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# House of Commons Debates

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Wednesday, March 11, 2020

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



## **CONTENTS**

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

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1405)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for North Island—Powell River will now lead us in our national anthem.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### NOWRUZ

**Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this House once again to speak on the occasion of Nowruz.

On Thursday, March 19, at 11:50 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, those of Persian, Kurdish, Turkish, Azari, Baluch, Afghan and Pakistani descent in my community of Richmond Hill, and in the greater Toronto area, will ring in the new year with festivities, dinner and charity drives.

We face an uncertain time in Canada and the GTA as cases of COVID-19 are on the rise. However, I want to acknowledge the ongoing hard work of all levels of government and our health care providers in helping to maintain public safety. I thank all event organizers who put the safety of our community first and postponed, rescheduled or reformatted their celebrations.

To the 300 million people celebrating Nowruz in Canada and across the world, I say:

[*Member spoke in Farsi*]

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### KINSMEN TELEMIRACLE

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last weekend a great Saskatchewan tradition continued. For 44 years, Telemiracle has been rallying support from the great people of my province for those who need it most.

Telemiracle supports the Kinsmen Foundation, which offers additional medical assistance, equipment, travel accommodations and so much more to people with cognitive or mobility challenges. Its annual telethon is circled on every calendar in the province and boasts a loyal following of supporters and donors who tune in year after year to enjoy excellent local entertainment and to support a great cause.

Telemiracle embodies the Canadian spirit of giving, and its longstanding contribution to increasing the quality of life for all Saskatchewanians deserves to be celebrated. I would therefore like to offer my humble thanks on behalf of the good people of Regina—Lewvan to this year's Telemiracle team, who raised over \$5.5 million. These funds will go to Saskatchewan individuals and families when they need it the most.

Once again, I thank all in Saskatchewan for answering the call to ring those phones.

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### MODEL UNITED NATIONS

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on February 29, I had the opportunity to participate in the first annual model United Nations at Tamanawis Secondary School.

Model UN provides youth a platform that magnifies leadership and teamwork. This event allowed delegates to nurture their skills in an active, comfortable and positive environment. Inspired by social studies department head Ms. Lindsay Hutchison, these secondary school students will be the voice to change the world, which will make Surrey—Newton and all of Canada a better place.

I urge all members to join me in thanking the Tamanawis delegates, sponsors and staff for all their hard work in organizing a successful student-led model United Nations.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### LÉONE FORGET

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about a volunteer in my riding who has given of herself her whole life, working behind the scenes, a woman of dignity.

*Statements by Members*

Of course, I am talking about Léone Forget, who played an active role in providing much-needed services to Saint-Sauveur's most disadvantaged residents.

Ms. Forget was also the person who broke ground for Saint-Sauveur's community garden, which feeds people in need. The garden brought a lot of attention to the local food pantry, the Garde-Manger des Pays-d'en-haut, and brought her widespread recognition as well.

For 17 years, Ms. Forget worked very hard on the holiday charity drive, cared for vulnerable people on Rue Saint-Denis and provided invaluable assistance at the local soup kitchen, Soupe et compagnie. Right now, she is fighting for her life.

Madame Forget, on behalf of all the people in my riding, Laurentides—Labelle, thank you, and we wish you all the best.

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● (1410)

[English]

**NATIONAL ENGINEERING MONTH**

**Hon. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, March is National Engineering Month and, as a fellow engineer, I want to recognize the valuable work engineers do.

Engineers solve problems, identify opportunities and create jobs. They are successfully involved in all aspects of our society. Engineers are building the infrastructure of our country, enhancing cybersecurity, finding new methods to reduce pollution, inventing clean and advanced technology, and designing new modes of transportation.

As we transition into the new economy, engineers have a unique perspective that policy-makers can benefit from. On the occasion of International Women's Day, it is also important to note that Engineers Canada and engineering schools are working on recruiting more women, more indigenous and more LGBTQ engineers.

To all those considering joining the profession I say, "There is a place for you in engineering." On behalf of our government, I want to thank engineers for their valuable contribution to our society.

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**GLOBAL INSTITUTE FOR WATER SECURITY**

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Global Institute for Water Security of the University of Saskatchewan brought together 24 water scientists from 13 institutions from across Canada to meet with parliamentarians and talk about water science.

They were here to share information with decision-makers about scientific contributions to water security, new technology to monitor water and climate, solutions to water contamination, and equitable access to water.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, as well as the member of Parliament for Saskatoon West, I was able to pass a motion to have the institute appear before our committee. Members learned of the institute's

mandate to research ways to protect freshwater resources for sustainable food production; to mitigate the risk of water-related disasters, such as floods, droughts and fires; to predict and forecast extreme global change; and to bring solutions to indigenous communities that face water insecurity.

I want to thank Dr. Jay Famiglietti and his team for doing such a great job.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for International Women's Day—yes, I said “women”, plural—I would like to highlight the actions of a few women from Sherbrooke who, in the 1970s, helped provide women with the tools needed to shake up our patriarchal society. Laurette de Montigny founded the first shelter for abused women. Madeleine Lacombe established the first help centre for victims of sexual assault. Marie Gratton advocated for the rights of women in the Church. Suzanne Blache established the first employment centre for women. Lise Drouin-Paquette founded Femmes et politique municipale de l'Estrie. Lastly, Nicole Dorin helped found PEPINES in 1993.

I thank all the women who accept themselves as the persons they are to fulfill their potential, as well as those who are taking up the cause.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last weekend, in honouring International Women's Day, I attended many events and met so many community leaders in my riding. I met Marjorie Taylor, Ruby Dhillon, Parveen Rashid, Myrna Adams, Angela Johnson, Mary and Cristina Romano, and Irene Chu, as well as all the young girls, such as Avneet and Jaspreet, and many other amazing Bramptonians.

I also would like to recognize organizations such as Cancer Warrior, Brampton Professional Women, Pink Attitude, SOCH and so many others that empower women. Because of them, our community is stronger.

International Women's Day is an opportunity for all of us to celebrate the progress we have made and to renew our collective effort to knock down barriers facing women's advancement.

I want to recognize my wonderful female colleagues in Brampton, in caucus, in cabinet and across the aisle. These women, regardless of their political stripe, make a difference in our communities across Canada and around the world.

I thank my family, my twin daughters Arisha and Amrit, and of course my mother. It is because of her that I am here.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE LA  
FRANCOPHONIE**

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, March 20 marks the 50th anniversary of the Francophonie. Those who know me know that I am a strong advocate for the French fact. I am a proud Canadian, francophone, Quebecker and Conservative.

Today I acknowledge this notable and most important event. The forerunner of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie was established on March 20, 1970, under the name of Agence de coopération culturelle et technique. Canada is one of the founding countries. The OIF was founded on a shared common language, French, and is responsible for promoting and disseminating francophone cultures.

I remember that it was the Conservative Party of Canada that committed to ensuring that the federal funding allocated to the provinces for francophone communities would be spent as planned. That is another reason I am proud to be a Conservative Party of Canada representative.

Let us continue to protect, develop, and promote our French language.

I invite francophones and francophiles to proudly celebrate the institution that is the OIF. I wish everyone a happy 50th anniversary.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

[English]

**THOMAS WILSON**

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House with a heavy heart to pay tribute to the life and public service of a great Windsorite, Mr. Tom Wilson, who passed away this week.

Tom was a retired teacher who taught history and geography before entering municipal politics in 1985. He faithfully served the residents of Windsor for 21 years as a city councillor for ward 5. For many of us in the east end, he was known simply as the mayor of Forest Glade, where he supported youth athletics and organizations. He helped establish Forest Glade Optimist Park. He chaired the conservation authority and was an early champion of environmental sustainability.

Tom and I ran against each other in a municipal election. He quickly became a mentor, supporter and friend. Many times he would pick up the phone to provide insight and encouragement. More than anything, he wanted to see young people succeed.

All of us in Windsor are better for knowing Tom Wilson. Rest well, Tom. Rest well, mayor of Forest Glade.

**GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for the last four years the government has blown through its promise of a balanced budget. Liberals told Canadians the budget would balance itself while they threw huge parties and spent billions of dollars of taxpayer money. The party is over. The money is drying up.

The government's high taxes, wasteful spending and massive deficits have put Canada in an incredibly weak position, but now we are up against a global pandemic. Markets are tanking. Canadian energy is unable to get to market. Thousands of jobs are disappearing. Economic growth is screeching to a halt. Millions of Canadians are less than \$200 away from insolvency at the end of the month.

The possibility of a made-in-Canada recession is becoming more and more real. The Prime Minister is missing in action. There is no captain at the helm of the ship. The Prime Minister has left Canada weak and vulnerable, while also leaving Canadians behind when they need strong leadership the most.

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**PETER SNELSON**

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and express our sincerest condolences on the passing of Pete Snelson, a champion for freedom and liberty as well as a regional director for the Canadian Shooting Sports Association.

I had the honour of getting to know Pete through the CSSA, where I learned Pete was a veteran. He suffered from PTSD for over 30 years. He tirelessly fought for better treatment for our veterans, many of whom suffer from the mental anguish that all too often accompanies military service.

In his honour, the CSSA has created two scholarships that will be handed out to winners of the Peter Snelson Memorial Essay Contest. This is a fitting tribute to a man who dedicated his intelligence, creativity and energy to advance causes of liberty and freedom.

I want to extend our sincerest condolences to his mother, Mariette, his sister, Kathryn, and to members of the CSSA and all of his friends and family.

Pete will be dearly missed. May he rest in peace.

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**COVID-19**

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. This pandemic does not affect everyone equally. The most vulnerable people will ultimately be hit the hardest.

### Oral Questions

People without sick leave cannot afford to stay home from work. They lose their pay and maybe their jobs. A disproportionately high number of these people are women and come from marginalized groups. Many of them work in the service industry and food service, as caregivers and as front-line workers. It is in everyone's best interest that they stay home if they are sick, but they are also among the half of all Canadians who are \$200 away from insolvency. A day's less pay could mean missing that month's rent or the ability to put food on the table.

Other countries are finding ways to help and take care of their people, but 45 days into this outbreak, the Liberals are still "exploring additional measures". The Liberals need to spend less time talking about helping people and actually start helping people.

\* \* \*

• (1420)

[Translation]

#### SIMON THIBAUT

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Simon Thibault, who is living with epilepsy.

Simon Thibault had his first seizure 30 years ago. Today, at 43, he is not going to let epilepsy hold him back. In partnership with  pilepsie Montr egie, he has launched, and will participate in, the D fi-Simon ride for epilepsy.

From July 4 to 10, Simon will cycle 1,200 kilometres to raise awareness and inform the public about epilepsy. Accompanied by his two sons, William and Rapha l, who will be cycling with him, and with the support of his wife Val rie and daughter Lily-Ann, he will visit epilepsy associations in Quebec City, Chicoutimi, Pasp biac and, of course, Granby.

This is an excellent way to give hope to those living with epilepsy. Above all, Simon wants to show everyone affected by epilepsy that this illness must not prevent them from overcoming prejudice and breaking down barriers.

Good luck, Simon.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### RARE DISEASE DAY

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Rare Disease Day came and went on February 29, the rarest day of all. This year's theme is, "Rare is many worldwide. Rare is strong every day. Rare is proud everywhere." Millions of Canadians, two-thirds of them children, are affected by one of over 7,000 rare diseases. Only one in three of these Canadians can access needed treatments.

The hardest experience as a father is to care for a loved one with an incurable condition. My three oldest kids suffer from the rare kidney disorder called Alport syndrome, which is incurable, genetic and degenerative. My youngest daughter passed away two years ago from Patau syndrome and no day goes by without me thinking of her.

I join patients across the country to call on the federal government to abandon the changes to the PMPRB, go back to patient stakeholders and work out a solution that makes access to treatments the first and most important value, instead of price controls that block access to medication.

I invite all members to join me to celebrate Rare Disease Day.

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#### TERRY FOX

**Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bank of Canada is looking for Canadians to put on the new five-dollar bill. There is no shortage of great Canadians to be recognized in this way, but in this bright firmament, no light shines brighter than Terry Fox. Terry Fox is a Port Coquitlam hometown hero and a national symbol of resilience.

[Translation]

Not only is Terry a hometown hero, but he is also a national hero.

[English]

Even 40 years after he dipped his foot into the Atlantic in St. John's and began his marathon of hope, he continues to inspire Canadians. Through his own battle and the fight that carries on in his name, countless lives have been saved. Many cancers, including the one that took Terry's own life, are now treatable thanks to his legacy and thanks to the way he chose to face this vicious illness. However, the work is not done.

[Translation]

He still has a vital role to play.

[English]

Let us give him a high-five.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

#### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister likes to blame everyone else for his failures. I have no doubt that in the days ahead he is going to blame things like the coronavirus and the stock market crash for Canada's weak economic performance. The reality is that long before those things happened, Canada's economy was already headed for trouble. The last quarter's result was a feeble 0.3%. Most economists are now slashing their projections for future growth.

The Prime Minister's strategy of choking our economy with red tape, raising taxes on small businesses and wasting billions on things like fridges for Loblaws clearly is not working. Will he change course?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Canadians know, we have a very different approach on the economy from the Conservatives. We believe in investing in Canadians, investing in the middle class and investing in infrastructure. That is exactly what we have done over these past five years. What that actually has led to is not only have we seen Canadians create over a million jobs while having one of the healthiest balance sheets in the G7, but we have also lifted over a million Canadians out of poverty. Our approach of investing in Canadians and in their communities is working, and we are going to continue.

• (1425)

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the problem is the Liberals are not investing in Canadians; they are investing in Loblaws, they are investing in Mastercard. They are giving out billion-dollar bonuses to Bombardier that can get passed on to executive bonuses. They are right, they do make different choices, and the results speak for themselves. From 2010 to 2015, Canada's economy consistently outperformed the U.S. under the previous Conservative government. Now, under this Liberal government, Canadian growth is almost a full percentage point behind the U.S. Will the Prime Minister admit that his spending is getting Canada nowhere?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the very first thing we did when we took office was to cut taxes for the middle class and raise them on the wealthiest 1%. The Conservatives voted against that. Then we brought in a Canada child benefit that stopped sending child benefit cheques to millionaires who the Conservatives supported and instead we gave more money every month to nine out of 10 Canadian families tax-free. That measure has lifted hundreds of thousands of kids and over a million Canadians out of poverty. We kept investing in Canadians, in their communities, in the future we are building together and fighting climate change. That is the future Canadians expect.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the previous Conservative government, when times were good we paid down the debt to give Canada the flexibility it needed to respond to the global economic recession. As a result, under the Conservative government, Canada was last into the recession and the first one out. The Prime Minister is taking a completely different approach. While times were good, he wasted money by throwing it around to his corporate friends. As a result, investment in Canada is down. Investors are fleeing Canada for other countries. Instead of choking our economy with red tape and new taxes, will the Prime Minister unleash the free market by lowering taxes on job creators and eliminating wasteful red tape?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Conservative governments under Stephen Harper added \$150 billion to Canada's national debt. We focused instead on investing in Canadians. The Conservatives may feel that investing in a Canada child benefit is wasting money and that lifting a million people out of poverty does not count for much, but we know it makes a real difference in the lives of Canadians. That is why we are going to keep putting Canadians first, not the kind of petty politics the Conservatives do every single day.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, providing support directly to parents is a Conservative principle that the Liberal Party fought against for years. The results

speak for themselves. While the Conservatives were in power, investors were fighting to get their money into Canada. We now see major investors like Warren Buffett fleeing Canada because of the political instability the Prime Minister has caused. Under his watch, business investment in equipment has dropped by 20% and more than \$150 billion has left our country's energy sector. Will the Prime Minister admit that giving handouts to Loblaws and Mastercard is not investing in Canadians?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, foreign direct investments actually increased 19% last year because of the initiatives we put forward.

The member opposite wants to talk about Berkshire Hathaway. He should probably look at the fact that Berkshire Hathaway just announced an investment of \$200 million in a wind farm in Alberta. That is a good thing. We know that continuing to draw in global investment as we move our economy forward is absolutely important.

\* \* \*

**ETHICS**

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Only a Liberal would think that losing \$4 billion on one hand is somehow leaving us better off, Mr. Speaker.

[*Translation*]

We know that the Prime Minister is trying to cover up his interference in the legal system. He even fired his former attorney general to keep her quiet.

There was a time when the Bloc stood against Liberal corruption. When Gilles Duceppe was leader during the sponsorship scandal, the Bloc helped expose the Liberals' corruption.

