions are controversial. They are controversial among regions and they are also controversial within political parties. The member will know that I quoted at some length Premier Notley of Alberta, who applauded the decisions of the Government of Canada.

I also know that I have had many meetings with union leaders and members of trade unions who understand that these energy infrastructure projects will create good jobs for their families. I have to say I am a little surprised that the member, who would have excellent connections with both the Government of Alberta and union leaders and members, does not understand that there is another side to the story he is telling.

• (1910)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Chair, could my colleague provide further comment when he indicated that when one part of the country is an area of need, the other parts of the country respond. We saw that in the fire in Alberta where all Canadians recognized what was taking place. The member across the way asked a question about caring. I believe we have seen a very strong indication of that caring attitude from the government.

The minister made reference to employment insurance and how this government moved so quickly on that front, but I also wanted to highlight the child benefit program, which helped a great number of Albertans. There are other initiatives that may be not as direct, but indirectly also helped Albertans and all people in the prairies.

We all care about what is happening in the prairies, particularly Alberta with regard to oil prices and the issues it has had to overcome. Could my colleague add a few more thoughts about coming together in support of provinces when they need it?

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Chair, I toured the devastation at Fort McMurray with colleagues and with others. I could not believe the ravages of this uncontrollable fire. What struck me most was the randomness of the devastation. We were touring through neighbourhoods, some that had not survived at all, and some that had survived almost one house randomly at a time.

The Government of Canada reacted swiftly and I think appropriately, as did Canadians. The outpouring of affection for Albertans and genuine concern about the devastation of the fire was probably the best example I can think of, of how Canadians came together when Alberta needed the rest of the country in ways that were impactful and meaningful.

Remarkably, because of the resilience of the people of Alberta and even the resilience of the human spirit, miraculously that community is on its feet again. I will never forget what I saw with my own eyes and how the community moved so impressively to put things right.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Before we continue, I know we do not have take-note debates too often, but I want to remind the hon. members that their questions and comments still have to be made through the Chair, not directly across. Just to add on to that, if someone is speaking, regardless of which side they are on, it is good to wait your turn and you will be recognized rather than shouting it across while that person is speaking. It just makes it easier for all of us.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Chair, I would like to split my time with the hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

For everybody who is tuning in tonight, particularly those in Alberta, I want to start by apologizing on behalf of all parliamentarians for what they just witnessed on the other side of the House. That was a display of their Liberal government in action, out of touch. It was sad to watch, sitting here. Instead of singing platitudes of what the government has done and what it hopes to accomplish, I would like to start my speech by reading a few of the messages that I have received over the last little while from constituents.

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First, “We are struggling to make ends meet on my income alone, and it is very hard. After our bills are paid, we have \$10 a month to pay for food, gas money to get me to work, clothing, school payments for field trips, etc. Needless to say, we are going further into debt each month with no end in sight. We need help if we are to keep a roof over our head and food in our bellies.”

Another quote, “Unemployed since May 2016, unable to find work with my related degree and experience. I have a bachelor of science in biology and numerous certificates.” Another quote, “I can’t afford my mortgage. I feel depressed and forgotten.” Last, “Never in my life have I been without a job for this long. I’m simply sad.”

That is why we are having this debate tonight, not to congratulate the government on initiatives it thinks are important, not to talk about the child care benefit that the Liberals think is important. It is about these people in Alberta who are struggling, these people in Alberta who cannot afford to make their next mortgage payment.

My colleagues and I from Alberta have risen many times in this place to ask the government, to plead with the government, for some type of support. Each time in question period, we get told the same things: “We approved more pipelines than you guys on that side of the House”. I can say that is not what Albertans want to hear. The minister said he has been to Alberta. Well I invite him to come back because wherever he is going, he is not hearing the same things that we are hearing in our constituency offices.

To make matters worse, we have the Prime Minister. The first comment he made in an interview where he told someone to simply hang in there, was a slap in the face to Albertans. That was something that resonated in Alberta. Is this honestly what the Prime Minister thinks we should do? Then it got worse. The Minister of Infrastructure and Communities then was asked on a radio show, “How do we get out of this crisis?” He simply said, with a chuckle, we will “get out of this difficult time together by holding hands with each other.” That is not what Albertans want to hear.

Last, the Prime Minister went on his cross-country tour. I encourage him to do that again and again because that gave us great stuff. However, the comment that he made about phasing out the oil sands takes us back to the 1970s and a prime minister back then saying very similar things, who happened to be his father. That is the sense that we get from the current government time and again.

We hear about the unemployment numbers in Calgary and Edmonton. They just keep going up. Apparently, construction jobs were supposed to counter this. That is where we lost most jobs in the province: 52,800, to be exact.

In my last few seconds, I want to tie this debate back to where it began. This is a jobs crisis. It is not a news story. It is not something that they can win political points off. It is a life for many Albertans back home, and that is why we are having this debate tonight.

● (1915)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I would like to respond to the member's speech, which was heartfelt and eloquent, by asking this question. Why does he not think that pipeline approvals are important to the workforce in Alberta?

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Chair, I do not believe I said pipelines are not vital to the workforce. They are incredibly vital.

It goes back to our early days here in Parliament where we encouraged the government at the other end to support the energy east pipeline, not to go and build it, but just show support for it. The signs that would have sent to the oil and gas industries and the natural resources sector would have been huge, but by voting that down and subsequently the actions that followed, there is zero confidence in the oil and gas sector.

If the minister feels that because two pipelines have been approved that is the answer to everything, it is not. We need more than just that. Those will not be built overnight. We need more and Albertans need more.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Chair, unfortunately we cannot drive through Red Deer or central Alberta without seeing abandoned office buildings, commercial real estate signs, and many of those who are in business have cut their staff drastically.

We have situations where there are notable increases in suicide, substance abuse, domestic abuse. These are the people's stories that I think have to be brought out. As we have expanded and talked to all members in our community, these are the things we are hearing.

Could the member please expand upon some of the solutions that we think can be done to help those individuals, and other stories that he has heard in his travels?

● (1920)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for his excellent synopsis of what is really happening in Alberta.

We have a provincial government that feels we are fighting against it. We have a federal government that feels we are fighting against it. Things like carbon taxes are not helping.

Back in 2016 the province lost a total of almost 53,000 jobs. That is 53,000 people. The sad part is, 35.6% of those losses were people aged 34 or younger. Those people will go on and find a job, whether it be in the U.S. or a different country, but they will not come back. We have lost them. They have moved on. We can give all the platitudes we want about the child care benefit, but it does not help them. At the end of the day, those are real stories from real Albertans, and that is why we are having this debate tonight.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, we know about the crisis in Alberta. We know that the crisis across Canada is rising unemployment, but surely, I can put the question to my colleagues.

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I am hearing from Albertans, including oil sands workers. They are fed up with the boom and bust oil economy.

I am saying this in all seriousness, I am hearing this from constituents. Is it not time that we stopped relying on the up and down price of oil and started to move to real investments, to a diversified economy, including a diversified energy economy?

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Chair, I am glad to welcome my colleague from the NDP to the debate. We share the same city. I am glad she has heard from Albertans. The counterpart in her constituency provincially happens to be the premier. I would suggest she has a significant amount of pull on that end.

However, it is funny. She raises the boom and bust cycle. She is essentially campaigning for a bust cycle with the way that New Democrats are running the province with the carbon tax and the minimum wage. We could go on about the provincial NDP, but again, this is about how we help Albertans and what that side of the House will do to help us.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Chair, I rise tonight as the member of Parliament for the people of Calgary Rocky Ridge. As a Calgarian and Albertan, I witnessed an economic catastrophe unfolding in my riding. These are my friends, my neighbours, my former business clients, my fellow Albertans who are suffering from the effects of a devastating economic downturn.

This January, I met with unemployed workers and employers as part of our jobs task force.

I heard from Gary, who has been out of work for two years. He has spoken with various headhunters who freely tell him that at his age, in his early fifties, it is unlikely that he will ever find work in his field again.

I heard from a man names James, a skilled worker, a mechanical engineer with 25 years of experience. He has a wife and children. He cannot even get entry-level work in the service industry or retail employment, because he is told over and over again that he is over qualified. This man just wants to work. If he cannot get work in his own field, he will take anything, but there is nothing available. James feels like a prisoner in his own home, since going out costs money. The only comfort I could give James was to tell him that he was not alone.

I heard from a senior executive who had to lay off 60% of his employees, 2,300 skilled workers, sending them into a recession with little hope of work in their field. He also had to cut the remaining salaries by up to 20% and cut their benefits.

I heard about an engineer who recently decamped to Detroit of all places. I mean, this is Alberta. We have people moving from Calgary to Detroit for jobs. When that happens, we know the world has been turned on its head.

I heard from an oil and gas entrepreneur who said that he has talked to international energy investors in London and New York. These are people who choose and decide where employment is going to be created. They make decisions on multi-billion dollar projects. These people now believe that the initials AB for Alberta stand for anywhere but.

I heard of businesses large and small fleeing Alberta, causing a commercial vacancy rate in excess of 22% in Calgary.

I heard from a small business owner whose sales and profits are down. His personal income taxes are up. He did not receive a promised small business tax reduction. His payroll deductions that he remits on behalf of his employees are going to also increase.

I heard from a mortgage broker whose clients recently graduated from university, took out mortgages, and wanted to start families in Calgary. These people now worry they have no hope for employment, and are beginning to take their families and their uncertain futures elsewhere.

I heard from professionals who have come to Calgary from all corners of the world for the employment opportunities that existed there. These people are now having to leave and look elsewhere in other oil-producing jurisdictions.

I heard from oil patch veterans who lived through Pierre Trudeau's national energy program in 1982, and these people say that today's situation is actually worse.

These Albertans joined me to discuss the causes of the jobs crisis, and to propose measures that the Government of Canada can take to help remedy the situation. One theme came up time and time again, stop making things worse.

Stop introducing carbon taxes, which make our energy sector less competitive and make everything more expensive. Stop using anti-industry and anti-energy rhetoric, such as talking about phasing-out one of the largest employers in the province. Stop increasing payroll taxes. Stop scaring away investors, and the jobs they create through mixed messages about phasing-out the oil sands. Stop playing politics with the National Energy Board.

Simply declare that the government has confidence in its rigorous processes, and that it will approve the pipelines that it approves. Stop driving Alberta jobs to Texas and the Dakotas, or even places like Nigeria, Venezuela, Madagascar, or the gulf states. Stop damaging other industries, like housing, by fiddling with mortgage rules. Stop cheerleading the Notley government's ruinous carbon tax policy.

The crash in oil prices was not caused by the current government, but if it wants to help, just please, stop making things worse.

• (1925)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to hear from the member across the way about what impact he thinks the accumulation of strategies and programs announced by the federal government have had on unemployed energy workers in Alberta.

Government Orders

Does he believe that the EI measures were helpful? Does he believe that the infrastructure investments have been helpful? Does he believe that the many visits to Alberta by myself and the entire cabinet, expressing the kinds of values that we are expressing here tonight, have been helpful and useful? Or, does the member simply think that everything that the Government of Canada has done or said means nothing?

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, as we are having this discussion, it is perhaps more important what the people I have met in my constituency had to say. While extending someone's EI by five weeks, it is cold comfort to Gary, James, or the people I met who have been unemployed for two years.

It means nothing to the small contract worker who is not eligible for employment insurance, who might have gone from working 40 hours a week to five hours a month. These people do not even show up in the statistics, yet these people are not making any money. They are not working, but they do not seem to count anywhere.

When I met with my constituents, I did not hear a whole lot of cheerleading from the people in my riding.

• (1930)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Chair, I was also fortunate enough to be born in Edmonton, and spent the first 25 years of my life there before moving to Vancouver, so I am very familiar with the importance of the energy sector in Alberta. In fact, I grew up within spitting distance of refinery row in Edmonton. One thing I learned from Peter Lougheed and others is the value of adding value to the product.

The Library of Parliament, a few years ago, did some research, and found that if we took \$10 billion of bitumen and refined that into refined oil, we would turn that into \$20 billion. If we take that refined oil, then process that into the upper level ethylenes, like kerosene, gasoline, naphtha, and aviation fuel, we turn that into \$30 billion. If we then take that, and use it as feedstock for a plastics and petrochemical industry, we turn it into \$40 billion.

Therefore, why would we ever want to support a pipeline that simply exports raw bitumen, so we send that bitumen to places like China and Asia for them to refine that very valuable product, and get the jobs and extra value that comes from refining? Why does his party support the export of raw bitumen, when that product should stay in our country to create jobs, and add extra value and billions of dollars to the Canadian economy?

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Chair, our party would also support the export of raw vegetables and not say, "Why can't we prepare a salad and ship that halfway across the world?"

The market will find a way to efficiently decide where products are built and how distribution channels will operate.

I do welcome the suggestion from those benches though, that they are pro-investment for upgrades. Perhaps they will get on board should a large project be proposed for Edmonton, or for his own riding, or for anywhere else. Perhaps they can support that large upgrade energy program, should it ever be proposed.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Chair, first of all I wish to inform you that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Edmonton Strathcona.

[*English*]

Mr. Chair, the subject tonight, and you gave it at the beginning, is to take note of job losses in the energy sector. In some of these debates, it has been easy to lose sight of that very simple fact. Anyone who has spent any time in Alberta over the past couple of years cannot have avoided taking note of the devastation that has been wrought on the economy in that province and on tens of thousands of families. That is why we are here tonight. We are here to take note of that, and one would hope come up with other than the pious platitudes of the Liberal government and start talking about solutions.

We talk about the immediate effect on those families. I have met some of those families, and there are members of my family who live in Calgary and who have been hard hit by this. There is a 25-year veteran of the oil patch, a senior geologist with two kids in university, so I know what it is like to see up close and personal someone losing his or her job after working so hard for so many years in that sector. That is why it is our obligation to start looking at this long-term, and see what those solutions can look like.

The first thing to point out is that the Liberals promised a great deal on employment insurance, but as we speak today, 6 out of 10 unemployed Canadians cannot access employment insurance. That is the current state in Canada. That has to change.

We also believe that we have to start working toward a sustainable economy. The Liberals talk a good game on that. We talk about losing trust in the Conservatives, but when they pushed through Kinder Morgan under the failed process of Stephen Harper without doing what they swore they would do, and when they said to the Dogwood Initiative that they would redo the process, they did not keep their word.

They pushed that through, and it is not going to get built because they have not respected their word and the people of British Columbia are going to stand up to Kinder Morgan. There is no way it is going to go through in its current form.

Let us be clear, the only way forward, the only way we can protect workers and families is to aggressively pursue the innovative diversified clean economy of the future, and leave the outmoded and unstable energy economy of the past behind.

Government Orders

I remember being in Alberta several years ago and reading a bumper sticker that made me smile, but I was trying to figure out the reference. The bumper sticker said, “God, if you give me another boom, I promise not to blow it this time”. I can understand when I go to Alberta and talk to people who are losing their homes, what it is to live in a boom and bust cycle, and I do not think of the people outside of Alberta, because it is primarily in Alberta that those job losses have occurred in the energy sector

Saskatchewan has had a hit as well, but I do not believe enough people in Canada understand the effect of that boom and bust cycle on families, and how many tens of thousands of families have been hard hit.

● (1935)

[*Translation*]

The current situation and the hardships faced by workers due to the collapse in oil prices around the world are the direct result of the failure of successive Liberal and Conservative governments to develop a diversified energy economy in Canada. It is the federal government's responsibility to take meaningful action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change.

[*English*]

Do not get me wrong, we understand that our natural resources are a blessing. Of course they are, and a lot of countries in the world are very jealous of the fact that we have access to so many resources, but the Paris accord was signed with one very clear purpose in mind, to make sure that Canada could contribute its share to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and its share of coming to grips with the reality of global warming.

Unfortunately, again, the Liberals have talked a good game, but they have not met the very specific criteria of section 4 of the Paris accord. There are two requirements in there. The most important being, that every time we talk about climate change in Canada, we have to have a plan to reduce and we do not have one.

We also have to have an economy-wide plan that puts us all on the same page in terms of reducing GHGs. We have not done any of that.

It is worth noting that Canada's market share of the global clean energy market dropped five points, and that is the most of any other of the 24 largest exporting countries. In fact, when it comes to clean energy exports, the Czech Republic now beats Canada. The lost opportunities cost Canada \$8.7 billion in 2013 alone, and we cannot repeat the mistakes that led us to this place.

Canada cannot be left behind in the energy economy of the past.

[*Translation*]

That is why we are calling upon the government to set its bland rhetoric aside and come up with a real plan for the future and for the sustainable development of Canada's energy sector.

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member's expression of values. Does he believe we should keep the oil in the ground? If his answer is we

know we have to move it for a while, would he rather move it by pipeline or rail?