What did the Prime Minister offer the Bloc in exchange for its help in burying his corruption?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect their prime minister to protect jobs, and that is exactly what I did and what I will continue to do. I will also continue to respect our legal system and protect Canadians' jobs across the country.

• (1430)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** Before continuing, I just want to remind hon. members I have my bifocals on, so not only can I hear you, but I can see distance as well. I can see who is shouting.

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, allow me to say that the Bloc Québécois did not want to give the Conservatives an opportunity to keep shouting that all Quebecers are corrupt.

This morning, the Prime Minister outlined a plan for containing what the WHO is now calling a pandemic. This announcement had some good points, particularly with respect to financial support and employment insurance. However, the government is still ignoring one of the most troubling issues, namely that border workers have neither the equipment nor the training to screen and deal with possible cases of the coronavirus.

Is the Prime Minister also going to announce a plan for managing the borders?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, ever since concerns were first raised about the coronavirus, we have been keeping the public informed and investing in our borders and in the Canada Border Services Agency to ensure that Canadian and foreign travellers entering this country are aware of the measures keeping them safe. We have always based our decisions on science and the advice of experts, and that will never change.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it would be nice if the government would be proactive with its policy for once instead of playing catch-up and finishing three strokes behind. This is a serious and worrisome pandemic we are dealing with.

Will the government ensure better border control, hold a press conference every day and increase seniors' purchasing power as of the age of 65 in the next budget without imposing conditions?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have invested and will continue to invest in our health care system to keep Canadians safe. We recognize that this crisis will have an economic impact on workers, Canadians, families and seniors. That is why we are going to invest to help them and to support the sectors of the economy that are facing challenges. We will always seek to help vulnerable people in this and every situation.

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**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the plan proposed by the Liberals today does nothing for the 60% of workers who do not have access to employment insurance. Those workers are faced with an impossible decision: Should they stay home from work or pay their bills?

Is the Prime Minister prepared to implement a program to help all workers stay home?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we completely understand the concerns of Canadians who are facing challenges, whether they pertain to their health, the safety of their family, their job or their financial security. That is why we are implementing measures to help workers and businesses continue to support families and communities. At the same time, we are always looking to do more to help those facing challenges. We recognize

that there are segments of the population that will not have access to employment insurance. That is why we are working for them too.

[English]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister seems to not understand is that the vast majority of Canadians will not have access to his plan, as 60% of Canadian workers have no access to employment insurance. Imagine a service worker who is stuck with the impossible decision: Do they go to work so they can pay their bills or do they stay at home and prevent the spread of a disease but risk not being able to pay the rent?

Will the Prime Minister commit today to ensure that all workers have paid sick leave?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is what I talked about this morning, the fact that our government will be there for all Canadians who are facing important decisions in keeping Canada safe, keeping their fellow citizens safe and keeping their families safe.

We know that the decisions Canadians can and will take in the coming days and weeks will have an impact on delaying the spread of the coronavirus in Canada and keeping Canadians safer. That is why we are going to make sure that we are working hard to support Canadians right across the economy through EI but also through other systems.

\* \* \*

● (1435)

[Translation]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister burst out laughing at my simple but serious question, which I will now repeat.

What did the Prime Minister offer the leader of the Bloc Québécois to buy his vote and ensure that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner will not testify about the "Trudeau II Report", a report that clearly shows the Prime Minister interfered in our justice system?

Here is what his House leader told me: If you want to know, invite them out for a beer.

If a person has to go for a beer in order to talk to the government about national issues, that is totally irresponsible.

What did he offer the leader of the Bloc Québécois in exchange for his vote?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know this will come as quite a surprise to the Conservatives, but there are people in the House from different parties who are focused on the well-being of Canadians and do not want to play political games at the expense of workers.

*Oral Questions*

We will always stand up for workers from coast to coast to coast. We will always respect our institutions and the people who work for them. That is what Canadians expect. The Conservatives are the only ones constantly playing political games.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the only job the Bloc Québécois and the Prime Minister are trying to save is the Prime Minister's job.

There is a scathing report called the “Trudeau II Report”. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner wants to appear and testify. All we want is to hear from the commissioner so he can answer questions on the report that found that this Prime Minister interfered in the justice system. This is not about jobs at SNC-Lavalin; this is about the Prime Minister's job.

What did he do to buy the Bloc Québécois's vote to keep the commissioner from coming to testify?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are worried about the coronavirus outbreak. Canadians are worried about their opportunities in the knowledge economy, the economy of the future. Canadians are worried about what lies ahead in the next few weeks. Meanwhile, the Conservatives care only about playing political games and dredging up these old issues.

We, on the other hand, remain focused on the well-being of workers and all Canadians. That is what people expect, and that is what we will always do.

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the quid pro quo between the Liberal-Bloc coalition is disgusting, and when Conservatives tried to invite the Ethics Commissioner to testify on the “Trudeau II Report” into the Prime Minister's corruption, a PMO enforcer spoke directly to the Bloc MP and bought her vote. Canadians deserve to know the full truth about the Prime Minister's interference in our judicial system.

What did the Prime Minister give to the Bloc to help him muzzle the Ethics Commissioner?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I gave the Bloc absolutely nothing.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is hoping this goes away, but we know an RCMP investigation is ongoing, as we heard from the lobbying commissioner. The full breadth of the interference in our judicial system must come to light, and the Bloc helping the Prime Minister cover up his corruption makes it complicit in his crime.

We know the leader of the Bloc met with the Prime Minister last week. Can the Prime Minister confirm that this is when he cut a deal to cover up his corruption?

**The Speaker:** I want to remind the hon. members that accusing someone of a crime is rather extreme, and I want to warn them—

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

**The Speaker:** Being in contempt of the Speaker is not a good thing, so I would not shout while I am speaking. That is not a good thing.

What I am asking members to do is be a little more judicious when they are asking their questions or giving their answers, so please be careful. We want to make sure that this place is as respectful as possible.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility of the Prime Minister to stand up for Canadians while upholding the law, and that is exactly what we have done.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has some nerve to talk about political games. Let's talk about political games, then. The report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is entitled “Trudeau II Report”. The report of the Ethics Commissioner questions the Prime Minister's behaviour in the scandal: “[the Prime Minister] used his position of authority over [the Minister of Justice] to seek to influence...her decision”.

We wanted the Ethics Commissioner to testify in committee. However, the Bloc Québécois helped the Liberals muzzle him.

What did the Prime Minister give the Bloc in exchange for help in their attempt to muzzle the Ethics Commissioner?

• (1440)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we gave the Bloc nothing.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the reprehensible behaviour of the Prime Minister and his accomplices in the Bloc Québécois is not nothing. They prevented the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner from testifying before Canadians about the “Trudeau II Report”. Bloc MPs are complicit in the immoral action of the Prime Minister, who was rebuked by the Ethics Commissioner. The Bloc and their Liberal allies prevented the Ethics Commissioner from testifying.

Where is the Prime Minister's honour in this situation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a responsibility to protect jobs across the country and uphold the law. That is exactly what I did.

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**GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives do not want to be the official opposition, the Bloc is ready to step up to the plate.

The Bloc Québécois's efforts are focused on making gains for Quebec. The Conservatives are focused on making gains for themselves. The other difference is that the Bloc Québécois has someone they can send to negotiate. That must be difficult to hear.

*Oral Questions*

Quebeckers want to know if the Prime Minister will protect access to the border and if seniors' buying power will improve.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to follow the advice of experts and public health officials to ensure that those arriving in Canada are informed of ways to protect themselves and are adequately monitored.

We will of course continue to invest in our seniors, as we have done since coming to power in 2015, by increasing the guaranteed income supplement for the most vulnerable. We continue to try to help seniors. It is part of our approach to supporting Canadians.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government has been underfunding health care, which is causing problems that go beyond the coronavirus. This is an ongoing problem that affects the quality of our health care. This is an ongoing problem that hinders the work of our doctors and nurses. Our hospitals are already overcrowded. Once the coronavirus crisis is resolved, our hospitals will still be overcrowded.

Will the government kill two birds with one stone and fix this ongoing problem by increasing health transfers to 5.2%, as Quebec and the other provinces have called for?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we recognize that it is important for our provincial authorities to have the resources necessary to keep Canadians safe and healthy during the coronavirus crisis. That is why we announced today that we will transfer \$500 million to the provinces to help them prepare for the arrival of COVID-19.

We will always be prepared to work with the provinces to improve our health care system for all Canadians, while ensuring that we respect provincial jurisdictions, of course.

\* \* \*

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this question period just got interesting. The Bloc leader just said that there were negotiations between him and the Prime Minister of Canada.

I would like to remind the House that the upshot of those negotiations was that the Ethics Commissioner was prevented from testifying before Canadians. The Bloc abetted the government in muzzling the Ethics Commissioner.

I also want to point out that the RCMP is investigating those actions, which could be considered criminal.

This is my question for the Prime Minister: What did he give the Bloc in exchange for helping to muzzle the Ethics Commissioner?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I did not give anything.

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, China, Iran, Italy and South Korea have all been designated as high-risk areas and the WHO is now declaring COVID-19 a pandemic.

While screening measures when entering Canada or travelling within Canada still have not been updated, the WHO is asking countries to take urgent and aggressive measures.

The government has the ability under the Quarantine Act to require all individuals who have visited high-risk areas to be placed in quarantine. When will it use it?

• (1445)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every step of the way, we have followed the advice of experts and public health officials on how to best protect Canadians.

On this side of the aisle, we believe in science. We unmuzzle scientists. We listen to experts in how to make our decisions to keep Canadians safe and, so far, that has borne out.

We are continuing to monitor very closely how the coronavirus evolves in Canada, encouraging Canadians to take steps to keep themselves safe. We will continue to inform Canadians at all border areas of how to keep themselves safe and how to keep all Canadians safe.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the media recently reported that travellers arriving at our international airports are being asked additional screening questions about their point of origin to help identify people who may be carrying COVID-19. Apparently, these questions have not been updated in some time.

With every passing day, the virus spreads to more countries, such as Italy, Iran and South Korea, and even to New York State.

Could the Prime Minister confirm whether the automated kiosks have been updated to include those countries?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as always, the health and safety of Canadians are our priority. We follow all public health advice, based on scientific knowledge and data.

We have stepped up our monitoring, and screening processes have been added at all international airports, land border crossings and points of entry.

We will continue to monitor this situation very closely and make the necessary changes in due course.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I gather the Prime Minister is not aware. I hope his people will get him that information.

At this point, when a plane lands in Canada, officials know where the passengers are coming from. They have that information about people crossing the border legally too.

The problem is that we know people are still crossing the border illegally every day at places like Roxham Road. The government does not know who they are, where they are going or where they came from.

Now that coronavirus is an issue, can the Prime Minister at least tell us whether these people undergo a health screening when they arrive and whether necessary precautions are being taken?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we have been telling opposition members for quite some time now, the safety and security of Canadians are never compromised either at or between border crossings.

We know the identity of each and every person coming into Canada at official points of entry or irregularly.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Indigenous Services when his government would stop breaking the law and honour the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling to immediately stop discriminating against first nations children. This was followed by 10 seconds of silence and then story time. The same silence was heard about a plan for COVID-19 on reserves.

When will the minister follow the rule of law, honour the tribunal ruling and stop discriminating against first nations children?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we strongly agree that we must compensate indigenous children harmed by past government policies. It must be done in a way that is both fair and timely to further healing.

We have worked closely with the parties and found consensus on a number of key areas. We have demonstrated our commitment to addressing longstanding child and family service needs of first nations, Inuit and Métis children.

We will continue working with our partners to ensure indigenous children are supported and cared for in the right way, with connection to community and culture.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Really, Mr. Speaker. This past week a little child from Attawapiskat had to be flown to Kingston, because of the damage tap water is doing to her body, and a little boy in Kashechewan suffered horrific burns. The only thing the medical clinic could do was send him home. That is the face of third world health in the north.

Therefore, when the Prime Minister does not even bother to give a permanent seat to his indigenous services minister at his COVID-19 table, indigenous people know they are going to get a third world response.

Does the Prime Minister have any clue what COVID-19 is going to do when it hits the overcrowded reserves in northern Canada?

#### Oral Questions

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government is responsible for delivering health care to indigenous communities and to the Canadian Armed Forces.

I can assure the member that all necessary authorities are involved in all discussions about how to ensure we keep Canadians safe, including indigenous Canadians, who, as the member well pointed out, are in much more vulnerable situations quite often. That is why we are focusing very much on what we can do to make sure that the coronavirus and its potential impacts do not devastate indigenous communities.

\* \* \*

● (1450)

[Translation]

#### THE BUDGET

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since 2015, our government has been making responsible investments for Canadians, for example, by lowering taxes, supporting families and ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to succeed.

[English]

Because of these investments, Canada and Canadians are in a strong position to respond to emerging challenges.

Will the Minister of Finance please update the House on when the government will present budget 2020?

[Translation]

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the past four years, we have made very significant investments to make life better for Canadians. It is very important to note that we have boosted our country's economic growth while maintaining, and even improving, our fiscal situation.

[English]

That fiscal position is so important for our ability to deal with challenges, real challenges that Canadians recognize we are facing in the economy today. That is why I am so pleased to address those challenges and to bring forward budget 2020.

I am pleased to announce that on March 30, at 4 p.m., we will be presenting budget 2020. I ask that an order of the day be designated for that purpose.

\* \* \*

#### HEALTH

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this past week in my riding, I got to meet little Owen.

### Oral Questions

Owen is four months old and his mom and dad brought him to an event I hosted. While I was holding this beautiful baby boy and noticing how strong and alert he was, his mom and dad told me that Owen had cystic fibrosis. They wanted help from me to get the medication he needed to live the life that he deserved.

Could the Prime Minister tell families like Owen's family and others when they can expect to have access to the life-saving drug Trikafta?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we recognize the impossible situations that far too many families are in with children who suffer either from rare diseases or diseases that require extremely expensive medication. That is one of the reasons why we put forward a rare diseases high-cost drugs strategy to help provinces across the country deliver the drug care that is actually needed.

We are also moving forward on creating better access to more affordable drugs for families that need them right across the country. It is part of our commitment to make sure that nobody ever has to pick between paying rent or paying for the medication he or she needs.

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we will try this again.

Ethan, Janelle and Tyler are just a few of my constituents who suffer from cystic fibrosis. Ethan is not even two, and Janelle and Tyler are both young entrepreneurs. They need a new medication to help them reach their full potential. That medication is Trikafta and it is not available in Canada because of regulations that are deterring the drug maker from making it available here.

What will the Prime Minister commit to today to make sure Ethan, Tyler and Janelle have access to this life-saving medication in Canada?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, our heart goes out to families that have family members struggling with illness. It is truly heartbreaking.

We know the importance of patient access to new therapies for serious or life-threatening conditions. To date, the manufacturer of Trikafta has not submitted an application to market this product in Canada. It is the manufacturer's decision to apply to market its product in Canada. For serious or life-threatening conditions, such as cystic fibrosis, physicians may request access to the drug through the special access program.

To help Canadians get better access to effective treatments, we are working with provinces, territories and other partners to develop a national strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases.

\* \* \*

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today my colleagues and I sent a letter urging the Prime Minister to work with us to address flooding along the Great Lakes. Many people in Haldimand—Norfolk have businesses and homes right along the shoreline.

That shoreline has already seen record high water levels. These people are not just worried about potential damages, but also for their safety.

Will the Prime Minister set partisan politics aside and work with us to address this very serious issue?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the safety and security of Canadians is always a primary concern for the government. We will work to ensure the safety of Canadians along the Great Lakes and elsewhere.

At the same time, on this side of the House, we recognize the prevalence of extreme weather events and flooding is only going to increase with climate change. That is why making serious measures to fight against climate change, like a price on pollution right across the country, are the kinds of things that Canadians expect and to which the Conservatives have closed their ears and hearts.

● (1455)

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for a Prime Minister who wants to work across the aisle and work together, that answer is unacceptable. This is very simple.

It seems like the Prime Minister is more interested in attacking the opposition than in protecting homes, livelihoods and the safety of thousands of Canadians living along the shores of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River.

Could the Prime Minister let those Canadians know what detailed action he is taking this year for a potentially devastating spring thaw? Will he commit to working with us, and it is very simple, on a bipartisan committee, to help these people out?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are concerned with the water levels in the Great Lakes. The International Joint Commission, a joint panel between Canada and the United States, manages these levels.

We are working with the U.S. and the IJC, which is actively examining measures to address these issues. The IJC will be providing a briefing to members in the coming weeks. I invite the member opposite to join.