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: The interesting thing about the Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Chair, is that he is an expert at setting up straw men, all the better to knock them down himself. What a spectacular false argument coming from someone in a party that always claims to understand that energy and the economy have to be taken care of at the same time. All we had to do is listen to what he just said. What a ridiculous false argument.

He talked before about the loss of trust in the previous government. It was the Liberals, and the Prime Minister, no one else, who promised British Columbia that none of these projects would go forward without a credible, thorough environmental assessment. They broke their promise to British Columbians and that is why Canadians do not trust them on anything to do with energy right now.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Chair, my riding of Yellowhead has not been affected as much as a lot of parts of Alberta, but some of the communities in my riding have. Two-thirds of the community of Grande Cache, a community of 4,500 people, have been without jobs for over two years. The communities of Hinton and Edson have been taking in residents from Grande Cache, assisting them in trying to find jobs. In fact, one chap worked for me for a couple of weeks until he could find some work. Yet the provincial government has not assisted them. Nor has the federal government.

Could the hon. member tell us where he sees roles for provincial and federal governments in these communities that are being devastated?

● (1940)

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague from Yellowhead for reminding everyone that the tragedy of the loss of jobs in Grande Cache has to do with the closing of a coal mine, first and foremost. However, it is another example that in the energy sector, because that is what it is, we have to have a long-term plan. We have to ensure we think of those families and communities, first and foremost.

One of the very few economic theories that is actually specific to Canada is the staples theory. It is a history that we have in our country of developing raw natural resources, exploiting them rapidly, and not thinking long term about developing them and adding the value here. I think the same thing is going to happen in the next few weeks when we look at the failure of the Liberals to deliver a plan for softwood lumber, and that is going to affect communities right across the country.

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It is a question of how we develop our natural resources, which we should remind ourselves are a blessing that a lot of countries in the world would give anything to have. We just have to remember that it is not enough to leave it up to the market in terms of sending things off raw and hoping things will work out for the best.

There was a challenge from one of my Conservative colleagues before, asking if we would stand and be in favour of refining, upgrading, and processing here. I am a former environment minister and have a good track record as an environmentalist. I stood and fought all I could to keep the Shell refinery in Montreal because I knew how much that meant in terms of value-added jobs.

Therefore, I am on the same page as the member when it comes to a long-term plan to ensure we have good jobs in the energy sector in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Chair, a lot of people are surprised when I tell them which province has the most wind farms in Canada. Most believe it is Quebec, but it is actually Alberta.

My colleague from Edmonton Strathcona spoke about the need to transition and diversify the economy.

Could the member for Outremont talk about current efforts to bring about this diversification? Also, does he see a future for Alberta as the Canadian leader in renewable energy?

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. It gives me the opportunity to remind the House of the wonderful opportunity afforded to Canada by the Paris agreement, which seeks to address the problem of global warming by reducing greenhouse gases.

We signed that agreement and, if we respect it, we will have the opportunity to create tens of thousands of good jobs in renewable energy. We have the universities, the expertise, the technical schools, the wind resources, and the knowledge of hydroelectricity to create clean energy and the economy of tomorrow. All that is available to us.

All it takes is a federal government that believes in it and that will begin to play an active, credible, long-term role.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, as members in this place have said, Statistics Canada has reported unemployment in Alberta the highest in 20 years. Approximately 12% of those between 15 and 24 years old are still looking for work.

The downturn has not just impacted workers in the fossil fuel sector, though. It is impacting communities reliant on those sectors. It is also impacting the renewable sector. The question that must be asked is this. How many more decades will we rely on a boom and bust economy until we finally implement an economic policy and the necessary measures for a more stable and sustainable future, not just for Alberta but for the whole country?

I hear this constantly from my constituents, including those working in the oil and gas sector. They are tired of this boom and bust economy. They raised this with me at the door in the last

election. They want their governments to invest in a more diversified economy, including a more diversified energy economy.

A starting point could be to finally pursue a broader approach to energy generation and use than energy from and jobs involved in fossil fuels. The Minister of Natural Resources told an energy forum this week that everyone knew what was going on, that we were in an energy transition, and that the agenda worldwide had changed dramatically. Why the narrow frame posed by the Liberals for tonight's debate?

As clearly expressed by the International Energy Agency, and surely no one in this place can disagree with it, as we belong to it and so do all the big energy producers, "We see clear winners for the next 25 years – natural gas but especially wind and solar...in practice, government policies will determine where we go from here."

The International Energy Agency advises that the way forward is government policies shifting significantly to support deployment of renewables and energy efficiency, coupled with the fact that the costs of both are declining. It says that the Paris agreement is a major step forward, but can only be achieved with policies that accelerate further low carbon technologies and support the next frontier for renewables. It agrees that investors need clarity and certainty from policy-makers, but government must not just maintain but heighten its commitment to achieve energy security and climate goals.

What is interesting is where the support is found in our country for this recommended shift in government investment. One example is iron and earth. This is an initiative by oil sands workers who are boilermakers, electricians, pipefitters, ironworkers, and labourers committed to incorporating more renewable energy projects into their work scope to ensure a more sustainable energy future for Canadians. Oil sands workers say their skills match well with those needed for the renewable and energy efficiency sectors, but they need federal investment to upscale the energy sector workforce, to expand manufacturing capacity for renewable energy, to support contractors and unions wishing to transition to the clean energy economy, and to integrate renewable technologies into existing energy projects.

The Government of Alberta, to its credit, is investing in pilot projects using geothermal for conventional oil and gas. A growing number of experts say the time may be right for geothermal to assume a higher profile, especially in oil-rich Alberta.

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It is also important to recognize that it is not just the oil and gas sector that is suffering. Media reports today say that the solar industry in Alberta alone cut its sales by 50% for residential installation. It is not because people do not want it. It is because the governments are dragging their heels on the incentives.

While provincial incentives are starting to roll out, where is the promised federal action to incent renewables? We need heightened action from the federal government. We all agree there must be a period of transition to ensure jobs for the future. The emphasis has to be jobs. Where is the federal just transition strategy?

The Conservatives budgeted for support for renewables and energy efficiency, then they cut that spending to cut their deficit. There is no appreciable increase in spending by the current government, but we have promises. Where have we heard that before?

The Liberals continue to fast-track energy projects absent genuine consideration to energy alternatives. The strongest commitment heard from the Liberals to date has been the call of the Minister of Natural Resources for a “gradual shift” to cleaner renewable energy. Canadians need more. We need, as the International Energy Agency said, heightened investment, heightened support, so we can have jobs for the future.

● (1945)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Chair, tens of millions of dollars are dedicated to exactly what the member wants: investment in renewable energy, incentives for the private sector, and innovation.

Very often people do not remember, or choose to forget, that it was innovation that found a way to extract fossil fuels from the oil sands in the first place. We have an awful lot of confidence in the entrepreneurship and the innovative capacity of Albertans and other entrepreneurs to do the same.

I would ask the member for some advice. How does she think the Government of Canada could better incent the private sector for renewable energy sources?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Chair, first, the government could start delivering the money that was promised. In the last budget, we had commitment after commitment, but gosh darn, when is that money going to flow? It may be starting in 2017. Where is the urgency?

As our colleagues from the Conservative Party say, we have so many people out of work, and not just in Alberta but across the country. Where is the sense of urgency?

We are a member of the International Energy Agency. We support the creation of jobs, supposedly. Let us deliver those resources. Let us have a just transition strategy. Let us start investing in our technical schools. We have five of those in Alberta. For heaven's sakes, there is a waiting list.

There is so much the federal government can do. Do not sit on the money; start delivering it.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Chair, I want to outline a few facts here.

First, when this side of the House was in government, the greenhouse gases produced in Canada were the lowest in our history. Second, right now we account for 2% of all of the GHG produced in the world. Third, we have the strictest environmental regulations when it comes to developing oil and gas.

My question for the hon. member is exactly this. Why is she so against the development of oil and gas and jobs?

● (1950)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Chair, I regret to say this, but I do not believe the member heard a single thing I had to say.

It is the actual oil field workers who are begging our governments to start investing in the new energy economy. Everybody knows the new energy economy is coming. They want to have a piece of the pie.

I did not say anything to demean the fossil fuel industry. I spoke about the support for the coming industry. As the minister has said, Albertans have shown they can use innovation to develop the oil sands. The geothermal industry and a lot of economists are now saying to use that same innovation and the same support to move into the new energy economy.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Chair, I would like to hear my colleague's comments in relation to value added and what we can really do with the fossil fuel industry if we take leadership as a country.

Several years ago, I had the chance to travel to Norway. It is a country that is deeply invested and deeply reliant on fossil fuel extraction. It has very firm policies in place to say that every bit of fossil fuel extracted will create maximum jobs, and will have maximum benefit for the economy. Its shipbuilding industry, refining, and transportation policies are all oriented around maximizing every piece of work that can happen from fossil fuel extraction. Its taxation of the resource was so committed that by the time I left Norway, it had a \$900 billion public pension fund set aside for diversification of the economy and investment into renewables.

The Norwegian experience from a social justice and environmental point of view is inspiring. I would like to hear my colleague's comments on how Canada might follow that lead.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Chair, as my former colleague raised, it has always been in the policy of the New Democrats to push for value added in all of our resource sectors.

Between my city and Red Deer is a major petrochemical industry. We need to support that. In the conference that the Minister of Natural Resources spoke at on Monday, we had representatives of that sector.

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However, to give a different perspective, value added is also appreciating the skills base that the workers in the fossil fuel industry have that they could apply to other sectors so we can have a continuation of well-paying jobs.

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

I have been a proud Albertan and Calgarian since 1970 and have lived through the boom and bust cycles of the energy industry.

Alberta's energy resource sector is a source of high-quality and well-paying jobs, not just for many Albertans but for many Canadians who come to our province to live and work. That means there are an estimated 190,000 direct Canadian jobs linked to the energy industry with countless other indirect jobs that depend on the industry. These are fellow Albertans and Canadians who face financial insecurity at the moment international oil prices drop.

We must remember that oil is an international commodity. When prices are high, Albertans and Canadians thrive but every time we see boom and bust it is the international nature of the market that has devastating consequences on the lives of everyday Albertans.

Our boom first began in 1973, causing prices to soar from \$3 to \$15 U.S. per barrel. The sector proved to be an excellent source of well-paying jobs but demonstrated to be very volatile. By the 1980s, the price of oil was well over \$30 U.S. a barrel. Again people flooded into our province to take advantage, again unemployment evaporated, again housing prices skyrocketed, and again everyone profited.

By 1982-1983, the Alberta energy sector again collapsed and everyday Albertans and Canadians suffered the consequences. Unemployment in Alberta rose from 4% to 10%. I invested in real estate during these good times but paid a heavy price like lots of other Albertans.

I am a certified welder and I also lost my job during that time. I could not afford to pay my bills and my family lost their home and everything. I worked as a taxi driver to keep food on the table. It took my family over a decade to recover.

In the early 2000s, the price of oil began to rise again and the cycle continued. Prices climbed from \$30 to \$150 U.S. a barrel in 2008. That year saw a 70% reduction in the price of oil and it returned to \$31 U.S. per barrel. After 2009, the prices began to rise again, but this was short-lived.

The energy sector crashed again in 2014. Alberta unemployment shot up to 10%, but this time our government provided Albertans with historical investments to help with the recovery. Our government increased time for employment insurance for Albertans, adding an extra 20 weeks for a total of 70 weeks to those who had never claimed employment insurance in the past. Our government has provided over \$250 million in stabilization funds, \$240 million in university research funding, and continues to invest in infrastructure with a total of 127 projects in Alberta worth over \$4.2 billion. There has been more funding invested in infrastructure in the last year compared to the previous five years combined. We approved two new pipelines, which will create an estimated 27,000

jobs in Alberta alone by ensuring we protect the environment while growing our economy.

Our government's investments and confidence in Alberta has led to a return of private capital investment in our province.

Wood Mackenzie estimates that oil and gas companies will be doubling new project developments in 2017.

Canada's oil rig count has more than doubled from 81 to 193 since early January. This is well above the 126 oil rigs that were active in Canada at the same time last year.

Alberta's GDP is expected to grow by 2.3% in 2017, due in large part to rising oil prices and production. The Conference Board of Canada recently outlined 2017 will see Alberta begin to recover. Oil prices averaged \$52 U.S. in January 2017, compared to \$31 U.S. in January 2016, with estimates this trend will continue.

These times have been tough on my fellow Albertans who work in the energy sector and their families, but our government is working for them. We have their back.

To my fellow Albertans and the party opposite, please work with us, do not be skeptical. Our government is working hard to create a more prosperous Alberta and a more prosperous Canada.

● (1955)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Chair, to whoever is writing the talking points on the other side in the lobby over there, the UCCB, EI, and the carbon tax are not what the debate is about tonight. It is about people who have lost their jobs. The hon. member on the other side of the House seems to have forgotten that, in saying EI is the answer to this. That is not the answer to this. The answer to this is to get Albertans back to work. They have completely forgotten that on the other side of the House.

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang: Mr. Chair, our government has been working with Albertans and Canadians to create those much-needed jobs. That is why the government approved the pipelines. We have been investing in innovation and technology. There is \$240 million going toward innovation and technology. Does the member know what got the oil out of the oil sands, to begin with? It was innovation and technology.

We are trying to diversify the economy by investing in clean energy, and that will create jobs. We want to have a mix of fossil fuel energy, solar, and wind energy so we can be a leader in the world economy.

● (2000)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Chair, one thing my colleague across the aisle and I have in common, both coming from resource-based communities in British Columbia, is that we certainly understand boom and bust economies. Port Alberni, my hometown right now, has an unemployment rate of 10%. I really sympathize with people in your community who are struggling to make ends meet as oil prices are low.

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Right now, there are ships loaded up with raw logs and the mills in our ridings cannot even afford to buy the wood, because that wood goes to market and is bought by overseas markets. We are failing people in our communities. Young people, in the last election, voted for real change. They wanted real change. They wanted to see us do it differently so that we are not in this boom and bust cycle. The government has failed to develop a clear policy to increase investment and deployment of alternative energy sources so that Canadians can get off this boom and bust cycle.

Last year, the government announced a clean energy innovation fund. Maybe the member could talk about what projects have been funded and when we are going to get moving on getting off this boom and bust cycle that we are on, so that young people can actually really have the real change that the government talked about.

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang: Mr. Chair, that is why the government has been investing money in innovation and technology. We have been investing money. It is not going to happen overnight. It is going to take time. Mr. Lougheed tried to diversify the economy. He bought Pacific Western Airlines and Telus and tried to diversify the economy. It is not going to happen overnight. He had some good projects.

We are working on diversifying the economy. That is why we approved the pipelines, so that we can take our dependency off the U.S. market, so that we can get the world price for our oil. We were not getting the world price for our oil because we were landlocked. Once those pipelines are built, we will be diversifying and selling our oil to other markets, and that will bring in—

Mr. Gord Johns: So in 20 years, we have another cycle.

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang: No, we are diversifying in renewable energy and investing in other projects. That is how we are diversifying the economy.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Chair, we have heard all of the wonderful things that the government has done for Alberta, but let us be very clear. It has approved two pipelines, not pipelines to be built but just expansions of existing pipelines that started under the previous Conservative government. The one pipeline that actually would have made a significant difference by giving us access to markets in the Asia Pacific is northern gateway.

The problem with this is that you have now caused a lot of uncertainty within the industry. You have made a political decision on northern gateway. You said, “I don't like this pipeline going through this area”. The cabinet and the Prime Minister made a decision to block that pipeline.

Therefore, investors and corporations are asking how they can possibly invest in Canada and Alberta if they do not have any clear path to approval. If the National Energy Board approves energy east, will you stand up and approve energy east or will you make a political decision and deny it?

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Before we go to the answer, I want to remind everyone tonight to speak through the Chair. The committee is one of these forums in which people tend to feel comfortable and at ease with each other. Members are not sitting in their own seats, they are feeling laid back, and they are talking across the floor. I am sure the hon. member for Foothills did not want me to

do all of that, but was talking to the hon. member. I just want to clarify that.

The hon. member Calgary Skyview.

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang: Mr. Chair, the irony of the member's question is that it was the previous Conservative government that approved the pipelines and could never get them built. You have been skeptical that we have not delivered. First, you were saying to approve the pipelines. Now we have approved them and now you are saying it will not get built. You are the ones who are creating this uncertainty in the province.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Before we go on to the next member, I just want to point out how it works when members say “you” and someone says “you” and “you”, it just builds up and before we know it there is shouting match across the floor. This is not very parliamentary, and we have a long evening ahead of us. I am sure we do not want it to turn into a shouting match.

Resuming debate, the hon. Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

● (2005)

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Chair, our government is very concerned for Albertans and all Canadians struggling as the result of low oil and other commodity prices.

The impact on workers and their families has been considerable with job losses occurring across the province. This is why we are taking action to create jobs and growth in Alberta and the rest of the country. As part of our plan, we are delivering support for workers and businesses, continuing to invest in innovation, and strengthening infrastructure for Albertans and for Canadians. Any job lost means that a family is struggling to make ends meet.

Our government is working hard to support unemployed Albertans and to ensure they find meaningful jobs and opportunities. We have extended employment insurance benefits by up to 20 weeks for all Albertans laid off. We have reduced the unpaid waiting period for benefits from two weeks to one week.

Our government is supporting Alberta's businesses as they adapt to changing economic conditions. The Business Development Bank of Canada has partnered with the Alberta Treasury Branch to make \$1 billion available for loans to small and medium-sized businesses in Alberta. This builds on the BDC's previous commitment of \$500 million toward new loans and advisory services to help businesses struggling with declining oil and gas prices. The program has an excellent uptake in Alberta. Between April and December of last year, the BDC issued 1,150 loans to Alberta's small businesses and authorized \$258 million to Alberta businesses.

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Last year, the Prime Minister announced the approval of three major pipeline projects that will add 25,000 new jobs, and many of these jobs will be created in Alberta. One of these pipelines, the \$6.8 billion Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain expansion project, recently received environmental approval from the Government of British Columbia and the company expects that construction could begin later this year.

We are also delivering on a strong innovation agenda that includes doubling our spending on clean energy, ensuring support for innovation ecosystems through post-secondary investments.

Our government is following through on our commitment to make historic investments in much needed infrastructure that will create well paying middle-class jobs. Our government has already approved 127 public infrastructure projects for a total combined investment of over \$4 billion across Alberta in the last year. That means more than \$1.1 billion toward 48 projects in Edmonton; more than \$2.7 billion toward nine projects in Calgary; over \$182 million for 35 projects in northern Alberta; and more than \$205 million for 36 projects in southern Alberta.

Major projects, such as Edmonton's Yellowhead Trail freeway upgrade, or Calgary's Southwest Ring Road, are moving forward as a result of these efforts.

These investments will create jobs, provide much needed upgrades to community infrastructure, and leave a lasting legacy in urban and rural communities across Alberta and the country.

Alberta has been a driver for the Canadian economy for many years and we recognize the tremendous economic challenges that Albertans are facing. We are working hard to support Alberta workers, families, and businesses that need our help in the short term, but our work is also helping lay the foundation for economic prosperity in the long term.

When Alberta workers, families, and businesses succeed, Canada succeeds.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Chair, I was going to speak specifically about the job losses, which is what this take-note debate is about, but because it is the infrastructure minister, I thought perhaps we could talk a bit about some infrastructure programs that would be no cost to the government, such as energy east.

We heard earlier from the leader of the NDP how he had championed the oil refining business in Montreal. The question is where that oil came from that was being refined in Montreal. Instead of using Saudi oil coming into eastern Canada, we could be using western Canadian oil and putting western Canadians back to work.

I am curious as to when there is going to be a major push to help energy east.

● (2010)

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Chair, our government understands the important role natural resources play in the growth of our economy throughout the country. That is why we approved three major pipeline projects, and those pipeline projects will create 25,000 jobs for Canadians, particularly for Albertans. There is a process in place that every government follows for the approval of those pipelines.

We are proud that we are delivering on the expectations of Canadians to get our resources to the international market. We have done more for Alberta's resources sector in the last year than the previous government did in 10 years combined.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Chair, one thing we people in British Columbia have in common with our sisters and brothers in Alberta is that we know boom-and-bust economies. Right now I know loggers in the forests who are working in raw logs. They do not want to see wood shipped out of our country without adding value. When I talk to oil workers in Alberta, they tell me that they do not want to see oil shipped out of the country without being refined and processed here in Canada. That is something we have in common, and they know we can do better. Actually, they are counting on us.

When the government ran on a platform of real change, that meant real action. Right now, what we need is to see real action.

The government talked about a clean energy innovation fund. It is time to spend that money so we can start investing in clean energy, in alternative energy, and end this cycle of boom-and-bust economies. The government needs to accelerate getting this money off the table and into these communities, especially in Alberta, so that we can get people back to work and can end this cycle of boom-and-bust economies.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Chair, we are proud of our relationship with the provincial government. Under the leadership of Premier Notley, the climate action plan implemented with her government is exactly what the hon. member is talking about.

Diversifying our economy and not relying on a single source, investing in new technology, investing in sustainable energy, transferring the carbon levy to low-income Albertans to offset the cost, and investing those resources in public transit and in technology is exactly what the Alberta government is doing. We are here to support the Alberta government through our investments in green infrastructure. We will be investing close to \$25 billion over the next 12 years to support those kinds of initiatives.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Chair, the minister has mentioned Alberta. I come from beautiful British Columbia, even though I spent eight years in Alberta.

I would like to ask the minister this question. How are his vision and the Liberal government's vision going to help British Columbia? I am sure there are many British Columbians listening to the speech now.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi: Mr. Chair, one of the biggest strengths of our country is our regional diversity geographically, culturally, and economically.

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We are focused on growing the economy throughout the country, whether it is Quebec's economy, British Columbia's economy, or Alberta's economy. We are Canadians. We stand with each other in times of need, and we also help people in times of need. We saw the generosity shown by Canadians to Albertans during the Fort McMurray fires and the support they have extended to Albertans to extend EI benefits to the hardest-hit regions in Alberta. That is our stand, and that is what we take pride in.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Edmonton West.

Before Christmas, I had a woman come into my office. I will not name her. She is a single mom. She is one of the many out-of-work engineers in Calgary. She could not afford day care, because she had been out of work for 18 months, so she brought her son into my office. She was not asking for millions of dollars of help. She said she just wanted to work. She said she wanted to help other women who are in her situation who have been laid off. What she did not say, but what I could see, was that her child had not had a new coat in two years, and she had not had a new coat in several years. Here was a woman who cannot afford to pay billions of dollars to lobbyists and cronies to get a bailout, like Bombardier did. She just wants to work. This government is nowhere for people like her.

The government is no better than it was in 1982, when the current Prime Minister's father gave the one-finger salute to protesters in Salmon Arm who dared challenge the fact that a Trudeau government did not give two rips about western Canada. Here we are today, but here is the difference.

● (2015)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I am sorry, which Trudeau were you referring to?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: The Prime Minister's father.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Thank you. I just wanted to clarify that.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Chair, here is the difference. Western Canada impacts the entire country now. Alberta energy sector workers stand in solidarity with workers who fly back and forth from the Maritimes, with steelworkers from across the country, and with people from British Columbia, because a strong Alberta means a strong Canada. We cannot be silenced anymore.

What has the government tried to do? It is very clever. It has done everything except actually call it the national energy plan 2. It put uncertainty into the regulatory process for approving major resource projects. It put a tax on everything, which will not reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Anytime we ask the government to show the demand assumptions on price elasticity, it cannot do that. It put a consumption tax on this.

The infrastructure minister, who just rose in debate, spent \$800,000 renovating his own office instead of doing anything in Alberta. As one of my colleagues behind me said, all the Liberals have done is manage to put together a jumble of buzz words. Why? It is because they are ideologically opposed to our part of the country. I say this not out of politics but out of reality. Every single one of my colleagues who sits behind me tonight knows that this is right. It is something that needs to be said.

The Prime Minister cannot say that he wants to phase out the energy sector and then say two weeks later that he misspoke. We cannot have ideological, non-fact-based opposition to one of Canada's major job-creating sectors, which we know can produce energy in one of the most ethical, effective, environmentally responsible ways in the entire world. We are a leader in that. That is one of our exports.

We have a Prime Minister and a caucus who just do not care. They are more interested in \$1,500 Rosedale cocktail soirees than about the woman who was in my office. They are more interested in anything other than the woman who was in my office and wants to work. They do not care. They have done nothing for the people in my riding.

This is what I ask of the government tonight. It is very simple. The Liberals stand here and waste time in Parliament for a week and a half in debate on changing the chief statistician council. They should give a rip about Alberta. They should stop ignoring the fact that we are part of this country, because at some point, we will not be quiet, and that starts tonight.

I will say to everyone who is watching that we are not putting up with this anymore. The talking points the government is putting forward are not cutting it. On behalf of every person who has written to every one of the people who are sitting behind me tonight, we are standing up for them and we are standing up against that.

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Chair, like the hon. member, I am also a proud Albertan. I have lived in Alberta for 34 years. I know people who have been laid off or who have taken a reduction in their hours of work and are struggling.

I would like to ask the member if she supports extending the Canada child benefits to struggling families. Does she support extended EI benefits for laid-off workers? Does she support our investments in innovation?

The Canada child benefit will lift 30,000 children out of poverty in Alberta, 30,000 children who are struggling today. This year they will be better off. Next year they will be better off compared to this year. Those are the investments we are making, because we understand that families are struggling.

● (2020)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Chair, I stand against that member spending \$800,000 on office renovations, when people are losing their homes. I stand against that member imposing a new tax on everything, when people cannot make ends meet. I stand against that member standing up in the House of Commons and refusing to support the energy east project. I stand against this member voting to raise CPP premiums at a time when people cannot make ends meet.

Government Orders

I stand up in this House, and I stand against this member, who claims that he knows Alberta but has done absolutely nothing to support our economy.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for her passionate speech. I know she cares about the people in her community, and so do we, so do British Columbians, her neighbours. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters who are struggling right now.

I am really disappointed that we are not having a conversation tonight about how we got here, how we did not protect communities, when we have downturns like this, by putting money aside, like Norway did, to buffer us from situations like this. What are we going to do now to get some money off the table from the government from its clean energy innovation fund?

What are we going to do in the future so we can diversify our economy properly and protect our children and our grandchildren from dealing with this conversation that we have been having for decades, and failing miserably?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Chair, the government does not create jobs. Industry creates jobs.

We need to ensure that we have a climate in which jobs can be created. The infrastructure minister just laughed at this point. Why did he laugh at it? Is it because his government put in place several taxes on everything, when the economy is struggling? He has destabilized the investment climate in the energy sector by complicating the regulatory process, which was already world class. He has failed to provide any sort of infrastructure, except for a new chair for himself.

If we want to have an economy that is not boom and bust, we need to have an economy that is attractive to investors. The political instability that has been put in place across Canada by governments like Premier Notley's and the Prime Minister's is not helping us.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Chair, the conditions in Medicine Hat are similar to how they are around the province. Our unemployment rate is at a five-year high, or higher. Our unemployment rate rose from 2.7% in December 2014 to 6.4% in 2016. Translating that, it sounds like just 3.7%, but it means that more than 6,000 people in our community lost their jobs in the last two years.

Can the hon. member explain to me and to this House how the Conservative Party's record on stimulating the economy and creating jobs helped people in my riding in Alberta?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Chair, this is not about statistics. This is about people.

In the dying seconds of my part of this debate, I want the government to understand that. This is not about \$1,500 fundraisers. This is about an entire province and community that has been demoralized, because spouses, teachers, wives, and husbands are out of work. Nobody is unaffected.

While we can quote unemployment rates and quote policy, at this point, the government needs to understand that Alberta is part of Canada, and without a strong Alberta, we do not have a strong Canada.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Chair, normally I start my speeches with how pleased I am to rise to address an issue, but I am not pleased with the circumstances that have me speaking today, which is the jobs crisis in Alberta. Our communities are suffering. Families are barely getting by. An entire generation of young people have no career prospects.

I am very fortunate in my riding to be invited to speak at schools. We play a mock parliament. I play the speaker and we divide the classes in half. Recently, I was at a school and asked the principal what we should debate and talk about. At this school, it was not Trump, marijuana, or Pokémon Go. The number one issue on the kids' minds was stress. It was the stress of not knowing if their parents were going to have a job the next day, where their moms' and dads' cars were, why they are not going on vacation, and why their families are breaking up. How old were these kids? They were in grade 7, and the number one issue on their minds was stress, caused by the economy.

It is disgraceful that nothing is getting done about this. In November 2016, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement bragged about all the federal money that is being poured into her home province of Newfoundland and Labrador. She said "We don't just want our fair share. We want more than our fair share."

In last year's budget, on infrastructure transit spending, Alberta was underfunded per capita by 14%. I have to ask, where is the fair share for Alberta? Why is the infrastructure minister not standing up, like the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, demanding an extra fair share for our province?

The very fact that we have to demand a take-note debate on this issue is proof enough there is a lack of leadership and a lack of concern for Canadians who live in a province that is not as friendly to Liberals as other provinces.

It leads me to ask where are the statements from ministers from Alberta pledging to stand up for their constituents? Where are the statements from the four Alberta Liberal MPs pledging that they will stand up for their constituents? They are nowhere. Where is the acknowledgement that there is even a crisis? Albertans have been shunned by the government, and the Liberal members' silence is deafening.

When the Prime Minister stated he wanted to phase out the oil sands, he was rightly and roundly criticized for such a blatantly inane remark, although I note the Alberta MPs did not join in the condemnation of this ridiculous statement.

Kevin Libin, writing for the *National Post*, noted the habits of the government to make decisions biased solely against Alberta. Libin asked, correctly, why Alberta's economy was the only one the Prime Minister was plotting to phase out. He continued by wondering when the phasing out of Ontario's vehicle manufacturing industry will begin. He stated:

Government Orders

While the Liberal government is clear it eventually wants Alberta out of the oil business, it says nothing about plans to shut down the other provinces' carbon-intensive industries, whether it is Ontario's auto and steel factories, Quebec's airplane makers—

—who we know just got a big bailout yesterday—
—or Saskatchewan's farmers...

He continued:

Alberta's been put on notice that its primary industry — one that catapulted the province out of the agrarian era and is now responsible for at least one-fifth of its economy and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs — is being planned out of existence.

The Prime Minister likes to pretend he does not play the politics of division in the country, but it is easy for struggling Albertans to be a little skeptical of the Prime Minister's intentions, and be cynical of his sincerity when he says he is here to help. Trust me, Albertans can do without this kind of help.

The people in my riding of Edmonton West are not faceless statistics. They are real people who have reached out to me with stories, and I would like to share a couple with the House today.

Kathy wrote to me, “My husband works for a large firm. They have and are continuing to lay off thousands. It is very scary living this way, thinking you may be the next to go. What a terrible way for a veteran and their family to have to live, wondering if they'll have a job at the end of the day.” This constituent has served our country, and the government cannot even bother to give him and his family a sense of hope for the future.

Ewan wrote to me to just say, “Fix it.”

I received a letter from a gentleman named Mohammed, who said, “We need to encourage business, not destroy it. We need to get pipelines built, not just approved.”

These are Canadians just like us. They want to work, support their families, and pay their bills. They are husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters. These are constituents who have been searching for a job for six months, 10 months, a year. They are unemployed and underemployed. They are losing hope, and the government refuses to act.

What can we do? The Liberals can stop demonizing our oil industry because they do not like it. They can start by stopping the assault on pocketbooks and commit to no new taxes. They can ensure that the transit infrastructure funding is fairly applied across the country, not just to those areas rich in Liberal votes. They can start standing up for all out-of-work Canadians, and not just the ones that vote their way.

• (2025)

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Chair, after 10 years of mismanagement by Conservative governments in Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador, and indeed here in Ottawa, it is nauseating to sit here listening to members on the other side say how demoralized they are at the economic situation in which we find ourselves. It is nauseating because the Conservatives had nine years to get their oil resources to market. They had nine years to put money aside in a rainy day fund. Instead, they decided to spend it on tax cuts for the wealthy, and no meaningful measures for innovation or diversifying our economy.

I think about all the wonderful things the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities has just said about how we are actually helping the people of Alberta, how we are helping the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, these are people whose children are in my kids' classes.

When I listen to members on the other side, my only question is, how can they say this to us tonight, and not just look in the mirror and give the same speech, and put the blame where it rightly belongs? This cognitive dissonance is nauseating.

• (2030)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Chair, I am waiting for the translation so I can hear if there was a question there.

The government across the way loves to talk. Earlier in question period today we heard a question from a colleague from the NDP about Jordan's principle. We have been talking about it for a year and nothing has been done. The Minister of Health stood up and said, “We have identified money for this. We have identified thousands of children that might be helped.” The Liberals are not actually helping them, but they have identified them.

It is all we hear from the government, that it has identified spending, that it has identified infrastructure. The Liberals have not actually done anything. All they do is talk about it. Announcements do not create jobs. Identifying does not create jobs.

My friend from Calgary Shepard often quotes a Yiddish proverb, but he is not speaking yet, so I want to say one: If his word was a bridge, I would be afraid to cross it. I would be afraid to cross any bridge that those guys talk about, because all it is is talk and there is no structure. There is nothing for Alberta or for jobs in Canada.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, what troubles me is this evening we have heard a number of speakers from the Conservative Party, and I have yet to hear a single proposal to address the unemployment or how to ensure that Canadians, including Albertans, are going to participate in the new energy economy.