Again, fighting climate change will be an important part of keeping these Canadians safe, and I invite the members to join with us on that, as well.

[Translation]

## HEALTH

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we support the \$1-billion investment to combat the coronavirus, but the plan is not very reassuring in terms of security. Customs officers in airports are being left to fend for themselves. They are warning us that the two or three people added by Health Canada are not enough. Even travellers are concerned about being able to enter Canada without being asked a single question.

Will the government tighten security measures? An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, especially when no cure is available.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the decisions that we make as a government to keep Canadians safe are always based on the recommendations of scientists and public health officials. Travellers arriving in Canada must report to a CBSA border services officer and indicate whether they are sick or could have been exposed to an illness.

We will continue to inform travellers arriving in Canada of the measures to protect them and we will use every means necessary to keep Canadians safe.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, airports may have inadequate coronavirus screening measures, but our land crossings do not have any.

There is no protocol for people arriving by train, bus or car. COVID-19 is no longer confined to overseas countries. It is also affecting our neighbour. Nearly 200 cases have been confirmed right on the other side of the border in New York state. There are no masks, no thermometers, no information at our borders. There is nothing.

Will the government implement a protocol to ensure that border officers can protect themselves?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we base our decisions on the advice of public health officials and disease-control experts. We will take all necessary responsible measures to protect Canadians, travellers and workers at our border crossings. We have increased monitoring, and screening processes have been added at all international airports, land crossings and other ports of entry.

We will continue to do everything we can to protect Canadians and stop COVID-19 from spreading.

\* \* \*

## NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, GNL Québec wants to get started on the Énergie Saguenay project, which would produce 84% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than all its competitors worldwide thanks to our hydroelectricity back home. Investors no longer want to invest in Canada, which is putting billions of dollars in investments and thousands of jobs in jeopardy.

## Oral Questions

How will the Prime Minister explain to the people of Chicoutimi—Le Fjord and across Canada that they are missing out on major projects because of the climate of uncertainty he has created and his lack of leadership?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this project is in the early stages of an assessment process.

We are working with the resources sector to create good jobs and attract investment. More than 400 major resources projects are planned or under way in Canada. That is more than last year, and it includes the largest private investment in Canadian history, the LNG Canada project. Direct foreign investment has also increased by 19%. Investors around the world are looking for sustainably sourced products and we are positioning Canada so that we may all benefit.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

[English]

## THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we now know the date that the government will present yet another deficit budget, yet \$100 billion in new debt has so far only bought us an economy that is grinding to a halt, down to 0.3% before the coronavirus crisis even struck. Before that crisis, half of Canadians were \$200 away from insolvency and \$150 billion of projects had been cancelled.

Given that the past \$100 billion has bought so little, how much can Canadians expect to get from this next Liberal deficit budget?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, only a Conservative would think that a million people lifted out of poverty in this country is so little. Only a Conservative would think that a million new jobs created by Canadians over the past four years is so little.

Our plan to invest in Canadians, to support families, to lower taxes for the middle class and raise them on the wealthiest 1% has delivered for the Canadian economy, and that is why we have room to manoeuvre. We have firepower ready to go on this coronavirus challenge we are facing.

We know that investing in Canadians is the right path forward. Conservatives still do not get it.

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

**The Speaker:** We had started off really well. It got bumpy and now we are starting up again. I want to remind hon. members that if someone is asking a question or answering a question, please show some respect.

The hon. member for Carleton.

### Oral Questions

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for the 200,000 people who have lost their jobs in the energy sector, the government has done nothing but give the power for them to be fired rather than the firepower he now talks about. In fact, there is no firepower left. The Liberals had already racked up a \$30-billion deficit before the coronavirus crisis even struck. We go into this storm with a leaky roof, a cracked foundation and empty cupboards awaiting Canadians.

What is the government going to do to get us out of the mess in which we find ourselves in this treacherous time?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Again, Mr. Speaker, we hear the Conservatives choosing to talk down the Canadian economy, to talk down Canadian workers. I actually suggest that the member opposite listen to someone he regularly quotes, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who laid out very clearly the fact that we have significant fiscal capacity to respond to the challenges we are facing because of the global challenge of the coronavirus.

We will continue to respond and invest in Canadians because that is what has lifted a million people out of poverty and that is what has led Canadians to create a million new jobs.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's strength lies in its strong, diverse and inclusive communities. Since coming to power in 2015, our government has increased support to LGBTQ+ communities. Canadians may be surprised to learn that people are undergoing so-called conversion therapy in this country even to this day. Three provinces and several municipalities have already taken steps to prohibit this questionable and dangerous practice.

Could the Prime Minister inform us of what the Government of Canada is doing in this regard?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her important question and for her hard work in her riding of Orléans.

We believe that Canadians should be able to live their lives freely. That is why we are proposing a progressive law that will criminalize the destructive and harmful practice of conversion therapy. We will continue to work with the provinces, territories and our allies to continue to build a country where every Canadian can live free from discrimination and truly be themselves.

\* \* \*

[English]

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, across the GTA there are shootings almost daily. We know from the Toronto police chief that the weapons of choice for criminals are smuggled guns. When caught, these dangerous criminals get bail. When convicted, they get a slap on the wrist.

Will the Prime Minister commit today to supporting my bill, which would keep criminals behind bars who knowingly use smuggled guns?

• (1505)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are significantly strengthening border control measures to interdict the supply of illegal guns from the United States, but we know that will not be enough. That is why we have made the decision to strengthen gun control by banning assault-style weapons and by moving forward on giving cities the opportunity to restrict handguns within their city limits.

I encourage the member opposite, if he cares about Canadians who are suffering from the impacts of gun violence, to support our decision to strengthen gun control rather than the Conservatives' approach to weaken gun control and make Canadians less safe.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety refuses to stop his plan to give needles to prison inmates. This is Liberal hypocrisy at its finest. The government is quick to punish law-abiding gun owners while at the same time literally giving convicted felons a weapon while they are in prison.

Will the Prime Minister commit today to listening to those on the front lines of Canada's correctional institutions and immediately stop the prison needle exchange program?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our priority is always the safety and security of all Canadians.

The prevention and treatment of infectious diseases protects everyone, including correctional service officers. Correctional Service Canada conducts thorough threat risk assessments before inmates are approved to participate in this program, and the appropriate safeguards are always in place. Since the introduction of this program, there have been no safety incidents involving staff or other inmates.

This is yet another example of the Conservatives' approach, which does not work to keep Canadians safe.

\* \* \*

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government just loves to waste Canadians' money. We have recently learned that the CRA paid over \$73,000 to ask a focus group if it would like to change the colour of its envelopes. Envelope colour? What a joke.

Does the Prime Minister really think that spending double the Canadian median income on this is really an effective way to spend Canadians' hard-earned tax dollars?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we took office we promised to invest in Canadians and that is exactly what we are doing. We also promised to stop the using of public money for partisan purposes, which the Conservatives under Stephen Harper did as a routine approach. The waste brought forward by the Conservative government was entirely inappropriate. That is why we chose to do things like restore the long-form census to make sure that the decisions Canadian governments take are based on the needs of communities.

We will continue to engage with Canadians.

\* \* \*

#### TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, now more than ever Canadians rely on cellphones for their work, school, finances and health care, making access to high-quality and affordable service absolutely essential. However, cellphone and wireless bills are still putting too much strain on too many Canadian households.

Could the Prime Minister please update Canadians on the latest steps this Liberal government has taken to reduce cellphone prices?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for her continued advocacy on affordability for the middle class and her incredibly hard work.

In the last election we made a clear commitment to Canadians that we would lower their cellphone bills. Last week, we announced a clear plan to ensure that the three national cellphone providers offer plans 25% cheaper. This is one of the many ways we are making life more affordable for Canada's middle class and those working hard to join it.

\* \* \*

#### HEALTH

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, more than 15 months ago I asked the Prime Minister to act on rising HIV/AIDS infection rates in Canada, yet the number of new cases here continues to climb, while countries where HIV/AIDS testing and treatment are more accessible have seen reductions of over 30%. China is already putting self-test kits in vending machines on university campuses.

As we hope to see approval of Canadian self-test kits soon, could the Prime Minister tell us how his government plans to make sure that those kits will actually be accessible to young gay men, racialized and marginalized Canadians and indigenous communities?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the hon. member for his tireless advocacy on behalf of all Canadians and particularly marginalized Canadians.

We recognize that HIV/AIDS continues to be a problem in communities right across the country. That is why we are working with public health officials and experts across the country to ensure that we are giving people the tools to keep themselves and their communities safe. We will continue to work with all members in the

#### Routine Proceedings

House to ensure that we are doing the right things to keep Canadians safe.

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### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1510)

[English]

#### PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to subsection 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer entitled “Surtaxes on Steel, Aluminum, and Other Goods: Issues for Parliamentarians”.

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#### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to four petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

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[Translation]

#### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

##### CANADA-CHINA RELATIONS

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations concerning a motion adopted on Monday, March 9.

[English]

##### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled “West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits”.

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

##### LIAISON

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 107(3), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Liaison Committee, entitled “Committee Activities and Expenditures - April 1, 2019-September 11, 2019”.

*Routine Proceedings***NATIONAL CYCLING STRATEGY ACT**

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-239, an act to establish a national cycling strategy.

He said: Mr. Speaker, for years, New Democrats have been calling for a national cycling strategy to combat climate change and support community planning. Today, I am honoured to reintroduce a bill that would create a national cycling strategy in Canada.

Canadians want to do their part for the environment and keep active too. I first called for a national cycling strategy four years ago, and the Liberal government has failed to get it done. I am reintroducing this bill to help keep cyclists safe, to keep our communities healthy and to take real action to help municipalities address the threat of climate change.

Many other OECD countries have already adopted cycling strategies and have seen significant increases in cycling as a result. Cycling advocates have long called for a national cycling strategy whereby the federal government would work with indigenous communities, provinces and municipalities to increase commuter, recreational and tourism cycling across Canada.

A national cycling strategy is strongly supported by communities across Canada, including Victoria, Toronto, Ottawa, Cumberland, Port Alberni and Tofino, and organizations such as Vélo Canada Bikes and the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.

A national cycling strategy is a great way to help Canadian commuters make choices that are healthier and more affordable and that help our environment. If the Liberals work with us, we can promote active transportation for Canadians who want to tackle the climate crisis in their day-to-day lives.

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

\* \* \*

• (1515)

**PETITIONS**

## WILD SALMON

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table e-petition 2367 on behalf of constituents from my riding of Courtenay—Alberni.

The petitioners cite that Pacific salmon are under serious threat from pathogens, pollutants, and sea lice originating from open-net fish farms; that wild salmon support first nations and indigenous cultural traditions and complex ecosystems, contributing to coastal forests, which produce the oxygen we breathe; that in spite of three legal decisions against it, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans refuses to screen for PRV and to agree to transfer farm fish known to be infected with PRV; and that Pacific salmon runs on the coast of B.C. are in a state of emergency.

The petitioners call upon the government to legislate the removal of open-net fish farms from B.C. waters by 2025; to immediately stop the transfer of PRV-infected smolts into open-net fish farms; to complete the transitioning of open-net fish farms to land-based closed containment by 2025; to dedicate funding and financing for

training for fish farm workers to move to employment in land-based closed containment facilities, transitioning workers out of the aquaculture industry in regions that will not have land-based closed containment and for remote first nations communities currently dependent on revenues from the fish farm industry.

## INDIA

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to present petition e-2391, which is signed by over 4,000 people from across Canada who are concerned about amendments made to the Citizenship Act by the Government of India that make religion a criterion for nationality and discriminate against some religious minorities, such as Muslims. The petitioners are also concerned that the criteria of the National Register of Citizens may make marginalized minorities stateless, as they are more likely to be unable to prove their identity and status.

The petitioners call upon this House to condemn these measures, to demand their withdrawal and to condemn the excessive use of force by the police against the peaceful citizens of India.

## POWELL RIVER GASOLINE PRICES

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I am here on behalf of many constituents in my riding, largely in Powell River and the qathet Regional District, who came together there in December, when many of them signed this petition, to talk about the increased costs of gasoline in their area.

The petitioners are asking for a Competition Bureau investigation into Powell River gas prices. This is a huge issue. They are calling on the minister to direct the Competition Bureau to finally initiate an investigation into the potential price-fixing of gasoline in the Powell River area. This has been going on for many years.

This issue matters a lot to these constituents, and I hope to hear back from the minister very soon.

## WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EQUALITY

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition today that follows up on International Women's Day.

The petitioners call upon the House to enact legislation and policies that will promote pay equity and pay equality so that women in Canada get the equal treatment they deserve.

## INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a second petition from members in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

The petitioners ask that the government commit to uphold the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by immediately halting all existing and planned construction of the Coastal GasLink project on Wet'suwet'en territory; ordering the RCMP to dismantle its exclusion zone and stand down; schedule nation-to-nation talks between the Wet'suwet'en nation and federal and provincial governments, which I am glad to see has happened; and prioritize the real implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## CANADIAN CHINESE POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I met recently with the Canadian Chinese Political Affairs Committee, which initiated this petition. The petition reflects the widespread concern within the Chinese and other communities about the situation with coronavirus and calls for a stronger response from the government. I want to thank the committee for its leadership.

It is very clear that these communities are particularly affected by the stigma and are concerned as well about the virus coming back from other countries into their communities, and the petitioners want a strong and effective response from the government. They highlight the situation in Canada with respect to coronavirus. Of course, the numbers have grown since the start of this petition and are higher than written here.

The petitioners call upon the government to consider a number of measures in response, such as improving communication with the Canadian public regarding the outbreak. For instance, in its daily briefing, Health Canada should release empirical data regarding its level of preparedness. The petitioners also propose that the government consider expanding the scope of screening and testing at airports, as many countries, such as the United States, South Korea, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan, will now utilize temperature checks at airports.

As well, the petitioners call for the consideration, if the situation escalates further, of a strong self-quarantine advisory or even a mandatory self-quarantine policy for those returning from heavily affected countries, and that flight restrictions also be considered for these countries.

Again, I want to commend the Canadian Chinese Political Affairs Committee for its leadership in working on this petition and I look forward to seeing the government's response to it.

● (1520)

[Translation]

## CARBON PRICING

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition calling on the government to maintain its carbon pricing policy in order to reach the Paris Agreement targets.

## Routine Proceedings

[English]

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and to present a petition on behalf of hundreds of residents of Victoria, who are concerned about fossil fuel subsidies.

We have a long way to go to meet and exceed our Paris Agreement commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 30% by 2030. The science has shown that Canada is warming at twice the global average, and Canada has declared a climate emergency. Therefore, these petitioners are calling on the government to eliminate all fossil fuel subsidies in Canada.

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition I have today is from residents of my riding who are concerned about the climate crisis. They are calling on Parliament to take meaningful steps so that Canada can become a world leader in a clean-energy economy. The petitioners would like to see comprehensive carbon pricing that will significantly reduce emissions and help low- and middle-income Canadians by equitably returning 100% of these revenues.

## INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place to present an e-petition that was started by one of my constituents from Galiano Island. I want send a shout-out to Christina Kovacevic for starting the petition, which has accumulated more than 15,000 signatures.

It calls on the government, as other petitioners today have mentioned, to observe and respect the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly in relation to the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and land claims; to halt all existing and planned construction of the Coastal GasLink project on their territory; to ask the RCMP to dismantle its exclusion zone; to have nation-to-nation talks, which, we note with real gratitude to the ministers involved, have happened, and there is an agreement currently under consideration with the Wet'suwet'en; and to make sure that it continues toward real implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

## ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

**Ms. Lenore Zann (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to table an e-petition from my riding of Cumberland—Colchester that has been signed by 4,248 people.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners note that whereas the RCMP and Treasury Board are now planning in May 2020 to move almost 4000 civilian members of the RCMP from a working pay system onto an incompressible failure of a pay system called Phoenix; and whereas the Public Service Pay Centre said that Phoenix was not stable on March 18, 2019, saying “Stabilizing the ... current pay system (Phoenix) remains a top priority”, and further stated in an update on April 3, 2019, “The pay issues currently being experienced by public servants are unacceptable, and we are working tirelessly at all levels to resolve them”; therefore, the petitioners call upon the president of the Treasury Board to honour the Treasury Board's commitment to civilian RCMP members and delay the transfer of almost 4000 sworn civilian members onto the Phoenix payroll system until the problems with it have been fixed or until there is a reliable and stable replacement.

I have affixed my signature.

• (1525)

**The Speaker:** I want to remind the hon. members to be brief and succinct when they make their report on a petition.

Presenting petitions, the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

## HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today and present a petition.

The people who have signed this petition are concerned about forced organ harvesting internationally. We condemn organ trafficking and we would like to see the passage of legislation in this place. The people who have signed this petition referenced Bill C-350 and Bill S-240 from the last Parliament. They look forward to seeing similar legislation passed in this Parliament.

## POVERTY

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition that calls upon the House of Commons to adopt a notional poverty elimination strategy, thereby assuring Canadians of a suitable quality of life and opportunity to succeed.

## INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition. It is similar to other petitions presented today. It calls on the government to uphold the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action by immediately halting existing and planned construction of the Coastal GasLink project on Wet'suwet'en territory; asking the RCMP to dismantle its exclusion zone and stand down; scheduling nation-to-nation talks with the Wet'suwet'en, which has happened; and prioritizing the real implementation of UNDRIP.

## THE MIDDLE CLASS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on the day the Minister of Finance announced that the budget will be presented on March 30 of this year, to table a petition calling upon parliamentarians to recognize the importance of Canada's middle class. The petitioners are asking us to look at ways we can increase the wealth of the middle class here in Canada.

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following question will be answered today: Question No. 242.

[Text]

Question No. 242—**Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to the People's Republic of China: how many Canadian citizens are currently (i) in detention, (ii) in detention with charge, (iii) in detention without charge, (iv) in detention without access to consular services, (v) in detention with access to consular services, (vi) in detention for reasons related to state security, (vii) subject to an exit ban, (viii) subject to an exit ban relating to a civil matter, (ix) subject to an exit ban relating to a criminal matter, (x) subject to an exit ban relating to state security, (xi) subject to prolonged interrogations, (xii) subject to interrogations without counsel?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

With regard to (i) to (xii), currently, Global Affairs Canada is aware of 123 Canadians in detention in the greater China region. This figure includes Canadians in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. It should be noted that in terms of the overall volume of arrests and detentions in the greater China region, an average of 116 cases were opened each year between 2009 and 2018. The vast majority of these cases were closed.

A Canadian is considered to be in detention when he or she is in prison, in a detention centre or in a medical facility. As a result, the number of Canadians in detention may change from day to day, due to the updating of the detention status in the database. The number of Canadians visiting the greater China region has increased steadily over the past decade, and not all arrests and detentions are reported to the department. As a result, comparisons from one year to the next should be made with caution.

\* \* \*

[English]

## QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the government responses to Questions Nos. 241, 243 and 244 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Government Orders*

[Text]

Question No. 241—**Mr. Scott Reid:**

With regard to policies and procedures of Correctional Service Canada (CSC), specifically at the Joyceville Institution: (a) what policies and procedures were in place on December 1, 2019, with respect to (i) administrative segregation, (ii) disciplinary segregation, (iii) segregation units, (iv) structured intervention units, (v) any analogous practice or unit; (b) what policies and procedures were in place on December 1, 2019, with respect to protective custody and inmates whose safety has been deemed at risk, if different than those identified in (a); (c) since December 1, 2017, on which date or dates were the policies and procedures identified in (a) and (b) amended, in each case; (d) what are the details of the amendments identified in (c) in each case; (e) on which dates were the amendments identified in (c) and (d) brought into force and effect, in each case, if those dates are different than the dates identified in (c); (f) were any of the inmates who were injured on December 1, 2019, subject to any of the policies and procedures identified in (a) and (b), and, if so, what are the details in each case; (g) were any of the inmates who were injured on December 1, 2019, affected by any of the amendments identified in (c) and (d), and, if so, what are the details in each case; (h) were any of the inmates who were injured on December 1, 2019, subject to any changes in their handling, within 30 days before December 1, 2019, as a result of policy or procedural changes not identified in (c) and (d), and, if so, what are the details in each case; (i) have the policies and procedures identified in (a) and (b) been amended since December 1, 2019, and, if so, what are the details, including the date or dates, in each case; (j) have the policies and procedures identified in (f) and (g) been amended since December 1, 2019, and, if so, what are the details, including the date or dates, in each case; and (k) have the policies and procedures identified in (h) been amended since December 1, 2019, and, if so, what are the details, including the date or dates, in each case?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 243—**Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act (TVPA), for the period of May 23, 2018, to December 14, 2019: (a) what compliance and enforcement actions have been taken to ensure that advertisements, promotions and testimonials for (i) Vype vaping products distributed by Imperial Tobacco Canada, (ii) JUUL vaping products, (iii) Logic Compact vaping products, (iv) STLTH vaping products, (v) myBLU vaping products, (vi) Mylé vaping products are in compliance with the TVPA and its regulations; (b) if compliance and enforcement actions have been taken with respect to these products, what has been the result of those enforcement actions with respect to (i) correspondence with manufacturers or retailers, (ii) charges laid against manufacturers or retailers, (iii) products seized; and (c) have Health Canada officials made any recommendations for adjustments to (i) the TVPA and its regulations, (ii) compliance and enforcement processes, (iii) other related processes, and, if so, what?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 244—**Mr. Brian Masse:**

With regard to federal funding allocated within the constituencies of Windsor West, Essex and Windsor—Tecumseh, since the fiscal year 2014-15, and including the current fiscal year: (a) what is the total amount of government funding allocated broken down by constituency; and (b) for each constituency, what are the amounts broken down by (i) department or agency, (ii) initiative?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr.

Speaker, I would ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand at this time.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**CANADA-UNITED STATES-MEXICO AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT**

The House resumed from March 10 consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, An Act to implement the Agreement between Canada, the United States of America and the United Mexican States, be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development has four minutes remaining to conclude his speech.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages (Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are on the traditional territory of the Anishinabe Algonquins and my constituents, like other Canadians across the country, will receive great benefits from the ratification of this agreement.

Yukoners, like others, are great traders. A lot of our exports are minerals, and Yukoners will benefit from the lower prices when tariffs are taken off many of the products they buy. This is especially important for low-income people.

In the first six minutes of my speech yesterday, I dealt with the concerns brought up by the other three parties in the House. I appreciate that members of all parties are working together in a non-partisan way to support Canadians in this great endeavour. It is not just here in the House where we have such co-operation and support, but across the country.

Premier Moe of Saskatchewan said that a signed CUSMA trade deal is good news for Saskatchewan and Canada. Premier Jason Kenney of Alberta said that he is relieved that a renewed North American trade deal has been concluded, and Jerry Dias of Unifor has said that this is a much better deal than the deal that was signed 24 years ago.

The reason CUSMA is so important, and why people have such positive views of it, is its many benefits. It makes products from the three countries tariff-free in Canada. It helps low-income people, as I said. It has updates that modernize the agreement, with new chapters. It has benefits for business workers, communities, labourers and the environment, including marine and air protection. I do not think anyone would argue against that.

*Government Orders*

CUSMA has benefits for the automotive trade. The agreement has a dispute resolution mechanism, which was at risk. It protects our culture, which is related to 650,000 jobs in Canada, 75,000 in Quebec alone. It protects energy, agriculture and agri-foods. It includes language on gender and indigenous job rights, but removes the investor-state provisions so that companies cannot sue the Canadian government anymore. That was an improvement many Canadians were looking for.

CUSMA includes gender equality, enforcement of women's rights, benefits for small and medium-sized businesses and a number of technical trade procedure improvements.

There are a number of things that are brand new in this agreement that we did not have in other agreements related to the environment, women and labour. They all benefit from this agreement.

As I have mentioned at other times when I have spoken about this, there are three or four benefits for the aluminum industry in Canada. I have mentioned a number of reports that talk about the benefits and the tremendous possible damage of not having this agreement for Canada.

I would just like to finish by giving a huge shout-out to our negotiators who were so professional and worked so hard to get this very successful agreement for Canada.

• (1530)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, my thanks to the hon. parliamentary secretary for finishing his speech and remembering to acknowledge territory, as he does whenever he stands to speak. It is much appreciated.

I will say that I am voting in favour of the ratification. I think this is a much better version of NAFTA than the original NAFTA that we have been under all these years.

Now that we have trumpeted the accomplishment of removing the investor-state provisions of chapter 11 of NAFTA in the new version of CUSMA, can the parliamentary secretary tell me whether the government is prepared to examine the other investor-state provisions in other agreements?

Particularly egregious is the secret deal done by the Harper administration with the People's Republic of China, which binds Canada for three decades to secret lawsuits from state-owned enterprises in the People's Republic of China.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Speaker, at this time, I am not familiar with the trade minister's agenda on that, but I will certainly pass on that question for the member.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my colleague knows that we have had a government in the last number of years that has been very progressive and strong on the whole trade file. Today we are debating the trade agreement among Canada, Mexico and the U.S.A., but we have had other trade agreements over the last couple of years, in particular the European Union, the TPP, agreements with Ukraine and other world trade organizations. All of this comes together as an important issue for Canada. It helps create jobs through trade.

I am wondering if my colleague can provide his perspective on how important trade is to our economy.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Speaker, this would not be such a huge issue in other countries' parliaments, but trade is such a big part of the Canadian economy, bigger than in the United States economy. It is instrumental to our success, and that is why people were very worried at the time that this would disappear.

Now, as the member suggests, we have agreements with 11 countries under the CPTPP, 27 countries under CETA, with Ukraine, and as one of the three countries of CUSMA. We are the only country in the G7 that has trade agreements with all of the other countries in the G7. This is critical to our economy and that is why the ratification of this will be such an important success for Canada.

• (1535)

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I ask the member for Yukon if this is such a great trade deal, why did the government wait until the 11th hour to release the economic impact analysis, which would actually demonstrate that it is a bad deal? The C.D. Howe Institute released a paper undertaking an analysis in which it pointed out that Canada stands to lose \$14.6 billion in GDP under the new deal, compared with the old deal.

I wonder if the member could comment.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Speaker, as I alluded to in my opening remarks, and as I said specifically yesterday, there are a number of studies on this. Most of them show great benefits to Canada. I will mention that RBC said that Canada's GDP could go down a massive 1% without this agreement and it could affect 500,000 Canadian workers. Scotiabank said that the Canadian economy would stand a strong chance of falling into a recession. The benefits of free trade agreements are pretty common knowledge. That is why there is unanimity in the House. All of those studies, with the exception of the one the member mentioned, reinforce that point.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague cited the number of trade agreements that the government has been able to negotiate, but maybe the member could speak about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and climate targets. We have not seen, and maybe he can correct me, that these have been priorities in any of the trade agreements.

Does the member not see that these should be priorities in any trade agreements moving forward?

**Hon. Larry Bagnell:** Madam Speaker, for the first time in history, we have the environment in this agreement, with much protection for the marine environment and air quality. That is a great step forward, so I agree with that.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on Bill C-4, the Canada–United States–Mexico agreement implementation act.

I would specifically like to thank my colleague, the member for Elmwood—Transcona, for his work on this file. Through extensive negotiation with the government, I am so proud that my colleague secured more openness and transparency for Canada's trade process.

Too often the opposition says that the NDP does not understand trade, but this could not be further from the truth. What we do not support is the neo-liberal trade agenda. New Democrats understand the importance of our trading relationship with the U.S., our largest trading partner, and we believe that a better NAFTA could improve the welfare of all North Americans. We believe that all trade agreements must be transparent, inclusive and forward-looking. They must address important issues, like income inequality, sovereignty and climate change. Above all, they must strengthen human rights. They must be transparent and fair for everyone.

Too many trade agreements are approached with the idea of how to make the rich richer. They focus on growing the wealth and power of those who already hold a great deal of wealth and power. They do not consider bettering the lives of all Canadians.

Certainly, people in southwestern Ontario, in my riding, know all too well what Liberal- and Conservative-negotiated trade agreements have created for them and their families. We see what were once highly productive manufacturing hubs now boarded up. One only has to drive along Dundas Street in London, Ontario to know the history of these trade agreements, and what it means to workers in my riding.

The original NAFTA was negotiated by Conservatives and signed by Liberals in 1994. People were promised jobs, rising productivity and secure access to the largest market in the world. It seemed like we were on the cusp of a dream, and all we had to do was sell our soul to cash in.

What happened was far from that dream, and instead Canadian workers faced a nightmare. Canada lost over 400,000 manufacturing jobs and its textile industry. In addition, Canada paid millions of dollars in court fees and penalties when sued by corporations under the ISDS resolution mechanism.

Despite some improvements, this NAFTA continues a disturbing trend of giving more enforceable rights to corporations in trade agreements than to the real people involved and the environment. Over the last 25 years, because of NAFTA, our North American auto and manufacturing industry has become highly dependent on the integrated supply chain. In fact, automobiles and parts will often cross our borders hundreds of times before a vehicle is completed.

### *Government Orders*

Since 2001, after we lost the Auto Pact, 44,000 Canadian auto jobs were lost. After this devastating announcement at GM in Oshawa a few years ago, Canadians are learning that no amount of language in free trade deals, including the new NAFTA, will stop corporations from leaving Canada and heading to Mexico, where they are taking advantage of a low-wage economy and a country that does not respect the environment.

Workers are left to fend for themselves, despite the fact that the Liberals will say that this agreement is good for the automotive sector. In fact, Liberals also ensured that GM Oshawa had no ties to Canada once they provided a multi-million-dollar bailout, and let the corporation off the hook from ever paying Canadians back.

The Liberals were nowhere to be found when those GM auto workers were fighting for their jobs in Oshawa. They were certainly not on the front lines, desperately searching for answers about their future or their livelihoods.

Interestingly, the Liberals claimed they were working hard for auto workers by signing the new NAFTA last spring. They insisted that the deal was fantastic and no improvements could be made. Funnily enough, the American Democrats proved them wrong. It would seem that the Liberals were not the skilled negotiators they claimed to be.

At every step of the process, the Liberals have said the same thing, that this trade agreement is a great deal. First, they said they were happy with the original NAFTA and did not want to renegotiate. Then they said the first version of CUSMA was the best we could get, and now they say this latest version is the best that they can get. Well which one is it?

When the NDP called on the government to wait to ratify the first version of CUSMA so the Democrats in the States could improve it, Deputy Prime Minister said:

Mr. Speaker, what the NDP needs to understand is that reopening this agreement would be like opening Pandora's box ... It would be naive for the NDP to believe that Canadians would benefit from reopening this agreement.

However, the Liberals are now keen to brag about improvements made by Democrats in the United States.

Income and wealth inequality in Canada today is at a crisis level with 46% of Canadians \$200 away from financial trouble. Working people, like people in London—Fanshawe, are struggling to get by and the wonders of this new NAFTA, like the old NAFTA, will not materialize for the majority of people in my riding. The fact of the matter is that neo-liberal trade agreements do not work for workers.

### *Government Orders*

New Democrats have been consistent in our calls for a transparent trade process in Canada that makes the government more accountable and allows Parliament to play a greater role than that of a simple rubber stamp.

The Liberals over-promised and under-delivered on holding meaningful public consultations on this agreement.

• (1540)

The NDP believes that in all trade negotiations, the government should consult Canadians and their members of Parliament from all parties in a meaningful, comprehensive and public way.

I would like to address some of the concerns that I have about chapter 11, the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism. We are pleased with the elimination of chapter 11; there is no doubt about that. However, it has been replaced with mandatory regulatory co-operation, and further influence has been given to corporations. While, in principle, international regulatory co-operation has the potential to raise standards, experts argue that under the new terms, corporate influence has increased at the expense of public protections, and it limits government's ability to regulate in areas such as toxic chemicals, food safety, rail safety, workers' health and safety, and the environment.

This agreement would give corporations advance notice of new regulations and ensure that they are allowed a consultation process before any regulation goes through a legislative process.

Regulatory co-operation is subject to dispute resolution. This means corporations can still directly challenge government actions, which is the highest form of regulatory chill. Regulators have to vigorously defend proposed regulations and are even required to suggest alternatives that do not involve regulating. They have to provide extensive analysis, including cost benefits, to industry. This makes governments accountable to industry, not to people.

I would also like to address the gender concerns that I have in this agreement. The Liberals promised an entire chapter to promote gender equality, and this was not delivered in CUSMA. The Liberals appear to have abandoned their promise before it could take root. Their limited language regarding the importance of gender equality does not exist, as there is no gender chapter.

Experts testified at the international trade committee that these agreements should not just have a gender chapter, though, but that they must also mainstream gender rights throughout the entirety of an agreement, and that gender equality does not concern only the issues of women entrepreneurs and business owners.