It is not even just Canadians who are saying this, but the International Energy Agency. The International Energy Agency represents the big fossil fuel industry. It represents the major governments of the world.

Statistically, more than double the number of jobs are provided in installing solar energy, more than double in installing wind than even in natural gas. If this debate is about trying to create employment for Canadians, why is there no discussion whatsoever about diversifying our energy sector so that we can provide jobs for the future for our children and grandchildren?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Chair, that is a very rich comment coming from the member for Edmonton Strathcona who spends her time travelling through the U.S. lobbying against Alberta interests, Alberta jobs, and Alberta oil.

Government Orders

It is very difficult to explain in five minutes all the things that need to be fixed with the government, but we could start with lower taxes, no carbon tax, less regulation. We could get pipelines approved instead of destroying and turning down pipelines for political reasons, as was done with Northern Gateway. We could move forward on energy east.

I have to point out that when we had a supply day debate last year on energy east, all four Liberal members of Parliament from Alberta, every single one of them, voted against the motion supporting energy east.

There are a lot of things we can discuss to get going on to create jobs, and they have been discussed all night.

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Chair, our government is keenly aware of the situation in Alberta. I can assure members in this House that our government has approached the economic downturn in Alberta with nothing but concern, compassion, and a dedication to assist with the economic recovery.

The former government took our great province for granted for far too many years. That was a mistake, a mistake we will not repeat.

When hard times hit the province, the federal government was there, and we have worked closely with the province to respond to the needs of Albertans. We brought in EI reform. We made historic investments in infrastructure and flood mitigation. We stood with Fort McMurray during the largest wildfire evacuation in Alberta's history. We are making unprecedented investments in clean tech and the economy of tomorrow, not to mention that we approved three pipelines.

We will leverage the strength of that great province and strategically invest to ensure economic security and that Alberta's best days are yet to come.

Our employment insurance program has proven to be vital to see Albertans through the difficult time. Budget 2016 brought in a \$2.7-billion reform package of Canada's employment insurance program. We extended benefits up to 50 weeks for hurting Albertans. We reduced wait times for EI applicants from two weeks down to just one. We extended EI work-sharing agreements from a maximum of 38 weeks to 76 weeks, helping companies to cope until commodity prices rebounded. These changes were made so that people of Calgary Centre, Alberta, and Canadians right across this country have access to help when they need it most.

EI was certainly there when tens of thousands of people from Fort McMurray were forced to flee their homes last spring during the wildfires. When tragedy struck, our government was there ready to lend a helping hand. Our Service Canada staff were on the ground providing direct support and assistance to the community and workers in crisis. As the chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Northern Alberta Wildfires, I saw first-hand how quickly we responded and got Albertans the help and support they needed. Our Service Canada staff were on the front lines during the wildfire crisis, and our government is proud of the work they did to help Canadians in need.

As the community came together to rebuild what was lost, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to get youth involved. As such, our government provided the Infinity Metis Corporation with close

to \$350,000 to hire indigenous and other youth between the ages of 15 and 30 to help with the efforts to rebuild the community of Fort McMurray and the surrounding municipality of Wood Buffalo. A total of 66 youth were hired to help rebuild the devastated Fort McMurray region through the McMurray Métis youth summer work experience project.

Throughout this tragedy, Albertans and all Canadians have truly demonstrated the resilient spirit that we are innovative and that we are builders.

I am also proud to say that since taking office a little more than a year ago, we have approved over 70 infrastructure projects in Alberta. These projects will deliver much-needed improvements to our aging infrastructure and are worth more than \$3 billion. This totals more funding than the previous five years combined under the former government.

This means funds for flood mitigation along Calgary's rivers and crucial public infrastructure like the Green Line LRT through downtown Calgary. These projects will mean quicker commutes and a long-term boost to the local economy, and of course, jobs. Calgaryans will see better jobs as a direct result of our infrastructure plan. I am proud to see this government delivering on these promises and taking action where the former government failed.

Furthermore, in over a year since forming government, we have been able to do what the previous government could not get done in a decade. We have approved the following infrastructure programs that will create tens of thousands of jobs for Canadians: the Arnaud apatite mine, 910 jobs; Woodfibre LNG project, 700 jobs; Black Point granite quarry project, 100 jobs; Ridley Island propane export terminal, 240 jobs; NOVA Gas pipeline, 3,000 jobs; Pacific NorthWest LNG, 7,000 jobs; Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, 15,440 jobs; and Line 3, 7,000 jobs. These projects mean 30,000 jobs, and more than \$26 billion injected into the Canadian economy.

● (2035)

Furthermore, in the previous government's 10 years in power, it failed to diversify Alberta's economy, leaving Albertans vulnerable to boom and bust energy cycles.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Chair, it is interesting to hear those members suddenly take such an interest in the plight of Albertans. Is that not the member who said Albertans feel refreshed after losing their jobs?

Government Orders

I am exhausted after sitting in my office having meeting after meeting with my constituents, and listening to them telling me how they are going to lose their homes and cars. They cannot pay for child care. They have to take minimum wage jobs, if they can even find them, and all that member talks about is “will create”, not have created. The Liberals have not done anything for Albertans; zero for Albertans. They have taken advantage of them. They made great promises during the election campaign and have done nothing.

Does that member agree with the Prime Minister that we should phase out the oil sands?

• (2040)

Hon. Kent Hehr: Mr. Chair, we have stood by Albertans, and we continue to deliver on their behalf. I understand the plight of many Albertans. They are facing a difficult time. Neighbours, friends, kids I went to school with, are not working right now, and that is difficult to hear.

That is why our strategic investments in employment insurance are going to help in the short-term, as well as investing in infrastructure. How we approve pipelines is going to add jobs very quickly. Our approach to building an economy today is transitioning toward a better future for Alberta.

Although the former government talked a great deal about Alberta, very little was done. That is one of the reasons why I ran for office. We saw, in 10 years of the Conservatives in power, no access to new energy markets for our energy industry.

Very little infrastructure was delivered for Calgary in terms of LRT and flood mitigation. The city is now getting it. That party had very little diversification of our economy, if any at all. We are now delivering on this, and I am proud of what our government is delivering for Albertans.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Chair, it is intriguing to hear some of the comments tonight. Some of them are just purely provocative enough to provide some good literature down the road. This debate has been very narrow-minded if all we are thinking about is the here and now at this moment.

The member for Calgary Shepard talked about my area that was devastated after some of the effects of NAFTA and the auto jobs. We all look insensitive if we do not admit that we all have people coming to our constituency offices who have no jobs. We have to understand there is a culpability issue here. That is the elephant in the room here tonight.

This issue in the here and now is devastating for people. It has been a long time coming, long before the 10-year previous government that my hon. colleague was alluding to. This has been brewing for a long time. We need to have a long-term plan. This rip and ship business does not work. It is not a good tactic.

What does my hon. colleague think about the issue of raw bitumen being shipped? Should we not be maximizing our opportunities and refining our resources here? Maybe like in Norway, we could have a trust fund to take care of the tragedy cycles.

Hon. Kent Hehr: Mr. Chair, I listened with great interest to that member. I will agree with her that the former federal government did

not look after Alberta's interests very well in either the short-term or the long-term.

The previous government was not successful in diversifying markets for our energy industry. It was not successful at delivering infrastructure for our city and our province to build LRT and flood mitigation. Those things would have improved the economy over the long run. It did very little, in fact nothing, to diversify the economy in terms of developing a long-term plan to improve on our green economy, as well as finding new ways to do things better for our oil and gas industry.

I did not get to mention in my speech that our government has invested \$75 million in the University of Calgary since taking office, transitioning to low carbon sources of energy, and working directly with the oil sands. That is our commitment to the people of Alberta, and we have been delivering time and time again for that province.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I grew up in rural Alberta. Before entering politics, I was a business owner, and many people in Edmonton's business community are friends and supporters. I am the son of a heavy-duty mechanic on one side, and a forklift operator on the other.

Many of my family members are tradespeople. I have seen firsthand the negative impacts of this economic downturn. I have heard it at events. I have heard it at the doors. I have felt it in my own immediate family where members of my family suffered almost a year of unemployment, and the lack of dignity that comes along with that. This debate tonight is particularly poignant for me.

I serve as Alberta caucus chair, and it is critical that our government is doing everything in its power to address the economic downturn affecting our country, our region, and our province. We are providing support for those out of work, we are supporting those whose jobs are in jeopardy, and we are delivering on the creation of new jobs.

I ran for this seat in this House because I and friends, people in my riding, were fed up with being overlooked and taken for granted, both by a 44-year-long Conservative provincial government and a 10-year-long Conservative government at the federal level.

Members of Parliament would travel across the country during election time to raise money for other candidates, and ignore the people in their riding because they simply did not need to bother. We would see entire election cycles go by where those candidates would simply avoid debates because they did not think those Albertans were worth their time. People got fed up. People stood up, and we had a different election result.

Government Orders

My people were tired of being taken for granted by two orders of government, and they were tired of failed Conservative economic policies. There was no movement on pipelines to tidewater. There was sluggish economic development, lack of infrastructure that actually moved people and goods, and made a difference in the lives of Canadians and Albertans. There was no determination to break logjams with indigenous peoples, no outreach to people who were threatening basic infrastructure on pipelines, because it was a government that was ossified and did not know how to debate.

I am standing up with my colleagues tonight, watching an opposition that is dismayed by the fact that our government has approved three pipelines. The opposition is dismayed by the fact that we are actually going to create the conditions to have 25,000 jobs created.

I sat on the plane with the president of Leducor the other night, who was thrilled that he can actually build for real projects that the former government promised and simply never delivered. We see tonight a stark choice between a divisive and dogmatic vision of the past, and a progressive, dynamic Alberta of today and tomorrow. An Alberta that can and will lead in green initiatives. An Alberta that can and will, with a Liberal government in Ottawa that understands its needs and will invest in infrastructure and productivity. An Alberta that can diversify its economy, and will no longer be at the whims of decisions made half a world away. An Alberta that is diverse, dynamic, and determined to showcase what its entrepreneurial spirit can do.

This debate is deeply personal for me. This is about workers, union workers and non-union workers; people with whom we talk to in our communities, on our doorsteps. They are young people, indigenous people, LGBTQ people, disabled people. They are Albertans and Canadians all. They simply want to be put back to work.

With \$1.3 billion in infrastructure investment, with \$750 million in loans to bridge us through the economic downturn, with \$0.5 billion in more loans with Economic Development Corporation, with historic investments in infrastructure at the University of Alberta and NAIT, just to mention my city alone, this is a government that is serious about investing in Alberta.

This is a government that is serious about being here. This is a government that believes in oil, that believes in energy, that believes in the environment, and that absolutely will get more product to market in a way that the previous government was not able to do for 10 years.

I know the Conservatives wanted this to happen under a Harper-Prentice framework. It is happening under a Liberal Prime Minister-Notley framework because we committed to it. We know how to do it, and that is what this government has promised, and that is what we will deliver.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (2045)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: Before we go any further, I would like to say that it is nice to see the excitement in the room. I am sure the hon. member appreciates the help he is getting from the opposition, but I do not think that shouting across is part of the way

we work in committee of the whole. I want to remind members to respect the person who is speaking, whether he or she is asking a question, or whether he or she is giving a speech. I would appreciate it if everyone just kept their comments down.

The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

• (2050)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Chair, talk is cheap. Where was that hon. member when his government made the approval of pipelines more difficult when it made changes to regulatory approval process? Where was that hon. member when the government imposed the mother of all taxes, a tax on everything, a carbon tax?

The member talks about pipelines, but where was he when his Prime Minister put politics ahead of science, overturned the decision of the NEB, and killed the northern gateway pipeline? Killed an opportunity to get Alberta energy to market, killed an opportunity to get 200,000 barrels of oil a day out and to the Asia-Pacific market, and killed an opportunity to get Albertans back to work.

When is the hon. member going to finally stand up for Edmonton, stand up for Alberta, and start doing his job?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Chair, the answer to the hon. member's question is, I have been right here all along. I have been here and in my riding. We have developed a framework that has the confidence of Canadians. It has led to three pipelines, including pipelines to tidewater, including 25,000 jobs that are going to be approved.

We are standing up for oil workers. We are standing up for pipefitters. We are standing up for the engineers and architects along the line, because this is a government that understands dialogue. It understands how to bring diverse, even competing, interests together to get three pipeline projects approved creating 25,000 jobs, #proof's in the pipelines.

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I want to remind hon. members when I shout "Order", I am not running a restaurant here.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, I will let my colleague have the next question.

I would like to thank my colleague from Edmonton for his enthusiasm. Unfortunately, one thing the government does not seem to have enthusiasm for is expediting action on triggering investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

I commonly hear the phrase when I talk to my constituents, and they tell me they are getting tired of hearing the i-n-g-s. We are thinking, we are planning, we are talking, we are consulting. I mentioned tonight that the International Energy Agency is saying we need to expedite the move toward investments in the renewable and energy efficiency sectors to create jobs.

When is the government of the day going to finally plan, and start moving toward actually delivering some of the promised investments in those two sectors?

Government Orders

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Chair, the government is moving on all of these files on a regular weekly basis. Most recently, we had a strategic partnership, creating an investment fund at the University of Alberta, which is in the hon. member's riding, for the exact purpose of greening the Alberta economy. The same investment is being made at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development has been very clear about our green agenda, so has the Minister of Science. I am very proud of the record we are standing on, and the progress we are making every week and every month to greening Canada's economy.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Chair, we are happy to clean up the laundry of the previous government, but Conservatives are the ones who are wearing it. As someone who is involved in their community over the past 10 years, what could the previous government have done over the past nine years, and what are we doing now that could have avoided some of these problems in order to have a more robust economy in Alberta to withstand this cyclical and inevitable downturn in the price of oil that it should have predicted?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Chair, regardless of what the last government might have done, I know what our government is doing. Our government has reached out to indigenous Canadians with leadership. We have reached out to members of environment groups. We have reached out to industry leaders. We have, as government, shown the very best of innovation in the energy sector, combined with protecting our environment, and making sure that all Canadians across any development lines benefit.

It is that kind of dialogue, that kind of constructive working together, and making sure that we have a cap on greenhouse gas emissions, that we can meet our COP22 commitments. We can then actually transition to a carbon-neutral future, understanding that 20% of our economy right now comes from fossil fuels and will continue for the future.

• (2055)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Chair, I am very pleased to join this debate, as I was the one in the fall who kick-started the attempts to get an emergency debate on the jobs crisis. It was last fall when the government should have reacted, when Albertans were facing the worst economic headwinds in several generations, over 122,000 energy workers lost their jobs since the oil crash in Alberta, and the unemployment rate rose to 8.5%.

Before I continue, I want to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Banff—Airdrie.

The vacancy rate for lease space is climbing to record highs of 30% in Calgary. This year alone, 11,000 businesses have either failed or moved out of Calgary. We call this the small business extinction event. It is the worst people have seen in 40 years. I would know a little about it, because I used to work for the Chamber of Commerce in Calgary. It is the worst I have ever seen it in Calgary.

This is not my time. This is time for my constituents, so I will spend the rest of my time paraphrasing and reading emails I have received from them on the record of the government and their thoughts on how they have been doing.

"Albertans don't like hand-me-downs. We are proud, hard-working people that like to earn everything we have". It was said by Louise Byez from Elgin Meadows in my riding.

Aleks in my riding said, "Abolish the carbon tax initiative. It will not provide any sort of benefits to Canada or small business. It will lead to massive job losses". He continued, "My family and I immigrated here in the early 1990s due to civil war and eventual separation of the former Yugoslavia. I know how hard it is to find a job".

Clint Hickman, who lives in the northern part of my riding, said, "99.999% of crude oil moved by pipeline moves safely". He went on to say, "That's because of us. We are a world-class workforce".

Karen Draper from Calgary in my riding had a heartbreaking story. She said, "At the same time I'm broke and will be declaring bankruptcy this week as I have responsibilities I cannot afford. My vehicle insurance payment just bounced. I have a three-year-old son. My brother is laid off, my mother is laid off. My small business that was once very much profitable is now failing and it will dissolve, and the four of us will be pulling together to ensure we all get through. Thousands of Albertans are waiting for this weight off our backs. Please help us and stand up for people like us."

I spent the last few weeks asking businesses in my riding how much the carbon tax would cost each and every one of them, because it is a direct correlation to job losses to be expected. One business in my riding, which exports agricultural products, said that in 2017, it would cost \$588,000 and in 2018, it would cost \$883,000.