The only chapter that addresses the links between gender and trade in any substantive fashion is the labour chapter. Otherwise, the addition of gender equality language is more superficial than substantive. Labour rights must also address injustices to women, like pay inequity, child labour and poor working conditions. The NDP believes that for an agreement to be truly progressive when it comes to gender rights, it must address the systemic inequalities of all women. The NDP believes that both a gender analysis and a gendered impact assessment must be applied to all trade agreements.

A professor in my hometown of London, Dr. Erin Hannah, testified to the international trade committee:

Overwhelmingly we've put attention on women entrepreneurs in the gender in global trade agenda. That's important.... But the lion's share of women in the developing world work in the informal economy.

We don't have very good tools for assessing the impact of all sorts of things in the lives of women working in the informal economy, but particularly trade.... [There are no] methodological tools to study the impact of proposed trade deals on women who are not in the formal economy.

That raise much bigger questions, though, about whether the objective of these initiatives is to bring women into the formal economy, to transition women out of the informal economy into the formal economy. It raises a whole host of other issues. I think it's important to think about how that would change these women's lives. We have a data problem, but we also have an ideological problem.

The NDP believes that, like other socially progressive ideals that can be brought forward in trade agreements, words are not enough. For gender, labour, indigenous, environmental or human rights to be truly advanced, there must be tools in place to achieve that progress. As Dr. Hannah rightfully pointed out, Canada has a lot to do itself on the gender agenda. We do not have pay equity. We do not have universal child care. It is clear that to move forward globally and negotiate progressive trade agreements internationally, nationally we must have domestic tools in place that work effectively.

In conclusion, I would like to talk about indigenous rights. My colleague across the way mentioned that again this deal is absent of any mention of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We believe, in the NDP, that the government must abide by article 19 of the UN declaration and obtain free, prior and informed consent of indigenous people before adopting any measures that may affect them.

As was noted by Pam Palmater at the international trade committee during the conversations about Mercosur, indigenous rights should be addressed throughout the entirety of a trade agreement, not only related to one chapter. She also noted that throughout the Pacific Alliance nations, there are large numbers of indigenous people who experience a great deal of violence from transnational corporations involved in trade. That is certainly something we see in NAFTA.

These are some of the concerns I have about the trade deal, and I appreciate the time that this House has given me to discuss them. I appreciate any questions.

• (1545)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the intervention today by my colleague from the NDP although I do take exception with respect to one of the comments that she made specifically around the previous government wanting to basically accept any deal that was out there.

I appreciate the fact that the member was not in the House at that time, but I will tell her what actually happened. A deal was presented. This government seriously negotiated with the Americans for a number of weeks, if not months, to get the absolute best deal. To be fair, it was not the NDP but the Conservatives at the time who asked why we did not take the deal. There was a deal they said and they wanted us to take it. However we insisted on no. We felt we had to work on it and get a better deal and we did end up getting a better deal.

What we have today is a result of the hard work that was done not just by the ministry but also by the government officials who were onside, making sure that we would end up with the best deal. It is important to put that on the record.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, I may not have been in the House but I was working for the NDP member of Parliament for Essex, who was the NDP critic for trade at the time. I do know what happened throughout that negotiation process. It was the Conservatives who were pushing for the deal. A lot of promises were made by the Liberal government at the time and it did not fulfill many of them.

When the minister came before committee, she talked about a gender chapter. She talked about an indigenous chapter. The government did not deliver.

At the end of the last session, the Liberal government put forward a signed deal that it wanted the House to accept, despite a lot of New Democrats saying no, that the government was not getting the best deal. We knew then that it could be better. U.S. Democrats insisted that the deal could be better and they made it better. I find it interesting that the Liberal government is now taking credit for that work.

• (1550)

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to quote what the vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture said at committee. He said, “Canada agreed to place a worldwide cap on exports of certain dairy products in the CUSMA, which is unprecedented in regional trade agreements. As the nation's prosperity depends on reliable access to global markets, Canada must not agree to this kind of provision in any future trade agreement.”

Could the member tell me what she sees as the dangers in Canada making this kind of concession in regard to another country limiting our own trade with other countries?

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, New Democrats have also questioned the sovereignty challenges of other trade agreements that are going forward in non-status economies, as was quoted by the deal. It absolutely deserves a lot of attention.

### *Government Orders*

In terms of the agricultural sector, many farmers are looking forward to growing our ability to access those trade agreements, and I certainly support that, but it has to be fair and equitable.

I certainly do not disagree with fair trade, but I agree in the neo-liberal agenda as it is going forward with free trade.

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have heard a couple of comments and questions to the member about the Liberals saying they did a great deal and that the Conservatives wanted to push them forward to accept any deal.

When the NDP called on the government to ratify the first version of CUSMA, we were asking to get a better deal. However the minister at that time said, “Mr. Speaker, what the NDP needs to understand is that reopening this agreement would be like opening Pandora's box.” And yet the Liberals are now keen to brag about improvements made by U.S. Democrats.

Why should Canadians believe the Liberals had anything to do with the changes that increased protections for workers and guard against higher drug prices?

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his work on this file as well. These trade agreements have also hurt his community in Hamilton.

It is true. The Liberals were willing to take the deal as it was before and we were constantly pushing for something better because we knew there was something better. My colleague from Elmwood—Transcona has ensured that this deal also has something better through a lot of hard work and pushing the government to go even further and better itself, not just sign off on Conservative already created trade agreements.

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people, and I thank my Liberal colleagues for sharing this speaking time with me.

The Green Party will support the new CUSMA. We believe in fair and equitable trade that improves health, safety, labour and environmental standards. I would like to congratulate the Canadian negotiating team for getting this deal done with the Trump administration in the White House. Things could have turned out much worse.

CUSMA is not a perfect agreement. It is still a corporate model of trade. There are deficiencies. Climate change is not mentioned. The softwood lumber agreement has not been fixed. The good regulatory practices chapter could be very problematic. The extension of copyrights was not necessary. Indigenous rights and title are a particular area of concern in both Canada and Mexico. Aluminum was not properly covered in the rules of origin. The dairy industry faces increased imports and constraints on its exports. The negotiating process could still be a lot more transparent and consultative.

### *Government Orders*

However, there are significant wins. The proportionality clause for energy exports has been removed. Labour standards have been improved in Mexico. The rules of origin have been improved. Supply management has been protected. The environmental rules have been strengthened. The cultural industries remain protected.

In my view, removing investor-state dispute settlement provisions, or ISDS, is the biggest win. We need to remove ISDS from all our trade and investment agreements. ISDS gives foreign corporations extraordinary powers to bypass national court systems and challenge domestic laws in a private tribunal system. It gives foreign corporations rights that domestic corporations do not have. Foreign corporations can demand millions and even billions of dollars in compensation from governments for the loss of potential profit when domestic laws and regulations get in the way of their profits.

These secretive tribunals take place behind closed doors, with no public scrutiny or participation from some of the affected parties. Under some treaties, such as the Canada-China FIPA, the public may never know that a tribunal took place or that a Chinese state-owned corporation received financial compensation from Canadian taxpayers.

These are not real courts. Trade tribunals are made up of three corporate lawyers who work for major private law firms and earn \$1,000 per hour or more. These lawyers switch roles in different arbitration cases. Sometimes they work for the corporation, sometimes they defend government and other times they act as the deciding judge.

I know the Conservatives are big supporters of investor-state dispute settlements, so I would like to correct some of what I have heard from them on this subject.

No Canadian corporation has ever been successful in bringing an arbitration case against the United States. ISDS has not been a helpful tool for Canadian corporations under NAFTA. Canada's laws and policies have been challenged by NAFTA investor-state rules 48 times, and we have lost eight of the 17 cases that were completed. Canadian taxpayers have paid out hundreds of millions of dollars to foreign companies for the loss of potential profits, not for real expropriation.

For example, Canada banned imports of gasoline carrying MMT, a known neurotoxin, to protect the health of Canadians. The U.S. company that makes MMT, Ethyl Corporation, went to a NAFTA tribunal and received \$13 million in compensation from Canadian taxpayers.

*Bilcon v. Canada* is another egregious case. The Nova Scotia government told Bilcon it was open for business. Bilcon wanted to build a quarry and a shipping terminal and blast rock for 50 years in the vicinity of the calving grounds of the North Atlantic right whale. Bilcon failed the environmental assessment. It then bypassed Canadian courts and received \$7 million in compensation from a NAFTA tribunal. It should have received nothing.

The U.S. government has not paid a penny for an arbitration case because it has not lost a single case under NAFTA. It won all of the 21 claims against it. We need to remove investor-state dispute settlements from all trade and investment agreements.

• (1555)

One of the most problematic of those agreements is the Canada-China Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement, or FIPA. This is an ISDS agreement that will be impossible to change.

NAFTA had a six-month notice clause for abrogation or renegotiation. The Canada-China FIPA is locked in for 15 years, and then there is a one-year notice period, after which corporations that invested get a further 15 years of investor-state. It is 31 years in total. The Canada-China FIPA locks in the discriminatory practices that China had in place at the time of signing. The Canada-China FIPA was negotiated in secret, and signed and ratified without a vote in the House. It was ratified by an order in council by the Harper Conservative government while there was an ongoing court challenge by the Hupacasath First Nation. Let us imagine that. It is complete disrespect of our judicial system and of first nations.

The Canada-China FIPA does not have a national security carve-out or exemption, so if Canada blocks Huawei based on national security grounds, then Canadian taxpayers could be on the hook for billions of dollars for the loss of potential profits that Huawei claims, and we may never know that there was an arbitration case or payout, because both parties would have to agree to make that information public. That is another egregious part of the Canada-China FIPA: secrecy.

Canada has FIPA agreements with the A to Z of small-market and developing countries, from Armenia to Zambia. This is where Canadian companies are using ISDS successfully. Canadian companies have won \$2 billion in compensation from developing countries, and there is another \$10 billion being sought through ISDS, predominantly from extractive companies. For example, the Canadian mining company Gabriel Resources is seeking \$4 billion after the Romanian government, under massive public pressure, blocked a project that would have levelled four mountains, destroyed three villages and turned a valley into a toxic, cyanide-laced tailings pond. This is under the Canada-Romania FIPA.

*Government Orders*

Imagine if that happened in Banff. Imagine a state-owned mining company taking up Alberta on its open-for-business approach and putting in a proposal to level four mountains, relocate Banff and turn Lake Louise into a toxic tailings pond. Then imagine paying that corporation billions of dollars in taxpayer-funded compensation for the loss of potential profit when Albertans reject the project. Imagine that arbitration case and payout being kept secret.

The legal firms that specialize in ISDS shop these arbitration suits around to hedge funds and finance companies that also reap massive profits from these cases. The Wall Street hedge fund Tenor Capital invested \$35 million in the *Crystallex v. Venezuela* case and got a whopping 1,000% return on its investment when the Canadian mining company was awarded \$1.2 billion in compensation. The *Crystallex* case also came under a FIPA agreement. Indigenous people in Venezuela objected to the mine because it was destroying their community and territory. In this era of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we are going to see more challenges to destructive extractive projects not just here in Canada but around the world.

Canada has signed trade and investment agreements with some countries that have terrible human rights records. The Harper government negotiated and signed the Canada-Honduras Free Trade Agreement after a coup toppled the democratically elected government.

Is that how we reward anti-democratic behaviour? Should trade not lift all boats? Should the improvement of judicial systems, the rule of law and democratization not be part of these agreements? Should trade agreements not improve the health, safety, consumer, labour and environmental standards of all concerned? The Green Party believes so.

Investor-state dispute settlement, by its very nature, is anti-democratic and should be removed from all of our trade and investment agreements. I would like to applaud the Canadian negotiating team for getting rid of ISDS in CUSMA. Our work is cut out for us: one down, many more to go.

● (1600)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first and foremost, let me congratulate the members of the Green Party for recognizing that this agreement is better than what was there in the first place and is ultimately in the best interests of Canadians.

The member pointed out some of the benefits, which are part of the reason we are getting support in the House from the Green Party, the New Democrats and the Conservatives. All members seem to want to support this bill. There is also a great deal of support across the country from different levels of government, labour unions, entrepreneurs, big corporations, big businesses and medium-sized businesses. There is a wide spectrum of support for the trade agreement.

What are the member's thoughts on how important it is to have this trade agreement put in place?

**Mr. Paul Manly:** Madam Speaker, it is really important to get rid of investor-state, so the sooner we get this ratified the better. People who know me would be surprised that I am supporting a trade agreement that still follows this kind of corporate neo-liberal model, but I think the wins in this agreement are significant, especially with respect to investor-state.

As I outlined, it is an egregious part of the trade and investment agreements that have been signed by Canada and other countries around the world. There are some 3,000 of these investor-state agreements around the world. It is really a system of corporate capture that is fundamentally anti-democratic and blocks governments from doing things that are in the best interests of their citizens. I applaud the negotiating team and the government for getting rid of investor-state in this agreement.

● (1605)

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for putting an emphasis on the investor-state provisions, which we both dislike. We do not support this corporate model that ignores the rights of workers and indigenous rights.

Not having climate targets in this deal is of huge concern. I would like the member to talk about what could have been done if we had included climate targets and how trade could become a tool for reducing emissions so we can follow the IPCC report. The report identifies that we will have catastrophic changes if we do not make huge changes to our lifestyle today.

Could he also talk a bit more about how important the indigenous rights piece is? He cited the Hupacasath, and I applaud them. They have stood up for indigenous rights. He also cited how the government failed again. It failed to do adequate consultation and implement UNDRIP in this deal. There was an opportunity to do that. In fact, it was the U.S. Democrats that got us most of our gains in this deal, not the Liberal government, which is patting itself on the back. It would have settled on this agreement way before any of these changes were put forward, so we owe appreciation to the U.S. and certainly to the Hupacasath and all the other players who are standing up for really important values.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Paul Manly:** Madam Speaker, investor-state is a huge problem for dealing with climate change. Given the number of investor-state dispute settlement agreements around the planet that are going to impede climate action, we are going to have to deal with this through article 20 of the WTO to try to solidify something that overrides the investor-state dispute settlements that have been signed in multilateral and bilateral agreements.

In terms of the Hupacasath and their challenge, as the previous speaker said, article 19 of UNDRIP should have been taken into consideration and there should have been proper consultation with first nations about this. In the case of the Canada-China FIPA, to have it ratified in the middle of a Federal Court case is egregious.

I would agree that we have a lot of things to work on. We have a lot of fights ahead of us to deal with the spiderweb of investor-state that surrounds this planet and deal with the climate crisis to make sure we are able to fight it clearly, without corporate influence and blockage.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, to pass this legislation swiftly, as all stakeholders and constituents had requested, so the vacuum of uncertainty would be lifted on our trade relations with the U.S., our official opposition made many suggestions as to ways we would gladly co-operate with the government.

Knowing that the federal election was coming up in October, the Conservatives offered to begin a pre-study on the original legislation, Bill C-100, in May of this year. That way the government would only have to deal with clause by clause later on, but it declined. When the revised agreement was signed in December, the Conservatives offered to come back early from the Christmas break to begin work on the bill. Again, the government declined.

The international trade committee had approximately 200 requests come in on CUSMA, and the amount of work to do on the legislation had not changed. We consistently offered to commence that work earlier, but the government declined.

The Conservatives ultimately offered to complete clause-by-clause examination by no later than March 5, under the assumption that the government would not be recalling the House of Commons during the constituency break. Again, the government declined.

A unanimous motion was passed at the international trade committee, requesting that the government release its economic impact analysis for CUSMA. It was not provided until one day before committee conducted its clause-by-clause review and the government's economic impact report compared CUSMA to not having a NAFTA deal at all.

What this said was that the government wanted Canadians to believe that any trade deal, no matter how unbalanced or restrictive, would actually be better than nothing at all.

Thankfully, the C.D. Howe Institute released a report comparing CUSMA to the old NAFTA deal on February 21. It affirmed that CUSMA would reduce Canada's GDP by \$14.2 billion. Canada's exports to the U.S. would fall by \$3.2 billion, while our imports from the U.S. would increase by \$8.6 billion. The C.D. Howe Institute's report shed some light on why the government said it was im-

portant to support the new agreement moving quickly and then balked at every opportunity we gave to expedite the passing of the legislation.

We are here now dealing with the issues around what was not good in the agreement. With those 200 organizations and individuals who wanted to come and talk to the committee, we were able to process through 100 of those.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters said, "If we want Canada to take full advantage of this agreement, the government must take steps to insure Canadian manufacturers' productivity levels are equivalent to that of other OECD countries so they can succeed on North American markets and globally."

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce said, "The CUSMA, as signed last autumn, was in imperfect but necessary agreement to provide greater predictability in our relations with Canada's largest trading partner." Predictability was lost to such an extent that we were to the point where people were saying that we needed to just get this done.

Last week, I met with my own chamber of commerce and also held a town hall, with the shadow minister for agriculture, in my riding with a number of farmers from the area.

Agriculture and agri-food producers, manufacturers, exporters and all the support services of small businesses in my riding are experiencing the serious impacts of uncertainty with which the government has plagued our economy: increased costs and a loss of customer base because of the punitive policies of the government: an uncertainty of our relationship with our biggest trading partner, plus the shutting down of supply routes due to strikes and lack of railcars because oil is flowing on our tracks instead of safely through our pipelines; barricades that created dangerous situations and prevented products from being shipped; carbon taxes on heating and cooling systems that are necessary for manufacturing; and increased payroll taxes and red tape.

People feel they have been attacked and ignored by the government. They know that CUSMA is an imperfect, but necessary agreement to provide better predictability in our relationships with Canada's largest trading partner. Therefore, we are here ready to pass Bill C-4.

*Government Orders*

The Aluminum Association of Canada said, “As part of the ongoing collaboration between the Government of Canada and industry, we intend to initiate discussions with the government to encourage Mexico to implement a similar measure, which would help limit the arrival of products that do not comply with the rules of the agreement between our three countries.” Canada's aluminum industry is concerned by the government's failure to secure the same made-in-North American provision for aluminum as was given to steel. Canada is North America's largest producer of aluminum.

● (1610)

While the 70% rule of origin included looks good on paper, in reality the failure to include a smelted and poured definition, which is what the industry is asking of in Mexico, will leave the North American industry vulnerable to dumping from overseas, particularly through Mexico.

As well, the government needs to report on the status of the \$2 billion in tariffs, the revenue that it has collected thus far, to ensure it actually was used to support Canadian businesses impacted by those tariffs. The manufacturers in my communities were very discouraged by what they saw in the government's behaviour when they were facing shut downs, including its suggestion that it help the manufacturers deal with it by giving more EI. They did not want more EI; they wanted to keep those people working.

As well, there is an urgency to develop a strategy to market Canadian aluminum as the greenest in the world to help shore up our competitiveness in existing and emerging markets. This is part of the Conservative environmental plan. It looks at showcasing and bragging to the world about what Canada already has done and how we can help to impact the global issues on climate change that have impacted so many other countries that are not as clean as Canada.

Then there are our dairy farmers.

The largest group left behind by the government during the negotiations is Canada's dairy sector. The government has managed to simultaneously shrink the opportunities for dairy producers and processors at home, while also limiting their ability to grow by exporting.

Canada agreed to place a worldwide cap on exports of certain dairy products in CUSMA, which is unprecedented in regional trade agreements. As the nation's prosperity depends on reliable access to global markets in every market, but specifically in dairy, Canada must not agree to this kind of provision in any future trade agreement. Why would the government say yes to giving the U.S. that kind of power over our sovereignty and our opportunity to trade as we wish with other countries?

This concession is an affront to our sovereignty and there is no excuse or rational argument for this capitulation to go hat in hand to the U.S. to ask if we can please have its permission to export dairy to any country with which we choose to trade.

There are so many areas that are faulty in this agreement, which stakeholders brought to the attention of the committee, and we were able to create recommendations for the government to move forward and to rectify a lot of those issues.

Regarding government procurement, we have no chapter on being able to secure Canada's access to the U.S. market.

Regarding auto, Canada's exports of motor vehicles to the U.S. will decline by \$1.5 billion relative to the current trade regime under NAFTA, and imports would decrease by \$1.2 billion. In light of the hardships faced by Ontario's auto sector, which were compounded by the punitive actions of the government against our competitiveness, it must fulfill the auto sector's request to delay the implementation of CUSMA for the auto sector until January 2021 to allow it to adjust to the new climate of the deal.

Regarding forestry, so many mills have closed and support services, small businesses and whole communities have been brought to a standstill by the government's indifference. They do not deserve this attitude from their Prime Minister, whom they expect to re-engage right now with the United States trade representative to find a solution to this issue.

Regarding cultural exemption, the price of protecting it in CUSMA was to open ourselves up to retaliatory tariffs not limited to that sector. For example, if Canada decides to implement a digital service tax for a company such as Netflix, the United States would be within its right, as per CUSMA, to place a tariff of equal commercial effect on any Canadian export.

These are just a few of the examples of where the government has capitulated to the U.S. The U.S. reply to the whole document is a huge document of all of its successes. Ours, from what I understand the previous minister of trade on this side of the House said, was 72 pages long. Clearly, Canada has not come out on the best circumstances here, but as stakeholders have said, we just need to get this done and move on, hopefully in the future with better arrangements.

● (1615)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have a difficult time with the Conservative Party's approach to the whole issue of trade.

The Conservatives say they are going to support the bill. Then they go absolutely all over the place about why it is such a bad trade deal. If we follow their logic, it is almost as if they were going to vote against the trade agreement.

*Government Orders*

I really take exception when the Conservatives try to come across as the protectors of supply management. This is from the Conservative Party, the same party that destroyed the Canadian Wheat Board. Prior to doing that, it said that it would do nothing to hurt the Canadian Wheat Board. If the Conservatives were in government today, they would not have protected supply management. Many farmers recognize that fact.

What gives the member's party credibility when it has been so inconsistent on this trade agreement?

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Madam Speaker, the inconsistency is on that side of the House.

The Liberals voted against the very first NAFTA agreement. We are the party of free trade. The other trade agreements that the Liberals were championing today, the ones they signed their name to, all of that work was done by this Conservative Party when we were on that side of the House.

That member has nothing to say to me about free trade. We are very proud of the fact that we do very good deals. It is unfortunate, quite honestly, from my perspective, that we have to vote in favour of this in light of these issues. This has been done so poorly, but all our stakeholders have said that we need to deal with this and move on from here.

● (1620)

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, when the first NAFTA agreement came out under the Conservatives, 400,000 jobs were lost. I know that in the city of Hamilton, many manufacturing jobs were lost. The city was collapsing at that time.

Under the first agreement, investor-state dispute provisions were negotiated that would allow investors to sue our country. Now that this has been taken out under this agreement, does the member not feel this is a better agreement than the original one?

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Madam Speaker, from what I see in feedback from the stakeholders in the auto industry, there is a lot of angst around issues with this agreement. That is why they have requested that it not be implemented for the auto industry until 2021.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, it is always difficult to look back. I know people tend to forget what happened in the 41st Parliament.

The passage of the Canada-China investment treaty is one on which we really need to focus. People forget that it exists. I have heard so many members speak to the issues we have in CUSMA, now that we have gotten rid of chapter 11, the investor-state dispute settlement provisions, that allowed the U.S. government to sue us in secret.

However, it was under Stephen Harper that we are now obligated, for decades, to secret tribunals, where the People's Republic of China state-owned enterprises have the right to lean on the Canadian government in secret, first for six months, and then bring secret arbitration cases, if we do anything that hurts the expectation of profits of corporations from the People's Republic of China.

Would the member be willing to look into the implications of that, which was passed in secret, in cabinet, without a vote in Parliament?

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Madam Speaker, I cannot answer that. However, if we were forming government, we would be far more careful about the way we encourage investment from China in our country going forward.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague from Yorkton—Melville mentioned the delays by the Liberal government in allowing Parliament and the opposition parties to study the bill. We asked for that in October and December.

Could she explain why the Liberal Party continually blocks Parliament from proper oversight of such an important deal?

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Madam Speaker, clearly there is a problem on the other side of the House.

Quite often we see the Liberals making announcements and then trying to figure out the implementation of them. In this case, the deal took so long and was so poorly constructed that the Liberals, realizing they had conceded so much, tried to avoid any kind of scrutiny and simply tried to get it through the House.

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am thankful for this great opportunity to share some wisdom on this very important bill, Bill C-4, on CUSMA, which is the Canada-U.S.-Mexico agreement.

However, before I get into the bill, I will speak about the economy. Trade deals are linked to the economy, and the economy here in Canada after five years of Liberal government is very strong compared to what it was when we took office.

Let us look at what has happened. What has changed in the last five years?

We have seen 1.2 million jobs created by Canadians. We have seen over one million people lifted out of poverty, with 353,000 of those being children, which is over 20% of the poverty rate in Canada, and 75,000 being seniors, mostly women. These are big and important numbers.

As well, we are seeing the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years. These are the factors that are clearly stating how strong this economy is and how strong our government is, which has been focused on tax cuts and helping the middle class and those who want to join it.

Trade deals are extremely important to Canadians, and every province and territory is very happy with this trade deal. We had a trade deal before, but this one is new and improved.

We also have the CETA trade deal, which encompasses half a billion people. In that trade deal we have seen 98% of the tariffs removed, whereas in the past it was 25%. Members can imagine how the business community feels about that trade deal today. I know what the business community has to say about it my constituency.

As well, there is the CPTPP, the trans-Pacific trade deal, which, again, encompasses half a billion people. Between the three trade deals, we have a market of 1.5 billion people. In the Asia-Pacific deal most of the tariffs have been removed and 100% of the seafood tariffs are gone. Members can imagine that in my region of Atlantic Canada and in Nova Scotia this is a great opportunity to increase our exports, and it is extremely important.

How important is CUSMA, the Canada-U.S.-Mexico deal? It is \$2 billion per day, which is an enormous sum, and 80% of Canadian exports go to these countries.

Who is supporting this trade deal? It is not just us. The premiers are saying they are behind this trade deal, which is important, and I will talk more about it, but we know that Premier Moe, Premier Kenney and company, as well as Brian Mulroney, do. The business community is happy. The unions are happy.

However, they say Trump is a good negotiator. Let us look at the three things he wanted.

First, he wanted a sunset clause at five years when we would have to renegotiate or the deal would be dead. However, that is not in there. We took that out and it is now 16 years.

Second, he wanted the end of supply management. We are the party that introduced supply management, and we are the party that is promoting supply management. We will continue to support supply management because it is important to Canadians.

Third, Trump wanted a dispute resolution tribunal where there would be American judges and courts. Do members think we would have agreed to that? Maybe a Conservative would have, but we did not agree to that. We then added another important piece where the Americans could not stop and must participate in tribunal panels, where in the past they could say no.

These are three key areas where our government has been very successful in negotiating with the Americans.

• (1625)

Let us bring it back to Nova Scotia. What does this trade deal represent to Nova Scotia? It is extremely important, because \$3.7 billion is spent by Americans in Nova Scotia. That is an extremely important investment yearly, as my colleagues can imagine. That is 68% of all our trade products leaving Nova Scotia and going to the States.

That means there are 18,000 jobs directly related to this trade deal for Nova Scotians. That is 18,000 directly related jobs; I forgot to mention the 7,000 indirect jobs. Colleagues can imagine how we feel in Nova Scotia. The premier, Mr. McNeil, said that this is a great deal for Canada and a great deal for Nova Scotia. That is a very clear message.

I want to talk about a company in my riding just down the street from me, Marid Industries. It is a steel industry, and today it knows

### *Government Orders*

that with this deal it will be able to be competitive and move its products to the States and Mexico without tariffs. That is extremely important. That is making sure that it can move forward. These are great-paying jobs for the people who work in that industry.

Catherine Cobden from the Canadian Steel Producers Association said:

CUSMA is critical to strengthening the competitiveness of Canadian and North American steel industries and ensuring market access in the face of persistent global trade challenges and uncertainty.

That shows good, strong support from the steel industry.

Of course, we are seeing the strongest amendments in this trade deal when it comes to labour and environment, two major areas that Canada is pushing forward. We are making sure that we have some criteria around strengthening labour standards as well as enforcement and inspection standards. That means that wages being paid will create a level playing field. It also affects work hours and conditions. Those are essential pieces to ensure that the playing field is level, which is extremely important.

In the environment, as colleagues know, we have added some obligations in the fight against marine pollution. The other piece of it is air quality.

I must also mention pharmacare, because in the last amendments we were able to remove the 10-year restriction on generic drugs, which is extremely important.

We have added new chapters protecting women's rights, minority rights and indigenous rights and chapters that provide protection against discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation. These are all important chapters that are in this trade deal and are so essential.

As well, there are cultural exemptions, which help all Canadians, including those in Quebec. That is very important.

We have work to do. We know that in a trade deal there is a bit of trade here or there. The poultry and egg industries have opened up a small percentage, 2%. We are compensating them not only for loss, but also supporting them so that they can purchase better and more up-to-date equipment. The products will then be better able to be traded internationally, opening up that potential market as well.

*Government Orders*

This is a very important deal. I am extremely proud to support this. The people in my constituency are just waiting for this to be ratified as soon as possible.

• (1630)

**Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's wonderful speech.

Perhaps he could speak about the softwood lumber industry in B.C. and about the aluminum industry in Quebec, as people are suffering.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Madam Speaker, as members know, tariffs have been removed from aluminum and steel. We have also added in this deal that the amount of steel used in cars would be 70% between the three countries. In the past it was zero, so that is a big victory.

I want to share with my colleague some of the things his colleagues have said. Jason Kenney said he was “relieved”. I imagine it takes a lot to relieve him, but he is “relieved that a renewed North American Trade Agreement has been concluded.” Wow, he is relieved.

Let us talk about Brian Mulroney, a former prime minister of the country and chief negotiator. He said that Canada got what it wanted and that we got a great deal.

I know I have sat in this House for a couple of years and listened to the Conservatives saying to sign, sign, sign and not worry about negotiating because it is \$2 billion a day. We have a much better deal today than we would have had if we had listened to the Conservatives. In the last 10 years before we took power, we know what we got.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague's powerful speech.

This infamous document raises many questions about the agricultural sector. For instance, we know that dairy producers have been using a lot of fat for the past few years, so much so that they have a lot of protein left over for export.

Going forward, the United States will be deciding how much of those dairy products we can export. That will be 55,000 metric tonnes in the first year of the agreement and 35,000 in the second year. In subsequent years, those limits will increase by only 1.5% or 2%, although we were exporting up to 100,000 metric tonnes a year when there were no restrictions. How can the government put our supply-managed agriculture to work for the U.S.?

Furthermore, we conceded 3.9% of our supply-managed market to the U.S., and that is after dairy farmers' incomes had already been reduced by 8% under the first two agreements. We can only imagine what will happen with this added on.

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I realize, as my colleague should also realize, that you have to give a little to get a little in any negotiation.

One thing is certain: We were able to preserve supply management, which the U.S. President wanted to eliminate, as I explained in my speech. In Canada, we all know, as does my colleague, that supply management is extremely important. It is too bad that our former colleague Maxime Bernier is not here, because he opposed supply management and he certainly would have something to say.

Under this agreement, Quebec will receive \$57 billion as a result of exports to the United States. This is definitely a very important agreement for Quebec, too.

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I always enjoy listening to my colleague.

He mentioned some provisions, which the government is taking credit for, about protecting women. According to sources, the renegotiated deal originally included provisions for improving conditions for working women, which included workplace harassment, pay equity and equality issues.

However, that was in the scrub phase. These provisions disappeared in the scrubbing process. How does this protect women, and what happened to these provisions?

**Mr. Darrell Samson:** Madam Speaker, there is no question that when there are provisions, it creates more discussion as we move forward. The door is not closed right now. What is important is that we have the strongest chapters on labour and environment that we have ever had in any trade deal, and we have the protection of women and indigenous people included in there. Those are key points.

These have never been in there before, so now that they are there, the members are saying they are not perfect. No, they are not perfect, but we are starting to build a strong foundation so that Canada can continue to prosper as we move forward.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Fredericton, Health; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Seniors; the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Infrastructure.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill C-4, an act to ratify the new free trade agreement among Canada, the United States and Mexico, sometimes referred to as the new NAFTA. Whatever one wishes to label the agreement, one thing is clear, and that is, for Canadians, it falls far short of a win.

Before I elaborate on some of the shortcomings with respect to the new agreement, it is important to provide some context in terms of the history of how we got to where we are.

*Government Orders*

In November 2016, President Trump was elected, and it is no secret that President Trump was no fan of NAFTA. Indeed, he called it the worst trade deal ever. In the face of that, it was a little surprising that the Prime Minister pre-emptively invited the President to renegotiate NAFTA. The Prime Minister, ever so confident, stated that he would get a better deal. The Prime Minister boasted about a win-win-win: a win for Canada, a win for the United States and a win for Mexico.

It is no surprise that given the President's position on NAFTA, he took the Prime Minister up on his offer at the earliest opportunity. What did the Prime Minister do once he got his wish? Effectively, he put forward a whole series of non-trade issues that alienated the United States. During the course of negotiations, we saw punitive steel and aluminum tariffs levelled against Canada that had a devastating impact that lasted for more than a year.