John Odin owns an automotive technology company. He expects to pay \$8,230 more in carbon taxes. Carmen works for General Downhole, which is likely an oil and gas technology company. She said it would cost \$2,248 more in carbon taxes. Angela at Western Drilling Tools said it would cost \$94,958.52. As I said before, this is my constituents' time.

Cesar Ballestrini said, "It's too expensive to become an entrepreneur. High rents, high taxes, high electricity bill, high wages, high gas, low or no profit just to survive".

Penelope Moses said, "No carbon tax. Learn from Australia and France, why they are repealing their carbon taxes".

Rick Smith in Riverbend said, "Governments do not create jobs. They facilitate industry and private business to create the jobs. It is long past time to do just that.

Mr. Folden in Douglas Woods said, "Aggressively pursue getting new pipeline capacity built to export oil, aggressively pursue getting LNG facilities built in place".

Government Orders

Iva Georgieva on Mount Norquay, which is in McKenzie Lake, said, “Lobby energy east pipeline and get Canadian product to markets. We don’t need a carbon tax”, she went on to say.

Larry and Carol Wentz said, “Scrap the carbon tax and build those pipelines a.s.a.p. east and west. Quit giving money away to foreigners and invest in Canada”.

Carlos Santos from Mahogany said, “We need a low-tax environment, business-friendly legislation, and support for our oil industry. We don’t need uninformed protesters, bad, unstable government policy, a carbon tax, unfair legislation, and cumbersome causation payments”.

• (2100)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for sharing that, and for reading it with such passion. It is important to recognize, and I think we all have in the House tonight, that we all feel the job losses. It has touched every one of us in some way. I have friends in Ontario who went out to work in the oil sector in Alberta for about 10 years. They left Ontario because there was a downturn in the automotive sector. They have now returned and are also facing some of those situations. Therefore, we understand, I understand, and I would argue that every person in the House understands.

The question is this. How do we help? I believe we have done a number of things as a government to move that agenda forward. I would like to hear from you some of your thoughts on how we, as a government, can personally respond to those questions. If you would share that, it would be appreciated.

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to direct her comments to the Chair.

The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the first rule of government is to do no harm, yet it has done extensive harm to Albertans. It should get rid of the carbon tax. It has already broken its promise with respect to electoral reform, so why not another one.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I know his remarks are sincere.

We are taking note of the current employment situation in Alberta, and we certainly do not want something like this to happen again in the future. Oil prices are plummeting, which is causing a major problem in that province.

What would my colleague have done differently over the past 10 years, particularly when his party ran the federal government? What would he have done differently to prevent the current situation from happening? This is not something that started happening this past year. It is the result of the government failing to take action for much longer than that. What would he have done differently to avoid this situation? How can we prevent this sort of thing from happening again?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question on what the previous Conservative government would have done.

The first thing I would like to say is that the Conservative government never would have introduced a carbon tax. The Conservative government would have continued investing in Alberta infrastructure. It never would have accepted help from people who were only in Canada to protest pipelines and who were completely against economic development in Alberta. The government never would have accepted help from these people who did not care one bit about the future of Albertans.

[*English*]

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, as I have been taking notes tonight and listening intently, I have heard a lot about refining this evening. I know I am changing the topic slightly, but I would like to share this with the House. As I was writing it down, I thought it was important.

We have to remember that Canada is a net exporter of refined petroleum products, and we have not talked about that tonight. Our refining sector produces more product than we use in Canada. There is also some good news. As I am sure members are aware, construction is currently under way on the first new facility to be built in Canada since the mid-1980s. That facility is being built in Alberta. Therefore, when I hear talk about a refinery, I want members to know that this is occurring.

• (2105)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I have a short answer. When I worked for the Alberta finance department, we participated in the early negotiations of that upgrader. What the member may not know is that Ted Morton, the former finance minister and minister of energy in Alberta, has estimated that the potential cost to the taxpayer for an upgrader, which will likely never actually make a profit, would be \$26 billion because of the way the contract was formulated and then signed by the previous governments.

Refining product is a margins business. It is a very difficult one to be in. It also produces an extensive amount of GHGs, which the current government seems to be interested in taxing.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, times are tough right now in Alberta and they are getting tougher by the day. Unemployment is skyrocketing and it is quickly reaching a crisis situation. Skilled workers are struggling to provide for their families and they are being forced to leave the province to seek better opportunities for employment.

We would think that a situation as dire as this would elicit support from the federal government. We would think the Liberals would be hard at work, identifying solutions and coming up with a plan. Sadly, that is not the case. The Liberals have no plan to create jobs, but that is exactly what our province needs the most right now.

Instead, we are stuck in a tax and spend cycle with the current Liberal government, a cycle that is not working, a cycle that is not creating jobs. In fact, the parliamentary budget officer reported last October that despite the out of control spending and skyrocketing deficits, the Liberals had not created one net full-time job since they took office, not one.

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In comparison, while Canada's employment rate has been falling, rates in the U.S., the G7 and the OECD have all risen. It is very clear that despite more than a year of reckless spending, the Liberal plan has done nothing to increase our economy. Not only has the Liberal economic plan failed, the Liberals keep making decisions that will only make things worse.

If we look back over the past year, the Liberals have cancelled family tax credits for sports and for arts classes. They have cancelled small business tax cuts. They have imposed a CPP tax hike and a carbon tax that will cost families thousands of dollars every year. Then they brought in new rules on mortgages that would make it harder to buy a home.

I stand here today because on this side of the House we believe in fiscal responsibility. We believe in a framework for creating a strong economy, and a plan to create jobs and get Albertans back to work.

The energy sector plays an important role in our economy, and pipeline projects create jobs and they create long-term opportunities for Alberta families. Yet the Liberal environmental review process has increased regulatory uncertainty to major transportation and resource projects. The Liberals have imposed arbitrary, political and unpredictable regulatory processes at a time when we urgently need to get our resources to new markets and when we should be supporting our natural resource workers.

Furthermore, the Liberal government rejected the northern gateway project, which would have created 4,000 well-paying jobs. This decision was, to say the least, extremely disappointing, especially for the men and women who are out of work in our oil and gas sector right now.

The construction of pipelines and the development of our oil sands in an environmentally sustainable way is absolutely vital for the economy in Alberta and all across Canada. However, instead of supporting this key sector, we have the Prime Minister making comments about phasing out the oil sands, while giving out corporate welfare to Bombardier. To make matters worse, the Liberals will impose a national carbon tax on the provinces and territories.

The tax on carbon is obstructive to our province's economic growth, and adds yet another expense for everyday Albertans and small businesses that were already struggling just to get by. This new carbon tax will cost the average family more than \$2,500 every year, and will increase gas at the pumps by 11.5¢ a litre.

We have small businesses that are suffering, and this carbon tax will add just one more thing on top of reneging on the small business tax rate and all the other promises the Liberals have broken to small businesses. This will further exacerbate their problems and further exacerbate an already high unemployment rate in Alberta.

My constituents are struggling and they are hurting. They are expecting the government to create some immediate and targeted measures to support Albertans. They are expecting the government to create the conditions for businesses to thrive, to help grow the economy and to create jobs, to show leadership, to get our oil resources to market. However, when it comes to creating jobs and helping the Alberta economy, the Liberal government has failed miserably.

The Liberals have broken their promises for modest deficits. Their spending is out of control. This spending and these deficits are being borrowed on the backs of our children's and our grandchildren's futures. As a result, Albertans and many Canadians are feeling abandoned by the federal government. They want and deserve an equal opportunity to compete globally. However, navigating through new and expanding regulatory and political obstacles introduced by the Liberal government only exacerbates the current challenges.

The Liberals' economic plan, if we can even call it that, can be summed up as big on spending, short on long-term planning, light on details and hard on each and every Albertan pocketbook.

• (2110)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the last year of the Harper administration, Statistics Canada demonstrates a net loss of 26,000 jobs to the Canadian economy.

What was the strategy that was leading your government to lead that kind of economic performance? What were you planning to do to help Alberta jobs and Alberta workers during that kind of lacklustre economic performance?

The Speaker: Order. It may be committee of the whole, but I remind members again to direct their comments to the Chair.

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I would tell anyone to look back at the facts and take a look at the jobs that were being created by the previous government. There is no question that our economy grew and flourished. Jobs were created and people were at work. There were a lot of opportunities. I think about 1.2 million net new jobs were created after the global recession.

When I talk about what could be done and what should be done to try and help the Alberta economy, the very first thing that comes to mind is giving opportunities for people to get back to work.

The government over there, instead of trying to do those things, to give people opportunities, for the first time ever in history, chose to ignore the National Energy Board, the regulator, in terms of its decisions and took a pipeline away that had been approved by the regulator. The Liberals claim somehow that they approved two pipelines. No, they did not approve anything. The National Energy Board approved three pipelines, of which the government said to one of those projects for the very first time in history, no. The government was not going to listen to the science. It was not going to listen to the regulator. It was a bureaucratic decision, and it was going to take that opportunity away from Albertans. They should be ashamed of themselves, especially that member being from Alberta himself.

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[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was a little disappointed by my colleague's response earlier. Instead of proposing constructive solutions, things the Conservatives could have proposed during their 10 years in office, he simply mentioned what he would not have done compared to what the Liberals have done in the past year.

I will try my luck once again with my Conservative colleague; as a member here under Mr. Harper's reign, he watched the situation deteriorate during the last few years of his term. In my view, he did not take any action in response to the obvious threat looming over Alberta. I am wondering if he would have the decency or modesty to accept even partial responsibility for the current situation.

Would he have done anything different, knowing what we know today?

[English]

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, the member talked about what he would not have done. It is true, there are things that we would not have done that are being done by the current government. There is no question about that. We would not have imposed a carbon tax on energy, and I am sure that is already hurting. I would ask the member to take a look at where his party stands as well.

We have an industry that is hurting, but it is one that is working hard every day to try to do better with its environmental record and its environmental performance. Having said that, we already are one of the strongest environmentally friendly regimes in the entire world. If the member's party and the government want to try to shut down the opportunities for our oil and gas to get to markets, then what does that mean? It means the alternative is that we import oil from places that are far less environmentally friendly.

The government over here talks about trying to improve and balance the environment with the economy. If the Liberals actually wanted to do something to help the environment and the economy, they would be out promoting our Canadian oil as the environmentally friendly and responsible oil that it is, and trying to get it to market. That is what they should be doing. However, what are they doing instead? They are taxing it, and they are taxing the people who work in that industry to death. That is completely and utterly the wrong approach, and they should be ashamed of themselves.

• (2115)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely a pleasure to join in this debate this evening. I will be sharing my time with the member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe.

I appreciate the official opposition bringing this motion forward this evening. I know many people in Alberta are feeling the pain. I worked the best part of 10 years in Alberta, mainly in Fort McMurray. I had the great privilege of getting around to many parts of the province, having had the opportunity to coach in the Alberta junior hockey league. I was in pretty much every rink down in the south. We went to the Foothills looking for a goaltender down there, found none.

From Crowsnest Pass to Taber to Lethbridge and all out through Wetaskiwin, to every little rink, I got to know so many great people, hard-working, honest people raising beautiful kids. I had the great pleasure to coach a number of them during my time in Fort McMurray. My wife taught in Calgary for a couple of years. My focus will be more about Fort McMurray because I continue to stay in touch with my friends in Fort McMurray, having left in 1986. I try to get back every couple of years.

I know, like many other Canadians, we were just blown away with the impact of forest fires in Fort McMurray. Certainly that just sort of added to the dismay and added to the hurt that that community was feeling with the downturn in commodity prices and the drop in the price of oil. When you throw fires on top of that, and having lived in the Fort for 10 years when it comes to forest fire season, everybody sort of has their heart in their mouth. We saw the devastation and loss in that community.

Entire neighbourhoods, like Beacon Hill, Abasands, and Waterways, were just wiped out. People's livelihoods were wiped out. The impact it had on that community was devastating. I know I gave an S.O. 31, a statement at that time. It always riled me when Canadians would speak about Fort McMurray, sort of referring to it as this country's ATM, that it was a place to go and work, make money and then leave. That is not Fort McMurray at all.

Fort McMurray is a fabulous community, and I think it reflects the values of the province of Alberta. I know it is a special place in Alberta. All Albertans and all Canadians, who have been a part of that community, understand just what a special community it is.

That community still has not rebounded from that fire. Community members have tried to get back to a certain degree. The reality is that there is a new normal in Fort McMurray.

Let me boil it down. I know that part of the growth and part of the success of Fort McMurray and in turn Alberta was because Liberal governments had worked with the provincial governments and with industry to grow opportunities. When I started there, it was only the Great Canadian Oil Sands and then Syncrude opened up. There was only Suncor and Syncrude. In 2003, Suncor opened up a third mine. There was a federal government in Ottawa, and three big SAGD projects started up in Alberta at the time.

The Scotford upgrader was built. We know that was much to the benefit of the people in the Edmonton area, and all of Alberta, really. There was Albian Sands. Those were investments that were made that helped grow that economy, the national economy.

• (2120)

We will continue to work with the people in Alberta, the premier and her government, and the industry in Alberta. The drop in commodity prices has been horrific. Above that, there were the fires in Fort McMurray. There has been a great deal of hardship. The government understands that the people of Fort McMurray need and deserve help. We will be there to continue to work with them and help them.

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary perhaps did not understand that when he asked to split his time, these are 10-minute slots, so he ends up with five minutes of speech and five minutes of questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso for his speech. I have known him for quite a few years and I have no doubt of his sincerity. However, I take a lot of issue with what he said and the track record he had.

He said the government will be there to help. One of the most dangerous phrases for people in the west is “I'm from the government and I'm here to help”. That does not instill a lot of confidence with us westerners.

One of the solutions we know will help address the jobs crisis in Alberta, and Saskatchewan, and many parts of British Columbia and the prairies, is just for the government to get out of the way. We do not need the government to come and offer more EI benefits. We do not need the government to come and start manipulating the economy and trying to interfere with the market. We would just like the government to get out of the way.

Approve northern gateway. Let those energy workers do what they do best, and get their energy products to port. Energy east is so woefully delayed because of the government's mismanagement of the NEB process.

We saw the Liberals' approach to the economy this week. There is a private sector solution to Bombardier that the Liberals have blocked by not allowing the Toronto Island airport to be expanded, which would allow Porter to buy the jets, which would mean that taxpayers would not have to be on the hook.

My question for the member is: What ideas does he have where the government can just get out of the way, allow the private sector to solve this jobs crisis, and stop making it worse?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, my pal across the way. I understand fully. I know when oil was at \$140 a barrel, his government got out of the way and it went down to \$32 a barrel. I remember coming back after the election and the finance critic got up and asked our finance minister when it went down to \$28 a barrel what the Liberals were going to do about the price of oil. It was no problem going from \$140 down to \$32, but they got really upset about that last \$4. It was great that they started watching the market. They really lit it up then. I am being facetious, and the member knows that.

My colleague from the NDP said to cut the carbon tax, but I have not heard a whole lot more beyond that in this debate. I am sort of disappointed with the official opposition that it has not brought a little more to the game than to cut the carbon tax. I think that was a great point that was raised by the NDP.

Our government and our minister will continue to work with the Premier of Alberta and industry in Alberta, and we will continue to try to work with the people of Alberta to make that situation better.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have heard a lot of talk about pipelines since the start of this debate. I believe every one of them has been mentioned.

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One thing seems perfectly clear to me. In 2017, as in 2016, 2015, and 2014, major infrastructure projects like these cannot proceed without social licence. The previous government watered environmental assessments down to the point that they were no longer credible.

My Liberal government colleague promised a complete overhaul of the NEB to restore credibility to those assessments. How can the Liberals turn their backs on that promise too?

● (2125)

[English]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, if the NDP could take a mulligan, it might want to think back about the last election and how it lost organized labour, and how it lost the building trade. New Democrats cannot see that development brings jobs, and jobs are good for Canada. Jobs are good for Canadians. They like jobs.

The reality is, there has to be a balance between the economy and the environment. There are probably 10% or 15% of Canadians who will never approve a pipeline. There are probably 10% or 15% of Canadians who would not care if we ran the pipeline right down Yonge Street. However, the vast majority of Canadians believe if rules are set down and abided by, and if there is openness and transparency in a process, then they will understand that pipelines can be built safely, they can create jobs in our country, and that is good for all of Canada.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to speak to one of the more significant factors in our economic success as a country: a vibrant and robust employment market for all.

As a Maritimer, I am acutely aware of how job losses in Alberta reverberate across Canada. East-coasters of all stripes have flocked out west in search of good jobs and new challenges, and their hard work has helped support families and communities across the Maritimes. Several of my friends and colleagues have actually taken that trip and have been very successful in the work they have done down there. The lesson here is that we must treat economic stagnation in any part of the country as a vulnerability for the whole.