The Prime Minister spent a lot of time doing what this Prime Minister does: virtue signalling while Canadians paid. The United States concluded that Canada was not interested in reaching a deal. The United States negotiated a deal with Mexico. Most aspects of this agreement were negotiated between the United States and Mexico, including steel provisions and other components of the agreement. Canada was invited in at the eleventh hour when there were few items to resolve. In that respect, it was a *fait accompli*. The government was left with very little choice, either to sign the agreement or walk away. In the face of that, it is no surprise that Canada signed the agreement.

As a result of the Prime Minister's lack of leadership, what we got was not the better deal that the Prime Minister promised, but a worse deal. Instead of a win-win-win, a win for Canada, a win for the United States and a win for Mexico, we have an agreement that is a win for the United States, a win for Mexico and a loss for Canada. It is no wonder that the government was so reluctant to reveal its own economic impact analysis on this agreement until the eleventh hour. It did so one day before the trade committee went clause by clause on Bill C-4.

If this trade agreement were as good as the government would like Canadians to believe, then surely the government would be very eager to reveal its economic impact analysis to demonstrate what a good deal it was for Canada. However, the government did not do that.

Why did it not do that? Very simply, despite the rhetoric on the other side, the government knows that it is not a good deal and the Prime Minister did not get a better deal as he promised.

When we saw the economic impact analysis, the government's analysis compares the new deal to no deal at all. The appropriate comparator is not between the new deal and no deal at all, but between the new deal and the old NAFTA.

• (1640)

While the Liberal government quite deliberately did not undertake that analysis, in terms of what it has revealed publicly, the C.D. Howe Institute did undertake such an analysis. What the C.D. Howe Institute determined was that, under the new deal, Canada stands to lose \$14.2 billion in GDP. Not only that, Canada stands to see a reduction in exports to the U.S. market in the sum of \$3.2 bil-

lion, while Canada stands to import more American products in the sum of \$8.6 billion. That is \$8.6 billion more in U.S. exports, and \$3.2 billion less in Canadian exports. Again, it is a good deal for the United States, and a bad deal for Canada.

Despite the fact that this agreement falls short, we on this side of the House are prepared to support the government, support the passage of Bill C-4 and support the speedy ratification of CUSMA. We support it because, at the end of the day, this deal is better than no deal.

We have heard, as the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook noted, that the business community and premiers want to see certainty. They want to see continued access to our most important trading partner, the United States. We know there is \$2 billion in bilateral trade between Canada and the United States every day, and \$900 billion in bilateral trade a year. To put that in perspective, that is nine times more than with our second-largest trading partner, China. Seventy-five per cent of Canadian exports are destined for the U.S. market.

In light of that, it would be irresponsible not to support the ratification of this agreement. If we were to not do so, there would be a risk of no agreement, which would benefit no one. However, while we support the ratification, we do so on a qualified basis. We will continue to remind the government of the shortcomings of this agreement.

The Liberal government opened up 3.6% of the dairy market, and got nothing in return. The government was not able to get the same protections for the Canadian aluminum industry that are in the agreement for the steel industry. We know that the government got nowhere in terms of buy America. Mexico got a chapter on buy America, but Canada did not. The consequence is that it leaves Canadian companies out of the opportunity to bid on large government procurement projects in the United States. The government also sold out Canadian sovereignty by requiring permission from Washington to negotiate new trade agreements with non-market economies, such as our second-largest trading partner, China.

While this is a deal that we will support, let us make no mistake about it: It is better than no deal, but it is not a good deal.

• (1645)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will start by saying that I understand the role of the opposition is to challenge a government and to always push for something a little better. I get that and I understand that. However, to hear a number of Conservatives say today they are supporting this because it is better than no deal, and they have to do it because Canada needs something, is absolutely disingenuous at best. The reality of the situation is that Conservatives need to vote for this because they cannot be seen as not voting for it. They cannot go back to their electorate and try to explain why they did not vote for it.

*Government Orders*

The member tried to explain, after all the horrible stuff that was said about the deal, why he was still going to vote for it. Meanwhile, about a year and a half ago, Conservatives wanted to capitulate over anything, saying Canada should sign a deal. They were willing to go along with signing a deal back then, but now that the deal has improved, they are suggesting that it is still not good enough, even though we should have signed it back then.

Can the member explain what about the deal now is worse than the deal that we had previously, in terms of not meeting the standards he has for a deal?

• (1650)

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, various sectors of the Canadian economy have spoken and they have said it is an adequate deal. It is a good enough deal, but it is not a great deal. I could quote many people on that.

Is the member for Kingston and the Islands happy that Canadian aluminum producers do not have the same protection afforded to steel producers, opening up dumping from China via Mexico? Is the member proud that we opened up our dairy market, resulting in compensation that the government is now rolling out because it did not get a good deal to protect our supply-managed sectors of the economy? Is the member proud of the fact that we got rid of the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism, leaving Canadian businesses at the whim of U.S. courts?

I am not proud of those things. There is a lot of room for an improved deal. This is far from a good deal.

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, in his speech earlier, the member mentioned that Conservatives are not happy with the deal, but they are going to accept it. I agree there could have been a better deal. However, there are major improvements in certain areas from the original deal, and getting rid of the investor-state provisions was a good thing. It allowed the investors to actually sue our government.

Does the member believe that this is a better deal than the original deal, or does he feel the original deal was better and we should have stayed with it?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, we believe that the old NAFTA deal was a better deal than this deal. That is clear. The Prime Minister invited the President to renegotiate a deal that had, on the whole, been good for Canada and that created five million Canadian jobs. NAFTA was a good deal. This deal is an adequate deal, but one that falls far short.

**Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it has been really difficult to follow the Conservatives the last three or four days on this deal. Just a couple of hours ago, I heard them saying this was the deal that they negotiated. They said the Liberals were passing the deal they negotiated. Then the member says this is the worst deal that has been done. We have to get our facts straight. The Conservatives in caucus have a responsibility to shape up their argument. It would be nice if they could do that, because it was not very clear for me.

Let us look at this a couple of ways. Would my colleague not agree that going from zero aluminum and steel to 70% is much bet-

ter? Would he not agree that the labour and the environment clauses and chapters we put in are an improvement? Would he not agree that the Americans cannot block the arbitration panel? Even his colleague said we won more sugar. It is a much better deal with the sugar. These are very positive things for our country.

I would like the member to share his thoughts with me, and give me some sugar in his answer.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, with respect to aluminum that the member made reference to, it is with respect to parts from aluminum. At the end of the day, sources from a country such as China can be dumped into the North American market by Mexico. The agreement falls far short in terms of our aluminum producers.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has always been in favour of free trade. The free market allows for growth that would never be possible in a closed market. Quebec needs free trade agreements to help all of its economic sectors grow and innovate.

For example, after the original NAFTA was implemented in 1994, exports of Canadian fruits and vegetables and fresh fruit to Mexico and the United States increased by 396%. The majority of the exports were to the United States. It is essential that we retain this access.

The new CUSMA will ensure that businesses have continued access to the American market, and it will have benefits for many producers. We recognize that. Some producers will come out on top, in particular grain producers. The improved definition of grain is a positive.

A few minutes ago, my NDP colleague mentioned eliminating the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism. That is another positive. A number of organizations are therefore calling for this agreement to be ratified quickly.

However, there are some sectors that do not benefit from the agreement. They sometimes benefit very little, or not at all, yet they are the economic mainstay of our rural areas, the pillars that support the dynamic use of our vast land. Like culture, these sectors may need an exception. As members may have guessed, I am, of course, talking about our supply management sectors.

We in the Bloc are working constructively and will be long remembered for the solutions we proposed for the aluminum industry. In fact, our Conservative colleague just mentioned that. At some point, the same thing must be done for the sectors under supply management, but we first need to focus on when the agreement will be ratified.

*Government Orders*

In this agreement, Canada agreed to allow the United States to restrict its exports to third countries. That is unprecedented. We are talking, of course, about milk by-products. I think members are starting to realize that. Milk by-products, such as milk proteins, powdered milk and infant formula, are restricted. Approximately 110,000 tonnes of these products were exported in 2019. The Trump administration managed to include a provision that limits these exports to 55,000 tonnes the first year and 35,000 tonnes the second year. That is unbelievable.

Not only is our dairy sector already losing 3.9% of the market, but all supply-managed sectors are losing market share. Furthermore, restrictions placed on our farmers make it difficult for them to make up their losses by exporting their surplus solid protein to third countries.

Something will eventually have to be done about this, but the first step is to make sure the agreement is ratified after May 1. If the agreement is ratified in April, the clause explains that the agreement will enter into force on the first day of the third month. That means it would enter into force in July.

If the agreement is ratified in May, however, it would enter into force in August. That would make a world of difference, and people need to realize that. The dairy production year starts on August 1. If the agreement starts on July 1, that means the first year of the agreement will only be a month long. Farmers will only have a month to export the 55,000 tonnes. It makes no sense. That is why we have to make sure the agreement is ratified after May 1.

This will not delay the implementation of the agreement, and I am not suggesting that we postpone the ratification of CUSMA until after this session. That is not the issue. The issue is to make sure the agreement enters into force after August 1 so that farmers can start recouping their losses. We will see what we can do after that. Everyone knows that the Bloc Québécois can be creative. We will need to find a solution to this harmful and unacceptable clause.

On another note, we were pleased to read in the news that dairy farmers have begun receiving compensation. Everybody is happy, even the farmers, although it would have made them prouder to produce milk and feed Canadians, which is all they really wanted.

However, certain sectors are still not getting compensation. They are the supply-managed sectors, including the poultry, turkey, hatching egg and table egg sectors.

• (1655)

Representatives of those organizations acted in good faith and were very patient. They sat down with government representatives and presented their numbers. They reached an agreement on the amount of compensation needed last April. This is now March, so it has been almost a year. Nothing has happened since, no sign of anything. There were some meetings last summer, in July and August, maybe because our Liberal Party colleagues wanted to make a campaign announcement. That certainly helps, but nothing ever came of it.

What is holding up this file? Unlike people in the dairy sector, who asked for cash compensation, people in these sectors are asking for compensation in the form of innovation programs and in-

frastructure upgrades. They also want the option to run a marketing and promotional campaign and funding to support it. It varies from one sector to the next. I listed the four earlier.

I have a question for the House. Is the Government of Canada in the best position to know exactly what each of those sectors needs? Would it not make more sense to give people in those sectors the right to say what they want, what their needs are and what, in their opinion, will help their industries stay competitive and ensure their long-term viability? I think the answer is self-evident: it is up to the people in those sectors to decide.

People in those sectors do not understand. The Bloc Québécois does not understand why there is never any progress. The budget will be tabled soon. We would like to see some numbers. We want to see numbers for this. We want to know what the budget for this is. The government promised compensation for all supply-managed sectors. Settling matters with dairy producers is good, but dairy is just one of five supply-managed sectors, which means there are still four more. We want answers that demonstrate respect for the people working in those sectors, compensation that offsets losses and is comparable to what dairy producers got.

During questions and comments I would like people from the Liberal Party to tell me where we are on this file, because there are some people who are a bit anxious, who are waiting and have concerns. Yesterday, I met with representatives of these sectors, together with my distinguished colleague from Joliette. We want answers. Today, I am asking for answers.

Once this compensation has been paid, we will have to reflect collectively on the importance of these supply-managed industries to the economy, to our rural areas and to the dynamic use of the land. We have to understand the direct impacts these farms have as part of our supply management system, that is, in a protected market that allows us to have quality products, stable income, and food security. We also have to understand the secondary impact on industries that supply goods to these people.

Representatives of these supply-managed sectors told me something that I quite liked, and I want to share it with you. They told me that they are thought of as privileged, when in fact they indirectly pay the rent of the vendors and purchasers they do business with and they provide stability to the economy, a stability that also translates into food security.

The system is already seeing signs of neglect. I hope no one in the House would dare say that the Canadian market is protected. Once the agreement is implemented, 18% of the market will have been ceded to foreign producers. If that is considered a closed market, then I would like to know what an open one is. I think that the supply-managed sectors have done their fair share and it is high time we had legislation to protect them.

*Government Orders*

We are happy to hear the government's promises. It has assured us that it will not back down and it will be watching Brexit and Mercosur very closely. Still, the government has made similar promises in the past. Unfortunately, public confidence wavers when the government breaks its word. The public then demands more guarantees. Those who made verbal promises but did not keep them are asked to put their promises down on paper and sign them. This paper can then be brought out again. In this case, the paper I am referring to is the bill that my colleague and I introduced to protect supply management.

• (1700)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, whether it is the dairy industry in my home province of Manitoba or the dairy industry in Quebec or anywhere else in Canada, we all have a responsibility to ensure its health and well-being. I understand and appreciate just how important supply management is. I am very proud of the fact that this trade agreement virtually guarantees supply management well into future generations. Whether people are dairy farmers or others impacted by the supply management chain, they will see this as a positive.

We need to remember that President Trump wanted to dismantle Canada's supply management. For many years, that is what was being advocated. Yes, there are some concerns and we have recognized we are going to be looking very closely at the impact and there will be compensation, but let us not promote any sort of misinformation to try to give the impression that supply management, in the long term, is going to be harmed by this particular agreement. We are, in fact, guaranteeing its long-term survival.

Would the member not agree it is in the best interests of all Canadians by having that guarantee for the future?

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague very much for his comments. I am indeed very pleased to hear what he said. I will try to remember it, since the member just told me that it is very important to guarantee the continued existence of supply management. I imagine that the member agrees with protecting the supply management system through legislation, given that there is no guarantee that the system will continue under future parliaments.

We are often told that Mr. Trump wanted to dismantle the system and we are aware of that. That is why we want to protect supply management through legislation. My colleague spoke about compensation, and that is great. However, the government should announce something, because the four production sectors I mentioned are waiting for answers.

My colleague spoke about disinformation. I would like to know what part of my speech was disinformation because I had all the statistics to back it. There was no disinformation in my speech.

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Quebec is one of the biggest aluminum producers in North

America and an excellent, well-paid workforce. It does not have the same protections under the aluminum strategy as it did with the steel industry. Does the member fear, because the rules are so vague in the aluminum industry, that there is going to be a massive job loss in Quebec?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very pertinent question.

Yes, we are afraid. That is why we made such a ruckus over the aluminum issue. We will remember that when the Bloc Québécois raised the aluminum issue in the House, we were told by just about everyone that we were off track, that we were raising a problem that did not exist. We even had to explain the problem to government officials because they did not understand what they had signed. Next time, it would be advisable that they read all the provisions when they sign a contract.

Yes, we are concerned. That is why we went to the mat on this issue. The commitments obtained from the government are the most we could get. Naturally, we will remain vigilant to ensure that they are applied to the letter.

We are indeed worried.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my question for my esteemed colleague and riding neighbour has to do with what the government representative said a few minutes ago.

He said that there could be no better protection for supply management than what was negotiated in the new NAFTA. However, members will recall that supply-managed sectors took a hit in each of the last three agreements that were signed and, on top of that, now there are the concessions made under WTO, which represent a market loss of 18%.

Does he think that the best way to protect supply management is to sacrifice part of the market in every agreement? If not, what can we do?

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, I will try to answer the excellent question asked by my esteemed colleague and riding neighbour.

I will show a lot of good faith in my answer. I think that what we need to remember about what our Liberal colleague said is that supply management was threatened and they did what they could.

I think that all members of the House can agree that, from now on, we need to protect our supply-managed sectors through legislation. We will give the Liberals the opportunity to do so and to prove to all the farmers in their ridings that they are really standing up for them.

• (1710)

[English]

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party is the party of free trade and free markets. We recognize the importance of the U.S. and Mexican markets for Canadian exporters, which is why the Conservatives have been clear that we will support the swift passage of the new NAFTA deal. However, while a deal is better than no deal, Canadian industries are bracing for the impact of the changes to come.

Ironically enough, the Liberal government's economic impact report compares CUSMA to not having a NAFTA deal at all. This is baffling, since almost any trade deal, no matter how lopsided, would have been better than having nothing at all.

The C.D. Howe Institute discovered that CUSMA would reduce Canada's GDP by \$14.2 billion. Its recent report found that after the implementation of CUSMA, Canada's exports to the U.S. will fall by \$3.2 billion, while our imports from the U.S. will increase by \$8.6 billion, with the worst impacts being felt in our agriculture and dairy sectors.