What job seekers value more than anything is acquiring new skills and improving their existing talents to contribute to something greater than themselves. That directly leads to more competitiveness, greater productivity, and an even better quality of life. In support of these ideals, we must do all we can to match the strength and determination these job seekers have always demonstrated.

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In 2016-2017, federal training investments in Alberta amount to over \$212 million. Through labour market development agreements, the Government of Canada is providing more than \$110 million to Alberta for skills training and employment services, which help all unemployed Canadians prepare for and obtain employment. We have also eliminated the higher EI eligibility requirements that restricted access to the EI program for workers who were entering or re-entering the labour market. Now these workers face the same eligibility requirements as other claimants in the region where they live. This will increase access to EI for more than 50,000 workers, primarily youth and immigrants.

We have reduced the first EI waiting period from two weeks to one week, easing the financial pressure for eligible workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own or who have to leave work temporarily for health reasons or due to family pressures. This measure will put an additional \$650 million in the pockets of Canadians annually. Additionally, under the Canada-Alberta job fund, Alberta is receiving an additional \$5.8 million, its share of the additional \$50 million for the Canada job fund agreements, as announced in budget 2016. Priority is given to unemployed persons who are not eligible for employment insurance benefits and to skills improvement for employed persons.

This year, \$25.2 million is allocated through the Canada-Alberta Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities to fund programming for skills development and employment services that will help people with disabilities in Alberta. We also recognize the unique circumstances of indigenous people with regard to employment. We are working in partnership with indigenous communities throughout Alberta to support skills development and job training.

Our aboriginal skills and employment training strategy, or ASETS, provides a full set of services, from pre-employment training, which includes literacy, numeracy, and the acquisition of essential skills, to more advanced training-to-employment initiatives for skilled jobs, with an emphasis on pre-employment skills. In Alberta, ASETS has served over 40,000 clients, with over 20,000 of those securing jobs. This year, we increased the annual ASETS budget by 3%, the first time it has received an increase in 17 years. Furthermore, \$1.9 million is allocated through the Canada-Alberta Targeted Initiative for Older Workers Agreement to support projects that provide skills training and employment-assistance services for unemployed older workers living in small, vulnerable communities in Alberta.

Our focus, as ever, remains on the well-being of people who need support to find good employment and on strengthening our communities and growing our economy. We recognize, as Canadians, that when Alberta does well, Canada does well.

• (2130)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals want to know what our practical solutions are. Frankly, we are not looking for more government programs. We are not looking for more EI. Albertans who are out of work and Canadians who are out of work because of the energy-sector job losses or the energy-sector difficulties are not looking for more programs. What we are looking for, and what Canadians are looking for, is a Prime Minister who will stand up and unabashedly say, “I support Canadian oil. I think Canadian oil is the most responsibly extracted

in the world. It is the most responsibly transported, and I, as Prime Minister, will do everything I can to advocate for Canadian oil and energy. I will make sure that the process is fair and balanced and environmentally sound”.

“Guess what, Mr. Prime Minister”, we will say, “Our Canadian regulatory system is”.

What the people who have lost jobs in Alberta and across the country are looking for is a Prime Minister who will stand up and boldly say, “I support Canadian oil energy”. What that will do is tell the rest of the world that maybe Canada is open for business again. Right now, the message the rest of the world is getting, investors particularly, is that we have a Prime Minister who says that maybe we should shut down the oil sands, let us introduce a carbon tax, and maybe we do not like pipelines. That is what the problem is. We need a Prime Minister who will stand up and speak positively and be a champion for Canadian natural resources.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the member what our government has been doing for Albertans.

We have approved three pipelines that will create over 25,000 jobs for Albertans, and those 25,000 jobs will also create spinoff jobs. We are proud of that development and that decision.

We have also made historic investments in infrastructure, and when we invest in infrastructure, we know that it creates good-paying jobs for men and women and all those in need.

We have also made historic investments at the university level, both at the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta. We have invested over \$200 million in science, research, and innovation.

We continue to work for Albertans. We will continue to fight for them and do all we can to support them throughout this difficult time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

Unfortunately, the government has put forward a lot of piecemeal solutions today, solutions that focus on individuals receiving certain contributions, and that is fine, but I have not heard the government say anything about long-term solutions.

The problem we are dealing with today is not new. During today's debate, a number of people pointed out that this situation is cyclical, that it came up in the past and will probably come up again in the future. Can my colleague offer any long-term solutions that will result in a stable, sustainable future for Alberta?

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I am sure everyone here agrees that fossil fuels are not the energy of the future. I do not see us debating whether fossil fuels will dominate the planet. We are all asking ourselves those questions.

Does my colleague have a long-term solution for Alberta to prevent this history from repeating itself?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Mr. Speaker, again, I thank my colleague for the question.

As I said before, we have to remember that our government has truly made some significant investments in innovation, science, and research. With such innovations, good jobs are sure to follow and we will develop a sector unlike any other.

We will continue to invest in research and support the current energy sector in the province.

• (2135)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Confederation.

The motion that kicked off this debate refers to job losses in the energy sector, but that does not quite do justice to the whole issue. Alberta is not just facing job losses, it is facing a jobs crisis. That crisis is the result of bad decisions by governments and the impacts are visible across many sectors of the economy.

Here are the simple facts. The unemployment rate in Alberta is running at 8.5%, more than double what it was two years ago. Alberta has lost one-fifth of its natural resource jobs, but also one-fifth of its agriculture jobs, and one-quarter of its manufacturing jobs. The impact of Alberta's challenges can be felt across the country. Families in other parts of Canada who could once rely on the support of family members in the energy sector no longer can. Those jobs linked to the energy sector throughout the country are affected as well.

There are many factors propelling the jobs crisis we face in Alberta. Obviously oil prices are a part of it, but there have been hard times in our province before. Low oil prices alone have meant a temporary lull, but have also meant that companies could position themselves and make investments for the next step.

Unfortunately, when investors do not have confidence in a turnaround because of bad government policy, they do not make those investments in good times or in bad. Albertans have been through tough times before, but they are getting pounded by bad government policy, which is killing jobs and discouraging investment. This jobs crisis did not have to happen and it does not have to continue.

Let me identify eight policy decisions of the federal government that are killing jobs in Alberta and I have a modest proposal tonight. How about the Liberals reverse just one of them? Here are eight policy decisions that the government took and perhaps there are more, but eight that I would identify.

Immediately upon taking office, Liberals brought in a tanker ban off northern British Columbia. This cut off exports. Apparently tankers with oil from Alaska are fine, tankers with foreign oil in the

St. Lawrence are fine, but no tankers with Canadian oil coming off northern B.C. That was a decision that killed jobs in Alberta and across the country.

Number two, they withdrew support for vital energy infrastructure. They killed the northern gateway pipeline. They have failed to advocate for Keystone. They have failed to stand and support energy east, killing jobs in Alberta and across the country.

Number three, they promised in their platform a cut to small business taxes that would align with what all the other parties were proposing. They broke that promise. The then minister told us there would be some surprises in the federal budget. Yes, there were some surprises. That decision to effectively raise taxes on small business killed jobs in Alberta and across the country.

Number four, they eliminated the hiring credit for small business. This was another surprise in that federal budget. The elimination of the hiring credit made it harder for people to get jobs. That is killing jobs in Alberta and across the country.

Number five, they brought in a CPP expansion payroll tax increase. This is the tax on employing people. If we want to kill jobs, we introduce a higher tax on jobs. Policy decisions of the government are killing jobs in Alberta and across the country.

Number six is their policy on the carbon tax. We know the impact in Alberta killing jobs there and across the country.

Number seven is the overall climate of fiscal instability that they have created.

Number eight is the failure of the equalization formula to update itself.

These are eight policy decisions of the government it did not have to make that are killing jobs in Alberta and across the country.

Please, Mr. Speaker, let them reverse at least one of those terrible decisions tonight.

As I conclude, I want to speak briefly about the kind of society we are in Alberta. There is one thing that defines Alberta's political culture more than anywhere else and that is our radical optimism. In the world today for understandable reasons, the word "populism" has a negative connotation, but the tradition of prairie populism is something entirely different. It is the philosophy that something new is possible, that we do not have to continue to be trapped in old ways of thinking, that people can revolt against elites because they have a more grounded conception of the common good that reflects their own experience. The so-called common sense of the common people is the basis for this optimistic and hopeful western populism. This populism is the reason why every single national third party movement in this country's history has come from Alberta or Saskatchewan, across the political spectrum and across partisan categories.

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Western Canadian populist movements, though reflecting our culture in its origins, always spread across the country. We sought to offer a new alternative, but never to deny the same opportunity and aspirations to other people.

I love Alberta because Alberta is a place that always demands better of itself and of its representatives and it believes that ordinary people are the primary agents of change. Across Alberta today, ordinary people are waking up to the need for them to be more involved in politics and Albertans are demanding change from the federal government. We are demanding that the government listen finally to the common sense of the common people, that it reverse its terrible job-killing policies, and that it remove the impediments to our economic success.

• (2140)

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his impassioned comments about the great people of the province of Alberta. I know when Newfoundland and Labrador went through a similar existential crisis back in 1991, Alberta welcomed so many tens of thousands of Newfoundlanders and their families with open arms, who helped build the oil sands and have great jobs there. Many of them are now struggling, returning home to Newfoundland and Labrador looking for new employment.

Does the member not appreciate the value of our having approved pipelines that are going to employ 25,000 skilled labourers working in constructing these pipelines? Will he not at least acknowledge that these are steps in the right direction? Does he not agree that we need to get our resources to market? These jobs are going to be valuable. They are jobs in the very skilled trades that are being laid off in the oil sands at the present time.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his comments, and his recognition that the impacts of the energy sector are not just felt in Alberta but across the country. That is something that all members would do well to note.

In answer to his comments about pipelines, it is a good thing that the government has approved the expansion of certain existing pipelines. However, we need new pipelines as well. We need northern gateway. It does not make sense for the government to shut down northern gateway, a pipeline that effectively went through the same process as other pipelines that were approved.

The government needs to understand the value of these critical pipeline infrastructures, northern gateway, Keystone XL, and energy east, and advocate for them. Rather, it arbitrarily selected some pipelines over others and called it a compromise. That is not a compromise based on any sensible principle at all.

Let us stand up for jobs in every possible way we can, and reverse the bad policies that I talked about.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

I want to come back to what I was saying earlier about the future of fossil fuels in the world and not just in Canada. I think that my colleague and I have very little in common except that we may be the same age. That being said, does he see positive future prospects for

fossil fuels in 60 years, for example? Does he think that the government should continue to make massive investments in these energies or, as many of my colleagues have proposed, should the government turn to energies of the future that will certainly be used around the world 60 years from now? I do not think fossil fuels are the way of the future.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, maybe something has been lost in the translation, but the member talked about whether the government should continue to invest in this area. That is not what we are asking for. Rather, we are asking for the government to get out of the way and allow those private sector investments to happen.

I would say this with respect to what the future of fossil fuels would look like. We do not know exactly what that evolving future will be. It will involve significant technological change and advancement, just as we have seen in the oil sands over the last number of years.

The incredible advances with respect to environmental quality, and the other kinds of advances we have seen in the energy sector, I believe, will continue at that pace. I look forward to the continuing development of the energy sector, and the continuing expansion of technology.

Alberta will continue to be an energy hub long into the future if we have government policies that get it right. We will not benefit from Liberal and NDP policies that want to prematurely shut off our sector before the technology is ready, and in the process chase those jobs to other jurisdictions that do not have the same standards when it comes to safety, employment, or the environment.

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a little confused because I am hearing that the member opposite wants the government to get out of the way, yet wants it to pre-approve a pipeline. I do not see how that is getting out of the way. I do not know how pre-approving pipelines, undermining the regulatory system, and having no action on environmental policies gets a pipeline built. Historically, it has not.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to seem too pedantic, but the process of pipeline approval is the process of government allowing or not allowing a private sector organization to undertake a privately-financed project. By definition, that is a question of the government choosing whether or not to get out of the way.

To be clear, we are in favour of the process, but we think that the government needs to advocate for these projects. It needs to support these projects through that process. That is what we have not seen from the government. That is what we need.

• (2145)

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to contribute to this debate on the Alberta jobs crisis.

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The constituency that I represent, Calgary Confederation, is a riding located in the inner city of Calgary. It is smack dab in the middle, just north of the Bow River. It is a wonderful riding, and there are wonderful people who live there. They work hard and have great families. The population is approximately 112,000 people, and many of those people have been deeply affected by the downturn in the oil industry.

There have been massive lay-offs throughout my riding due not only to the price of oil but also due to the unnecessary taxation implemented by both the provincial NDP government and the federal Liberals on an industry that is already on its knees. The implementation of the carbon tax is an attack on an industry just trying to survive.

To understand the utter devastation that has taken place in the Alberta jobs market, one only needs to look at the Liberal government's record since taking office. While the national unemployment rate has remained steady at 7%, the unemployment rate in Calgary has risen dramatically to around 10%. Behind those unemployment numbers are real people, real families, and they are suffering. Even those with jobs today live under incredible stress not knowing if they will become one of the tens of thousands of laid-off workers in the oil industry.

My staff, in my constituency office, Lou and Pat, are on the front lines. They have been receiving calls that just tear me apart. It sometimes leaves them emotionally drained and visibly shaken.

There are parents, who are calling in, sobbing and telling of their children who have been sent away to family in other provinces, because they cannot afford to feed and house them in Calgary.

I went door knocking during the Christmas break, and I met one man who was ashamed to let me share his name. He told me of not finding work, depleting his family savings, losing his home, and still to this day cannot find work. He was so embarrassed by the situation that he sent his wife and three children to Manitoba to stay with his in-laws, so that he could shield the reality of his family's situation from his young children. Imagine being ashamed to be in front of your own children.

Another father almost had the same experience. He moved his wife and children to Saskatchewan, a province where at least the Saskatchewan Party and Premier Brad Wall get it. They strongly oppose a carbon tax, and I strongly applaud Premier Brad Wall for trying to convince the Liberal government otherwise.

Another constituent called into the office, and when we asked him his address, he gave us his licence number as his address. He lives in a car.

I have had two people mention suicide as an option if they do not get some help from the government.

The tragic stories go on, and the hope continues to fade. Hopefully, one day things will improve. We pray for the price of oil to go up again. We pray that the government listens to the people of Alberta, the people of Canada.

I implore all members to remember the people behind these unemployment numbers. Each person has a unique story, but they share the same challenges, putting a roof over their heads and food

on the table. It is what every Canadian wants and every Canadian deserves.

The Liberal government must stop taxing Albertans into poverty. Let us stop destroying their primary industries. Better yet, let us stop ignoring them and their situation. Let us get Alberta back to work, and let us do it soon.

• (2150)

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, the now Minister of Veterans Affairs held an ask me anything meeting. In it somebody asked him if he was anti-development, if he was going to stave off the concerns of constituents who think that he might not support pipelines, or if he was inconsistent. He said that he would pound on the table to support pipelines.

Yet, the member, when he came into the House, and had the opportunity to vote in support of pipeline development and Energy East, rejected that. He voted against it, so there was no pounding on the table.

Can my colleague talk about the detrimental impact of the Liberals' inconsistency on support for the energy sector, and what that has meant for investment?

I know my colleague talks to a lot of people who work in the sector. Could he talk a little bit about how the Liberals' policy in terms of changing the regulatory environment has shied away investment?

Could he also talk about why it is so important for Canada to lower our taxes and become more competitive, especially in light of the fact that the American administration has said that it wants to move toward a lower regulatory burden to encourage investment in that area?

Mr. Len Webber: Mr. Speaker, that is a lot to talk about in five minutes. I was hoping to get some more questions as well from the opposition.

What the Liberal government has put in place with regard to policy, regulations, and taxes has kept industry out of Alberta. It has kept industry out of Canada.

I talk to the people in the industry daily. I go door-to-door, and I ask people what they do for a living. I would say that 50% of the time they indicate to me that they used to work, or they do work in the oil industry. They have brought their industry and their work down to quite a slow pace in the hope that the government will listen to them, and react in a way, so we can urgently and quickly develop the pipelines. They hope the government will talk to people like the mayor of Montreal, and convince Quebeckers, convince all Canadians that Alberta's oil is beneficial to every Canadian.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. opposition colleague and ask him a very simple question.

We have heard a lot of questions about the federal carbon tax this evening. Does my colleague realize that the federal carbon tax will come into effect in early 2018? Does he know that a carbon tax has already been implemented by Alberta's provincial government?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. Len Webber: Mr. Speaker, I invite the hon. member to come to my riding, come door knocking with me, and talk to those people who are unemployed, people who are suicidal, people who have children in other provinces because they cannot take care of them. I implore him to come and listen, and talk to them about the carbon tax, which is a huge issue in my province, in fact, in this country. It is a burden on industry and our oil patch. It keeps investors away.

I invite the hon. member to come to my constituency. I will give you a tour. I will feed you. I invite anybody to come to my riding to talk to the people in my riding. It is incredibly emotional.

The Speaker: I appreciate the invitation, but I think he was talking to the member across the way. In that case, he means the hon. member. He does not want to say “you” unless he is speaking to the Chair.

● (2155)

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

I am proud to stand today to bring the voices of my constituents and all Manitobans to this debate. My riding of Kildonan—St. Paul to the north of the city of Winnipeg is made up of four communities divided down the middle by the mighty Red River.

I am proud to say that Kildonan—St. Paul is a picture of Canadian diversity. In North and West Kildonan, new Canadians have found a home and adapted. There are retirees, mineral workers, pipefitters, manufacturers, small business owners, bankers, waiters, students, and tradespeople all across the riding. It is a diverse and growing workforce.

This includes a small and dynamic oil sector. In the last 15 years, Manitoba's oil industry has grown from 10,000 barrels a day in 2003 to over 50,000 barrels a day a decade later. However, investment has dropped significantly in the last two years. Manitobans have lost their jobs and have been left wondering where their next paycheque will come from, like many Albertans.

As a former geoscientist, I have experienced first-hand the ups and downs of Canada's resource economy. I know that sometimes times are very tough. It was with that experience that I approached my role as minister of employment, workforce development, and labour. I saw that families were hurting in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, and in my home province of Manitoba.

If we look at the statistics, as of November 2016, employment in oil and gas was down 11.3%. For upstream businesses, it was down 23.4%. In hard rock, it was down 7.3%.

That is why we extended EI benefits to hard-hit workers in regions all across the country. We made the program easier to access and extended the amount eligible workers could claim, up to 70 weeks for some workers, an investment of \$2.7 billion. I also announced over \$200 million in additional funding for workforce training in the Prairies, and over \$73 million for work integrated learning. Training provides an opportunity for long-term gain.

This January, the Conference Board of Canada recognized that Manitoba's young indigenous people present an enormous economic

opportunity for Canada. Strong training programs are the key to unlocking this population's potential. Last fall, our government announced the approval of three pipelines. The construction of these pipelines will create over 20,000 jobs. These pipelines will make Canada's energy sector more competitive internationally and will lead to more jobs for Canadians.

Our government made a historic commitment of \$120 billion in our infrastructure plan that will put Canadians to work to rebuild our nation's roads, hospitals, and clean water. This plan will put people to work and prepare our country for the decades ahead. In Alberta, we approved over 127 projects worth \$1.36 billion, and 70% of those projects are under way.

I am proud to say that our government has started to make a difference for workers affected by the downturn in the resource sector. Last October, the Bank of Canada reported that the energy sector was beginning to rebound. We see that in the commodity prices in both oil and gas and in hard rock.

When times were tough, I am proud to say that we as a government supported those people hardest hit. We approved pipelines to create more jobs. We invested in skills development and training to prepare our workforce for the future. Our government understands that all Canadians benefit from strong economies in every province. We have and will continue to support Canada's resource sector.

● (2200)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the way talked about the extension of the EI program, but I want to go back in time and refresh her memory. When she was the minister of employment, the city of Edmonton was shut out of that extension for many months despite a huge increase in unemployment. In fact, the member for Edmonton Centre said there was a 33% year over year increase, but the member for Edmonton Centre said that 33%, a one-third increase in unemployment was not drastic enough.

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I asked this question twice of the member when she was minister, and twice she blew off Edmonton. It was not until there was an increase in unemployment of 78% year over year that the government finally relented and extended the EI benefits. If the Liberals are so concerned, why did it take the Premier of Alberta, the Mayor of Edmonton, the Edmonton Conservative caucus, and even the NDP member from Edmonton to stand up and demand changes, while two Liberal members from Edmonton did nothing? We asked the member when she was minister repeatedly and she did nothing until there was a 78% increase. I would like to know why.

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk: Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that we are very proud that we were able to step up and provide significant investments to those areas of the country that were hardest hit. This was based on criteria that were identified in 15 EI regions on a map that was established by the previous government, and in a process that both the Conservative side and our side understand. When we look at areas that are divided like that, some areas fall outside of the boundary and others do not. However, there were many parts of the EI system that included every single Canadian no matter where they were from, which we addressed in those changes.

However, the most important part is investing in skills and training, giving people a chance to find their next opportunity, and also investing in infrastructure, which creates real jobs in the present tense, as we see the recovery of the resource sector across Canada.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite has given us a lot of numbers tonight on what her government has done, what she has done. I would like to give her some numbers back.

Many in my riding of Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner who used to donate to our food bank now find it necessary to use that service. In 2014, our food bank served a total of 5,300 clients, 651 of them children, representing 868 households. In 2016, that number rose to 17,282 clients with 6,600 of them being children, representing 1,855 households. It is almost a tripling of the poundage of food.

So far the policies of the Liberal government have failed and they continue to fail Canadian families, making life more expensive and killing jobs. I would like to ask the member opposite when this House will learn what plan the government has to turn things around for the people in my riding and the people in Alberta.

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk: Mr. Speaker, this crash hurt Alberta's very strong economy. It hurt deeply an economy that supported all of us across the country by the wealth generated from one of the most sophisticated high-tech sectors in the world.

We can all be proud of the geoscientists, the engineers, the pipefitters, the tradespeople, all of the scientists who have made Canada the best in the world in the resource sector.

What we can do to help families is what we have done already. We have cut taxes and provided the Canada child benefit. Families have seen a benefit already. Not only that, in the long term they will see more for education and investments in infrastructure, which will create jobs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be participating in this very serious take-note debate on the job losses in the energy sector.

This debate is definitely about the situation in Alberta, but we could also talk about the situation in Saskatchewan and Newfoundland. We know that this is really serious.

Before talking about this issue, I would like to point out that when I visit schools in my riding I often talk to young people about the really special times in my life as a parliamentarian when I have had the opportunity to participate in important debates. When I think of that, I remember the debates we had about Attawapiskat. Members from all parties took part in these debates, which lasted until midnight. We heard some very moving and important speeches. We saw parliamentarians go a little further and elevate the debate.

I am also thinking of the debates on medical assistance in dying, in which members from all parties shared their values and deep feelings with other parliamentarians and the Canadians who listen to us and read *Hansard*.

This evening, with a few exceptions, such as my colleague opposite from Alberta who just spoke, most people have unfortunately used this occasion as an opportunity to score points, to play petty politics, to give sanctimonious speeches.

This is a very serious matter. I am a proud Quebecker. I am a proud Canadian. Every time I hear that my brothers and sisters in Alberta are facing huge economic challenges, it really upsets me. I want to help my fellow Canadians from Alberta. I think that is really and truly what all members here in the House want.

I know there are a number of responses we could give and a number of things we could propose as the government. The opposition party, the third party, and all parliamentarians can make suggestions during this debate as to how we could make a difference. It is important to set politics aside, come up with ideas, and recognize successes and failures.

One such success is definitely the fact that our government provided immediate assistance to Albertans during this crisis. We made substantial amounts of money available to the Alberta government. We invested in R and D to ensure that, when the economy recovers, we will be in the best possible position and the economy will be even more diversified in Alberta.

We approved pipelines to be able to bring resources that not only are from Alberta, but also are very important to Canada's economic development. This will make it possible to export them to other global markets.

I hope that we can raise the level of debate somewhat for the time we have left by proposing ideas and recognizing what works.

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● (2210)

[English]

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have to make note of this. The words “petty politics” were brought up by the member across the way on this particular issue, and this is about anything but that. I represent the oil industry in Manitoba, as small as it may be compared to Saskatchewan and Alberta. My colleague from Kildonan—St. Paul mentioned this a while ago as well. I probably should not say that she knows something about unemployment, but I will.

It is a situation that has arisen in my constituency as well. There are many people in western and southwest Manitoba and our small oil field who are suffering because they do not have jobs either. Camps were built in some of these communities and they are completely empty now. Hotels were built that are virtually empty now and struggling to make a go of it.

I have to raise this issue. This is about people's jobs. This is about my colleagues in Alberta mainly, as well as some from Saskatchewan, and I am here to support them because I believe that they are suffering terribly. My children are in Alberta and I know how desperate things are, particularly in a city like Calgary, where 30% of the office space downtown is empty. That is real. That is not about petty politics.

I would ask the member if he would like to retract any of that. He was looking for solid solutions. He talked about the money that Liberals have put into the economy in Alberta, but on January 1, they started peeling that back with the carbon tax.

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, when I mentioned that, I said, “What is the important thing for us to do?” I suggest to all members, let us not try to demonize each other. This is not about us in this place. This is about the people of Alberta who are finding themselves in tremendous difficulty. What I am saying is that rather than trying to demonize each other and say it is all bad, we have to recognize that there are some things that certainly were not the cause of the government. The world price on oil was not the cause of this government or the previous government.

One of the great things was that we were able to get the Keystone XL pipeline. We were supportive right from the get-go. We approved the Trans Mountain pipeline. We are working very closely with our partners to try to make sure we can create jobs and opportunities in Alberta.

As I said in my speech, which I hope the member recognizes, not only are we doing all of that but we are also making sure that we are investing in the future, so that as the economy picks up again, it is an even more dynamic, more diversified, more exciting Alberta economy, because what is good for Alberta is good for me and good for all of us.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my MP for his participation. I am calling him my MP because, when the House is sitting, I am pleased to live in his riding.

I want to pick up on what he said. Workers who lose their jobs in Alberta, Quebec, the Maritimes, or anywhere else in Canada are all

in the same dreadful situation, and the first place they turn for emergency assistance is employment insurance.

How is it that, even though the government plans to extend the number of weeks of benefits, as we speak, six out of 10 workers are still not eligible for employment insurance benefits? When will the government change the eligibility requirements so that those who are unfortunate enough to lose their jobs will at least be able to get some assistance?

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question and comments, and for making an excellent choice about where to live while he is here in Ottawa. Hull—Aylmer is truly a beautiful riding, but I am straying from my hon. colleague's question.

You raise an excellent point, but even if we were to change the system so that everyone who is out of work has access to it, we would still not be helping Alberta workers. Employment insurance is not going to solve the problem. Jobs are. We need to create a climate conducive to a vibrant economy.

● (2215)

The Speaker: Once again, I would remind the member to direct his comments to the Chair and to avoid using “you” when he is not addressing the Chair. I do not believe he was addressing the Chair in this case.

The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

I am pleased to rise in the House tonight to speak as part of this important take-note debate. As the jobs critic for the NDP, I recognize that this is a debate about jobs in our country. It is about the devastating job losses in the energy sector and the devastating impacts of boom and bust economies. It is about the need for our federal government to stand up for Canadian workers.

The collapse of oil prices has had a devastating impact on workers in Alberta. It has also greatly affected workers in Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, and communities in my province and across the country.

Today we have heard many emotional testimonials about how difficult the situation is on the ground.

Like many people, I also have family members in Alberta who have worked in the oil sector and have also felt the impacts. It has been devastating for many.

It is important tonight that as part of this discussion we recognize it did not just happen. These hardships are the direct result of successive Liberal and Conservative governments doing little to diversify Canada's energy sector. Both the Liberals and Conservatives have failed to embrace a definition of energy which goes beyond oil, natural gas, and coal. These hardships are also a direct result of successive governments that have failed to diversify not just our energy economy but our resource-based economy more broadly.

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I am from a mining town and we know what a boom and bust economy means for us. Our region also knows the importance of value-added jobs. Right now we are on the verge of losing hundreds of value-added jobs, particularly in the mining industry in our part of the country. People in Flin Flon and Thompson are very concerned, afraid, worried, and angry. Some months ago people in The Pas also faced insecurity. While there has been an interim solution, people continue to be concerned about the future of their resource sector, namely forestry.

In all of these cases what has been clear is that the federal government has been nowhere to be found to stand up for Canadian workers in our communities, much like in communities in Alberta and elsewhere. In fact, in our north, the federal government is nowhere to be found, not just in the communities I mentioned but also when it comes to Churchill, the Port of Churchill, or infrastructure jobs that were also committed to our communities.

Tonight we are talking about a situation that is increasingly impacting workers across the country. The reality is that the jobs situation in Canada is worsening. Over the last number of years, and it was certainly the case this past year, we have been creating more part-time, unstable work. Over the last year, full-time jobs only grew by 0.5%. This is related to job losses in the oil sector. More and more Canadians are struggling in precarious work. Many of them are young people.

That is why less than a year ago we launched a tour on the rise of precarious work in the millennial generation. We took our tour to Alberta. We went to Edmonton and Calgary. We heard heartbreaking stories about the challenges that young people were facing in these communities in difficult times.

I remember in Calgary we heard from an MLA, a minister in the government. She talked about how Calgary was often seen as a place of hope for many young Canadians and now even if one was from Alberta, that individual could barely make it by.

In Edmonton we heard from a young woman, a freelance journalist, who talked about the economic insecurity that she faced and how recently one of her bosses was told that if she wanted to find greater economic security, she should just get married.

The reality is that there is a way forward. That is by standing up for value-added jobs, standing up to companies that want to rip and ship our resources, standing up for a just transition.

We have heard tonight that research shows that an investment of \$1 million in coal creates seven jobs. That same investment of \$1 million creates 14 jobs in the solar industry and 17 in building retrofits.

People across our country are rising up to these challenges. They are demanding better from their government and we in the NDP stand with them.

• (2220)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of questions I will try to roll into one. We talk about jobs and how important they are, about the stability of jobs, and about training for good-paying,

middle-class jobs. As we have heard here tonight, our government approved three pipelines that created those jobs.

I do not think anyone would argue that innovation and the diversification of economies is important for any country, including Canada, and we are certainly working toward that. The oil sands, particularly, and the resource sector are leaders in that area.

Are you suggesting that the 25,000 jobs that will be available for Canadians are not jobs that are supported by the NDP?

The Speaker: Order, please. I think the hon. member knows that I am not suggesting anything and that she must direct her comments to the Chair.

The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, if the member had heard my speech, I listed a number of communities where we risk losing hundreds of jobs. I was talking about the mining sector and the forestry sector. What I referenced was the fact that the federal government is nowhere to be seen when it comes to protecting these jobs.

I would challenge the government on its figures. We heard earlier tonight that the numbers it is associating with these projects are not the actual numbers that will materialize. The situation remains that the jobs that are on the chopping block right now are ones the government should be standing up to fight for. Unfortunately, no minister has stood up to that challenge. People where I come from, and people across western Canada, are seeing the fact that the federal government is not standing up for them.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be here tonight to listen to my colleagues talk about an incredibly important issue, jobs in the energy sector.

I think policies are what we are looking for. It is not just about Alberta. We have had tremendous support from premiers in the prairie provinces who have fought for the energy sector, such as Lougheed, Klein, and most recently, Wall. They understood leadership. They stood up for it. People respected that.

That is one of the things that drives investment. We are looking for investment. That creates jobs. The government does not create jobs.

If we are the best drawers of water and hewers of wood, there is nothing wrong with that. Actually, we are the best in the world at it, so let us keep developing that. I do not like hearing that it is a bad thing, because it is a good thing. We are good at it. We have tremendous industries. Let us not take away from them.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is okay to be known as hewers of wood and drawers of water. We should have jobs that depend on processing the wealth that is in our territories and provinces, working with first nations.

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We can create wealth based on processing the raw materials that our country is so wealthy in. The fact remains that these are some of the best-paying jobs in our communities, whether in refineries or smelters. We need to stand up for value-added jobs. As I mentioned, this Liberal government has not. The previous Conservative government did not. The fact of the matter is that we are bleeding good jobs that are entirely related to the wealth our country has, and that is a crying shame. Canadians, Canadian workers, want their federal government to work with them to protect these value-added jobs.

• (2225)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the energy sector has long been an important source of jobs and wealth in Canada, and will continue to play that role for years to come. The oil industry is central to that sector. As we all know, the reason for this debate is that there has been in a serious downturn for the past two years because of low world prices for oil. Tens of thousands of workers have lost their jobs, especially in Alberta.

The natural resources committee recently completed a study on how the government could support the oil and gas industry to bring back those jobs. At the heart of this challenge is the fact that Canadian oil is expensive to extract and refine, since it is almost all in the form of bitumen and oil sands.

While we heard a lot of testimony at committee on the very innovative work the industry is doing to reduce costs and reduce the environmental footprint of the sector, many of the industry witnesses admitted that most of those innovations would not be built into the extraction plants until the price of oil was over \$70 a barrel. There is little indication in world energy markets that this price is likely to be seen in the near or medium future. We cannot afford to sit back and wait for oil prices to increase significantly to create jobs in the energy sector.

One strategy would be to provide more initiatives to produce value-added products in the oil and gas sector. Refining our bitumen before we ship it would benefit both the economy and the environment. More of our abundant natural gas reserves could be used to produce the building blocks of plastics and other materials with a fraction of the carbon footprint compared to similar processes using oil.

As the natural resources critic, I travelled with the minister last year to the clean energy ministerial meetings in San Francisco, often described as the implementation arm of the Paris climate agreement. The mood at those meetings was positive and upbeat, because speaker after speaker reported that we had passed a tipping point, and the world was shifting quickly, more quickly than anyone had predicted, away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy. I heard exactly the same message this past Monday at the Energy Council of Canada meetings.

One of the obvious paths forward is for Canada to take bold steps to build the renewable energy sector in this country. Global investment in renewables has been skyrocketing and now outstrips investments in fossil fuels. Canada needs to catch up. I have tried unsuccessfully to have the natural resources committee study how the government can help Canada join this shift to renewables. I have

talked to many workers in my riding, welders, electricians, and carpenters, who are working or who have worked in remote camps in the oil patch, but would rather live full time in their homes in southern B.C. They would welcome the opportunity to work in a distributed renewable energy industry, whether in solar, wind or geothermal, where they could go home every night to their families. This downturn, this crisis, offers an obvious opportunity to make significant investments in renewable energy.

Another point that I heard at the clean energy ministerial meetings was that the best new fuel is efficiency. The federal government could take one simple step, which is to reintroduce the eco-energy program to provide incentives to homeowners to retrofit their houses to be more energy efficient. This program was so successful that the previous government cancelled it in 2012 before it ran its course. When I talk to construction groups, such as the Canadian Home Builders' Association, they would be ecstatic if such a program were reinstated. It would bring good jobs to communities across the country, and reduce our carbon footprint at the same time.

We cannot wait for oil prices to rise another \$20 or so to let the market revive the oil industry in Canada. We may be waiting a long time for that to happen. We should provide incentives to refine our bitumen here in Canada, and we must take bold steps now to diversify our energy sector and create jobs across the country, joining the rest of the world in the shift to sustainable renewable energy.

• (2230)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member beside me has talked extensively about the need to diversify the economy. I would argue that the Alberta economy is one of the most diverse economies in the country, just due to the luxury of having immense amounts of capital that have flown into our province.

The good jobs that have come with the oil patch have often spun off into other things that have gone on. Most of the oil patch work tends to be shift work, 10 on and four off or two weeks on and two weeks off kind of thing. That has allowed for a lot of people to have two different jobs. They make their money in the oil patch and then they invest it in a different side company that they are trying to get off the ground, and they have the capital to do that. Often people learn skills in the oil patch that they are able to spin into projects around the country.

A lot of the innovations happen in the oil patch. For example, there are the wells and there are the flare pipes. I know we started out with just a pipe and then we would have a flame at the top of it. Now we have very sophisticated machinery that makes sure we burn all the natural gas completely.

Government Orders

I would challenge my colleague to investigate what actually happens in Alberta, to investigate the logging industry and the chips. Ninety-nine per cent of the tree that comes into town gets used for one product or another. I challenge him to investigate the farming industry, where some of the most advanced farming techniques are used in Alberta.

I would just challenge my colleague for that, and I would ask for his response. I know he is from the Okanagan. The people have some of the best things there as well. I challenge him to come to Alberta and check it out.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, as an ecologist, I would challenge the statement. If they have an economy that is brought to its knees by the change in price of one commodity, that is not a very diverse economy. It may be doing lots of different things, but it is reliant solely on one product. That is not a good thing.

The member talked about forestry. In British Columbia, we felt the effects of the same kind of thing about 10 years ago when we lost 40,000 jobs in the forest sector in British Columbia. People in British Columbia know what it is like to have communities that are hollowed out, with a number of mills just vanishing. We are facing that again with the softwood lumber agreement. With an annual allowable cut in British Columbia that is now set to decrease over the next few years, people will suffer there as well.

It is because we are reliant in Canada in far too many places on this rip and ship economy of just being hewers of wood. It is good to be hewers of wood, but we have to do other things with that.

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the member with respect to government attempting to be an enabler and giving incentives through different programs that we are offering to the good folks of Alberta.

My question is on that same subject. The member is correct. The expense of oil has risen, and diversity is the order of the day. With that, added-value products and investing in areas such as innovation, research and development, and diversified energy sectors to be more sustainable, once again is something in which the government is investing.

Does the member feel that it is imperative that we, as the federal government, work with the local jurisdictions, not just provincially but also locally and municipally, to further invest in their community strategies, to further be an enabler, to enable them to enter into the research and development markets and the innovation markets, and of course supplemented incentives as identified in our infrastructure plan? Does the member feel that in fact we should continue to make those investments?

• (2235)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, yes, I obviously think it is a good idea for governments to work together, to have a plan, to institute that plan, and to carry it out as expeditiously as possible. We have heard all the wonderful things that Albertans stand for and what they are good at. I have had well drillers come into my office and ask for the opportunity to go out there, that the technology exists now where they can use those abandoned wells for geothermal projects. Let the government provide some incentives to that industry. We have all the knowledge and know-how in Alberta to work on those

projects, to get jobs again, to create energy in a new way that does not rely on the price of oil.

Those are the kinds of things we have to look for. When we talk about innovation, let us be innovative. Let us think of new things.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources. It is a very odd relationship, but we are here as a team tonight.

It is a pleasure to be here to speak about this very important issue. Throughout the debate tonight we should be talking about the jobs crisis in the energy sector. Specifically, we have talked a lot about Alberta. However, our colleagues on the other side in the Liberal government, tonight their discussion has been about what they have done to improve EI. They have talked about trying to diversify Alberta's economy, like Alberta is really excited about not having jobs.

The key for Albertans is not to have extended EI. We appreciate when we work here together to come forward with a plan to address the unemployment situation in Alberta, but what Albertans want are jobs. What sets us apart from other parts of Canada, in my own opinion, is our entrepreneurship, our risk-taking mentality. That is what drove the oil sands, a very unique industry in the world.

We have also talked about diversifying Alberta's economy tonight, as if all it has is oil and gas. Alberta has one of the most diversified economies in all of Canada. To talk about Alberta, we should talk about our coal industry, our forestry sector, our agriculture sector. There is a reason that everybody knows about Alberta beef. We have an incredibly diverse economy.

What we have seen over the last year and a half is that Alberta entrepreneurship, that Alberta advantage being sucked dry by a provincial NDP government, which has implemented a carbon tax, increases to minimum wage, increases in taxes on small businesses and entrepreneurs, and a federal Liberal government that is doubling down on that. Despite a very difficult time in our energy sector, they are plowing ahead with additional carbon taxes on Alberta's energy industry. Not only is it Alberta's energy industry but it is an energy industry which is a nation builder. It impacts every province across this country.

I spent several days in Nova Scotia earlier this year, and it was amazing how many people came up to me and said that we needed to do something to get energy east up and running. They said that they were depending on that. Their friends and family had been flying back and forth to the oil sands in northern Alberta, but now there was nothing there for them. They are back in Nova Scotia, but there are no jobs in Nova Scotia either. They need those energy sector jobs.

To say that this is an Alberta-centric issue, I appreciate that, and it is true that we felt it maybe more than other people, but this is also a pan-Canadian issue. Energy workers across the country are feeling the pinch of what is going on right now.

Government Orders

What makes it that much more frustrating tonight is we have a Liberal government that is saying that it has increased EI, and that it has approved three pipelines. Let us be clear on what has actually happened in the last year and a half. The Liberal government did not approve three pipelines. The government approved two pipelines, which were already in the system. The National Energy Board approved those pipelines. They are not new. They are expansions of existing pipelines. For the government to say they have actually been built and those jobs have been created is disingenuous. We have a long way to go before we get there.

The one pipeline which I think should stick out the most for us is Northern Gateway, which was approved and put forward by the Conservative government under the former Prime Minister Stephen Harper. It was approved by the National Energy Board. It should have been one of those three that were approved.

However, the Liberal government made a political decision to say that it does not like that pipeline, and despite it being passed by the National Energy Board, it was not going to go with that. What that has done to the industry is it has caused a lot of uncertainty. If I am an investor and I want to invest in Canada, I am not going to do that, because there is a carbon tax, but also because there is no certainty for me to know where the approval is. I could meet every National Energy Board regulation, every environmental standard, which are the best in the world, but when the time comes, the Prime Minister and his cabinet could say no.

When energy east passes through the National Energy Board regulatory review, which they have delayed, will the government support it? Will the government support it or will it make a political decision, like it did with Northern Gateway, and deny it, putting Canada's energy industry further behind and causing more stress, when we have given them some great options to turn things around now?

• (2240)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was happy to share my time with the member opposite from Foothills.

We keep hearing about the carbon tax, and the way it is being talked about, as an imposition and something new. I want to take members back to 2007, when Premier Ed Stelmach put in a carbon tax at \$15 per tonne. This is not something new.

I will remind members, and I hope the member opposite will comment, the innovation that happened in the oil sector that we have been talking about tonight came about with a price on carbon. If we talk to those in the energy sector, they will tell us that they want a price on carbon, because it will innovate, and it will help them grow.

I wonder if the member opposite could respond to that.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague for bringing that up, because I really did not have a chance to talk about the carbon tax in my five-minute presentation. It was nice of her to put that ball on the tee and let me hit it off.

The member is exactly right. Actually, the carbon tax in Alberta was brought in before, in 2004. We were the first district in Canada to bring that forward. However, the provincial government at the time put in other stabilizers in the policy to ensure that the industry

could grow, but it was stagnant, and business and industry knew where they were going.

I am glad she brought that up, because the Liberal government has made it sound like Alberta has this dirty oil industry, and we have to do everything we can to try to clean it up. In fact, it has been a trendsetter. It set the bar before any other district in the world. We have one of the strictest and most environmentally friendly regimes anywhere in the world.

Instead of putting on a carbon tax, which further inhibits growth in the energy industry, why do the Liberals not stand up and be proud of the natural resources that Canada has? Be proud of Alberta's energy sector. Be proud of the technology and innovation that has happened in northern Alberta, because that is really where innovation and growth has happened in that industry.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the main thing I want to ask right now is about jobs in the energy sector, and jobs in Alberta.

I have family in Alberta, including children, who are trying to make a livelihood, and they make observations. People look at the energy sector, young people who are risk-takers and entrepreneurs, and I celebrate them. Those Canadians are looking at the innovation. They are also looking at other ways that other countries are treating their energy sectors, and how they are value-adding, how they are working.

Young people in my life describe their kind of livelihood job as feast or famine. We call it the boom and bust economy" but it is either feast or famine. One is working overtime or one is laid off. It is a shame that we have that kind of pressure on young people, let alone family people who have to make heart-wrenching decisions.

While we are talking about jobs here, I would like to hear an acknowledgement of the need for a long-term plan, that lessons have been learned from the past. Maybe moving forward, what are some of the things we can do when things are done right because of the positive results of this session here tonight? What are some of the lessons learned?

For instance, could we look at some of the lessons learned from other countries, like a royal—

• (2245)

The Speaker: Order, the member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I think I have the gist of the question.

If we go through with what the NDP would like us to do, there would not be a boom and bust. There would just be bust. That is really what the NDP is advocating.

Our young people in Alberta are used to this boom and bust. The attitude in Alberta is work ethic. We work as hard as we possibly can for everything we can get. If we work hard, we are rewarded for that, whether in the energy industry, ranching, or dairy farming. There are good times and there are bad times, but the mentality that is there in Alberta is that if I work, I can do everything, and if there are policies in place and a government that supports me, I will be successful. Right now, at the provincial and federal level, we do not have that.

Government Orders

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise today to reaffirm our government's commitment to the oil and gas industry, a vital part of our Canadian economy.

[*Translation*]

All members of the House recognize that recent years have been difficult for Canada's oil and gas sector.

[*English*]

The sharp drop in oil prices has taken a heavy toll on the men and women, and their families, who depend on the industry for their livelihoods, not just in Alberta, as we have heard tonight, or Saskatchewan or Newfoundland and Labrador, but right across the country.

Every job lost in the oil patch ripples across the Canadian economy, whether it is a manufacturing company in Ontario, an engineering firm from Quebec, or an oil worker commuting from one of our coasts. All of us understand that, just as we understand that we cannot move global commodity prices with a snap of our fingers, no matter how much we want to.

However, we can strengthen Canada's social safety net to help affected workers by extending employment insurance benefits for those in the hardest-hit regions and by introducing the new Canada child benefit that provides greater financial assistance to those who need it most. That is what we have done.

We are also making unprecedented investments in vital infrastructure, such as public transit, roads, bridges, and water treatment facilities, to get more Canadians working, building the foundation that will keep Canada's economy growing for generations to come. It is a balanced approach that ensures that Canada's energy sector remains a source of well-paying middle-class jobs.

We are striking a balance, approving the Trans Mountain expansion and Line 3 replacement projects and creating 22,000 construction jobs along the way. They were balanced decisions, and they were the right decisions.

The Prime Minister's mandate letter to the Minister of Natural Resources is very clear on this approach. I would like to read an excerpt from it:

It is a core responsibility of the federal government to help get our natural resources to market, but that is only possible if we achieve the required public trust....

That has been our approach since we took office, rebuilding trust and restoring faith by strengthening our environmental assessments and regulatory reviews, by expanding public engagement and consultations with indigenous peoples, and by ensuring that local communities and indigenous peoples are true beneficiaries of resource development. I believe it is an approach that has come to define our government: promoting clean economic growth by getting our environmental house in order and rallying Canadians behind us.

Our efforts started as soon as we took office, when the Prime Minister went to Paris with our provincial and territorial colleagues, and Canada helped lead the way on the global agreement on climate change.

The Prime Minister met again with the provinces and territories last spring and fall to launch the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. This framework has set us on a clear path toward ensuring that Canada is a global leader in the transition to a lower-carbon economy.

All of these measures are critical to the long-term future of Canada's energy sector, including the oil and gas industry. How? It will be by making the industry greener and more competitive for a world that increasingly values more sustainable practices. This was reflected in our government's first budget, which featured significant investments in clean technology and new innovation.

Let me just add that no one understands the need for clean technology and innovation better than Canada's oil and gas sector. That can-do spirit continues in the industry today through the Canada's Oil Sands Innovation Alliance. It is a formal partnership of 13 leading companies that have invested, to date, more than \$1.3 billion to develop and share more than 935 distinct technologies and innovations.

However, none of us can do it alone. We cannot work in isolation from one another. That is why the Minister of Natural Resources has been engaging with people across this country, bringing together environmental leaders, energy companies, indigenous communities, and municipalities.

That is what our decisions on the TMX and Line 3 pipelines do, and that is what has been the goal of the initiatives I talked about today: Creating jobs and prosperity through a stronger, cleaner, and more sustainable energy sector, one built for today and tomorrow.

● (2250)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed many of the hon. member's words this evening, but I would like to ask her some questions about an issue on which we have both been working over the past year, and that is the impact on policy decisions and on the regulatory process, and its direct impact on investment and jobs.

The acceptance of the independent expert recommendations for approval by the NEB of the two pipeline expansions were applauded, but for the first time in Canadian history, a Prime Minister actually overruled and rejected the recommendation for approval of a pipeline based on the same process, the same expertise, and independence. On top of that, the regulatory process for the energy east pipeline was stalled, derailed, and restarted. Another panel was appointed to hear it, and now it has to start at the very beginning.

Government Orders

Meanwhile, none of the regulatory reviews governing multiple regulatory processes are actually complete. There are undergoing consultations right now. Therefore, that demonstrates a clear lack of clarity for the process and for measures, and complete uncertainty in the approval process, which will deter investment and kill more jobs.

All of that being said and given the fact that the leader of our country said that a world-class asset, that any other country in the world would envy, should be phased out, how can she really suggest that energy investors, Albertans, or, indeed, the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who depend on the energy sector for their livelihoods can believe any word the Liberals say about supporting the energy sector and Canada's world-leading energy workers?

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, I have stood in the House many times, as has the minister, and said it is the responsibility of government to help get our natural resources to market. We recognize that we need to reach international markets.

I want to talk about some of the comments around the northern gateway pipeline. Indeed, the court found that there was not enough consultation with indigenous peoples through that process and that, in fact, stopped that process. The timelines have been very clear in terms of the process with the energy east pipeline, the 21-month timetable. We have moved to make things as clear as possible, while ensuring that we are building the confidence of Canadians in a review process that, in a perfect world, would not end up in court challenges, would have the confidence of Canadians, and would get through the process faster.

The Speaker: It being 10:54 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 53(1), the committee will rise and I will leave the chair.

(Government Business No. 11 reported)

The Speaker: Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:54 p.m.)

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