I have heard from many farmers in my riding who operate businesses in supply-managed industries, and they feel that the Liberal government has literally sold the family farm. The Conservatives are committed to Canada's supply management system, but the Liberal government's weak leadership and ineffective negotiation tactics have continued to erode the system's integrity. Concessions have been made to the U.S. without our receiving anything meaningful in return, and stakeholders are speaking up.

Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with turkey farmers in British Columbia. They indicated that market access concessions made as the result of CUSMA are going to hurt turkey farm families across the country. Not only that, this change would greatly hinder Canadian consumer access to locally farmed products.

What would this impact look like? Under CUSMA, the market access commitment calculation for turkey will be modified to a 29% increase in new market access for the U.S. into Canada. It will allow the U.S. to export an additional 1,000 metric tons of turkey products each year for the next 10 years above current access levels, with potentially more in the future.

Canadian dairy farmers and processors are also set to lose market access to the Americans. Before the international trade committee, the Dairy Processors Association of Canada shared that at full implementation, the access granted under CUSMA, in addition to the existing concessions from other agreements, namely CETA and CPTPP, represent about 18% of the Canadian market. When considering the three latest trade agreements, Canadian dairy processors will lose \$320 million per year.

On top of the market access concessions, CUSMA includes a concerning and unprecedented clause that will impose export caps on worldwide Canadian shipments of milk powder, protein concentrates and infant formula. For example, for skim milk powder and milk protein concentrates, a cap of 55,000 tonnes will be imposed for the first year and 35,000 tonnes for the second year.

### *Government Orders*

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is also sounding the alarm. In addition to the market access concessions, supply-managed industries are anxiously waiting for government to fulfill its commitment to quickly and fully mitigate the impacts of these trade agreements, action that is necessary, though insulting to many of my constituents who work in these industries.

Before the international trade committee, Mr. Dykstra, a New Brunswick dairy farmer, stated:

I now want to touch on the compensation package promised, and partly delivered, for CETA and CPTPP. I haven't heard anything about the remaining years and how it will be paid out. That in itself concerns me. The compensation package is bittersweet. Most farmers, including me, received a payment in December of last year for those previous trade agreement concessions. As far as I am aware, no concrete timeline has been set for the next payments. We, as dairy farmers, have always prided ourselves on getting all our money from the marketplace. This is how the system is supposed to work. This is how it did work. The government trading away excess and then offering compensation is not what we want.

• (1715)

In addition to the previously mentioned market access concessions, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture has raised two other issues causing serious industry concern.

First, the Liberals have relinquished Canadian sovereignty on critical internal policy development and export control functions. CUSMA commits Canada to consult with the United States before making changes to Canadian dairy policies. This should have never been surrendered.

Second, as mentioned previously, the Liberal government also agreed to cap dairy sector exports of milk protein concentrates, skim milk and infant formula to CUSMA and non-CUSMA countries, and approved an export charge on exports over the cap. This is disturbing on several fronts. Canada has long argued against the use of export tariffs to regulate trade. It also sets a dangerous precedent by allowing a regional trade agreement and a party in that agreement to control the trade of another party to countries outside of that agreement.

This is why the Conservative Party is standing up for these Canadian businesses and calling on the Deputy Prime Minister and the Liberal government to amend the agreement. Export thresholds for milk protein concentrates, skim milk powder and infant formula should only be subject to trade between the CUSMA signatories, not to other countries that are not party to the agreement.

*Government Orders*

I will give a real-world example of this from a company that employs hundreds of people in my riding, Vitalus Nutrition, whose CEO, Phil Vanderpol, presented at the trade committee.

Vitalus processes milk supplied by Canadian farmers into high-quality cream and butter, milk protein concentrates and milk protein isolates that have superior quality, nutritional value and functionality. It planned and anticipated demand and, up to this point, was capitalizing on the growth in the global market for nutritional value-added dairy ingredients. The federal government, or at least Western Economic Diversification Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, recognized Vitalus' economic promise and even invested significant funds in the company in the previous Parliament. However, that same federal government is now pulling the rug out from under the company and, ironically, its own previous investments. The Liberal government has managed, in this case, to simultaneously shrink the opportunity for Canadian dairy producers in the Fraser Valley while limiting their ability to grow by exporting.

Turning to forestry, Canada's forestry industry is also disappointed in the Liberal government's inability to protect its sector, since CUSMA does not prevent the United States from applying anti-dumping and countervailing duties to Canadian softwood lumber. Yes, Canadian forest product producers want a speedy ratification of CUSMA, even though it will provide no relief for their uncertainty. They want this in the hope that the federal government will start providing their industry the attention it requires. Businesses are going under, families are hurting and more than 20,000 forestry workers have suffered layoffs. The Liberal government must take immediate action to solve the softwood lumber dispute. It is unconscionable that a sector so significant was not part of the agreement.

I do not have time to address all of the shortcomings I have outlined that are in this new trade agreement, but I note that I would have liked to see the list of professionals admitted under temporary entry for business persons expanded to include the jobs of the 21st century. There are a lot of problematic issues regarding the rules of origin for automobiles and the new quotas in place. Also, buy America was not addressed.

When I was a graduate student, I participated in the North American forum for young leaders in North America. I had the opportunity to work with American and Mexican students at some of the top universities in our continent. On a personal note, we have so much untapped potential between our three countries, and I look forward to seeing labour mobility provisions changed during my lifetime, of course with strict immigration protocols, to meet the untapped potential we have with our trading partners.

With that, I would say that the new NAFTA deal put forward for ratification by the government is, overall, a disappointment, which I know because I represent the supply-managed industries in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. It would leave Canadians worse off than they were under the prior agreement and would relinquish our sovereignty. Our economy depends on free trade, and we need a federal government that signs agreements for the benefit of Canadians. It seems in this case that Canadians were sold out on so many fronts. We need ministers like my old boss, the member for Abbotsford, at the helm of international trade.

• (1720)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I heard the member and a number of Conservatives say, "We are the party of free trade." Please, with all due respect, this is not the Conservative Party of Brian Mulroney and Flora MacDonald. This is a much different operation. Members opposite may have hijacked the name and the brand, but it is certainly not the same party that the Progressive Conservative Party was in the 1980s and 1990s, when this deal was contemplated and came along.

I will touch on the member's comment that this deal is not good enough. In reality, the Conservatives were continuously telling the government about a year ago to take any deal. The member says it is not fair to compare this deal to no deal, but the reality of the situation is that Donald Trump had made it clear he wanted out of NAFTA unless a new deal was created.

To compare this deal to the old deal is not realistic, because we knew that the old deal was off the table. Rather than capitulating to Donald Trump, our position was to find a deal for Canada and in the process make it a better deal. That is what we ended up getting. We took care of a lot of issues that we experienced before. I hope the member will recognize this as the reality.

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, I remind the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands of a moment in the last Parliament, when the Deputy Prime Minister called over the member for Abbotsford and congratulated him. She embraced him in the House and thanked him for the excellent work he had done on the free trade agreement with the European Union. That does not happen every day. That happened because of the amazing work the previous Conservative government did to support free trade in Canada.

Turning to this deal, I note that all of my constituents who raised concerns about the new NAFTA have been vehemently and unanimously opposed to it. There are so many young farmers, like the dairy producers who were in Ottawa just a few weeks ago, who feel the Government of Canada sold them out. For the first time they are taking a paycheque from the government when they and their families prided themselves on maintaining the supply management system. That will be lost in a big way under this agreement.

I will make no bones about challenging an agreement that erodes Canadian sovereignty and that demands the Government of Canada to share its policies on dairy production with a foreign government. That is unacceptable.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Louise Charbonneau (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague for his very enlightening speech on supply management, particularly with regard to dairy products. In a way, he shares the same view as the Bloc Québécois. I commend him for that. I was very surprised to hear him mention turkey farmers.

*Government Orders*

Can he tell us more about that? What impact will CUSMA have on that sector?

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, I thank my Bloc Québécois colleague for her question.

[*English*]

I am not quite comfortable answering a question in French, but I will get there.

I was at the B.C. poultry AGM last week and heard that right now in Canada unfortunately we are consuming less turkey. Turkey producers across Canada have launched a new campaign to share the benefits of eating turkey meat at times outside of our Thanksgiving holiday.

The concessions that were made regarding turkey producers are like a double whammy to them, because they have already seen a decrease in their quota allotments over the last number of years. They will especially feel the impacts of CUSMA more than other supply-managed sectors.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise and speak to the bill to ratify CUSMA. We are at third reading; things are moving fast. I am glad this is moving forward, but it is important not to rush. We need to take the time to properly study and debate this bill.

The job of the Bloc Québécois is to represent the interests of Quebecers. That is why we are here. We agree with free trade agreements in principle. We need free trade. In economics, Quebec could be described as a small, open economy. We have a large territory with a population of about eight million. We need to trade with the rest of the world. Our areas of expertise include aerospace, artificial intelligence and computer science. We are proud of our farmers and our forestry workers in the regions. We are well positioned to trade. In essence, we support free trade agreements.

Obviously, no agreement is ever perfect. NAFTA was not perfect. Did we really need a new agreement like CUSMA to replace NAFTA? Our neighbour to the south demanded it. I would say this agreement is fairly good for the Canadian economy. The government did pretty well for the auto industry, for example.

There is one thing I find disappointing about this agreement and other agreements Canada negotiated recently. Generally speaking, an agreement should benefit the majority of the population, Canada's population in this case, but somebody always gets the short end of the stick. I do wonder—though not for long—why sectors that are important to Quebec's economy are always traded away.

In this agreement, concessions were made with respect to supply management. That happened with the trans-Pacific partnership too. Quebec is nowhere near the Pacific Ocean, but a significant chunk of the economy was traded away. The same thing happened with the Canada-EU free trade agreement. It seems that when Canada negotiates, it is all too ready to give up Quebec when it needs to offer something in exchange. Canada would like to protect Quebec's interests, but when it has to choose, it sacrifices part of Quebec's economy.

We saw the same thing happen when China joined the WTO. That killed our textile sector. It is still around, but as a shadow of its former self. The government did nothing to support that sector. Many women who had worked in the industry all their lives were left out in the cold, empty-handed. In contrast, the United States supported its textile industry and managed to save more jobs.

The same thing happened with our shipyards. The agreement with northern Europe ended up putting shipyards in Montreal and Sorel out of business, with neither compensation nor support. What a shame.

That being said, this agreement may not be perfect, but we think it offers a great opportunity to resolve the softwood lumber dispute. Quebec's forestry system was overhauled from top to bottom to ensure that the U.S. would have absolutely no reason to say it is subsidized and that we could do business on softwood lumber with our neighbour to the south.

Sadly, the new agreement did not resolve that dispute. The U.S. strategy is to drag out the dispute as long as possible and levy taxes to cool down this industry's market. Once it is on the verge of collapse, we will sign on the cheap. So far, this has not been done. I lament the fact that the Prime Minister has never spoken up in defence of Quebec's forestry industry. Forestry companies are paying more for lumber, since the price is determined by a market mechanism, and on top of that, they get taxed at the border as well. We did what was needed to fix that, but the government did not do its job at the federal level. As a result, our industry is paying twice. That is truly deplorable.

• (1725)

Given all that, we decided a year ago that the Bloc would support CUSMA on two conditions. The first was full compensation for supply-managed farmers. I am quite proud that I asked for the unanimous support of the House for full compensation for the last three agreements before ratifying this agreement. Naturally, we had to wait for the former member for Beauce to step out to go to the bathroom, because he was fiercely opposed to supply management. After all, he could have held it in. When we saw the support in the House we decided we could support this new agreement since half our conditions had been met.

The other condition was to have the illegal taxes on steel and aluminum cancelled. There are indeed steel producers in Quebec, as my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères confirmed. However, we were mainly concerned with the aluminum sector because 90% of the aluminum made in Canada comes from Quebec. There has been long-standing trade with our American neighbours when it comes to aluminum. I went to Washington and I wrote newspaper articles there. We held several meetings, we all pitched in and managed to get these taxes lifted. We thought that was it.

*Government Orders*

On December 10, 2019, after Mexico and the United States had signed the agreement, the House decided to move forward and the Liberals were patting themselves on the back. However, when we saw the final version of the agreement, we saw that a key section of Quebec's economy had once again been sacrificed. There was a disparity between the protection given to steel, which is primarily manufactured in Ontario, compared to aluminum, which is primarily manufactured in Quebec. Once again, Quebec got a last-minute surprise in the House. Quebec's economy did not receive the same protection as Ontario's. That is unacceptable. Since the United States and Mexico had already ratified the agreement, it was very difficult to go back and renegotiate provisions so that Quebec would have the same protections.

There was all kinds of pressure from the government and various stakeholders to sign the agreement, and we were made to believe that it could no longer be amended. My colleagues from Lac-Saint-Jean and Jonquière immediately rallied stakeholders in their regions, elected officials, workers, unions and businesses. They said that they could not allow this to happen and that they would do something. We were being told to sign the agreement because it was good for the rest of the economy. We were being asked to forget that supply management and the aluminum sector were being short-changed, and to think about the sectors that were gaining something.

We nevertheless decided to fight this and to stand up for the aluminum sector. We did not know how to proceed, but we managed to make significant progress with the help of stakeholders and—credit where credit is due—the Deputy Prime Minister.

We now know that the problem caused by last-minute changes to CUSMA was that steel was being given significant protection. The “melted and poured” provision of the agreement required that most of the automotive parts made in the territory of the agreement were to be made with North American steel. This clause did not apply to aluminum.

Many automotive parts are made in Mexico, which imported aluminum from China, the dirtiest aluminum in the world because it is made at coal-fired plants, compared to Quebec's aluminum, which is the greenest and made at the most energy efficient plants in the world. All Mexico had to do was process the Chinese aluminum to make it North American aluminum. Even the Prime Minister acknowledged that the dumping of Chinese aluminum is unacceptable and illegal in international trade.

We obtained a commitment from the government that it would ensure that Mexico applied the same traceability measures as Canada's to track Chinese imports and the portion of components made with Chinese aluminum. If a problem arises, we can then revisit the “melted and poured” clause. I have been led to believe that the Americans agree with us and that very soon they will implement traceability measures to prevent Mexico from using dumped aluminum.

• (1730)

I will stop here, as my time has expired.

• (1735)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments, and I really appreciate the fact that the Bloc has decided ultimately to support the legislation, which makes it unanimous among the parties.

The provinces of Quebec and Manitoba have a lot in common. We can talk about the textile industry, and some of the things that were to the detriment of the textile industry a number of years ago, supply management, our garment industries, our aerospace industries, and how much we love and want to protect our culture and arts. Much of this stuff is in fact protected within the trade agreement.

When we have these types of negotiations, as I am sure my colleague would recognize, there is give-and-take. I made reference to some of that give-and-take with the last presenter from the Bloc. I said that President Trump was determined to dismantle supply management. Here, at least, we have now guaranteed it into future generations. I see that as a positive thing for the dairy farmers and others in Manitoba and Quebec.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts in terms of that particular guarantee.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

I will acknowledge that in the past, Manitoba and Quebec shared a number of cultural connections. One such example is the great Louis Riel. I think that his tragic fate was what ultimately led to the development of Quebec's national conscience.

Back in the early 1900s, French was still dominant in Manitoba. Clearly, our culture still needs protecting in Manitoba. That is for sure.

Donald Trump obviously wanted to get rid of supply management entirely, so the government eventually agreed to open a crack. We feel that this crack is still too much, because it is the third time, in three consecutive agreements, that it has happened. That is unacceptable.

In closing, I remind members that the American agricultural industry is also protected. The same sectors in the U.S. are protected, along with the sugar industry, and I do not think that the Americans made any concessions.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague on his speech.

He spoke about the aluminum industry, which we were very concerned about. We also stood up for the aluminum industry in the House.

*Government Orders*

Unfortunately, I think the Bloc Québécois is being quite naive. It was satisfied with the Deputy Prime Minister's stated intention to perhaps do something with the Americans to protect our aluminum industry, to provide for traceability measures.

These negotiations unfortunately never materialized. They are yet to happen, and the Bloc Québécois seems to be taking the Deputy Prime Minister and the Liberal government at their word.

Earlier the parliamentary secretary spoke about give-and-take. Where is the give-and-take in all of this?

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, first of all, I find my Conservative colleague's comment pretty ironic because the Conservative Party was quick to vote in favour of the new NAFTA at second reading and at all subsequent stages even before we had these enhanced protections.

Second, elected representatives, union members and workers in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean are all very pleased with what we achieved.

We targeted Chinese aluminum and proved that dumping is illegal, and we ensured that measures will be implemented, as is the case in Canada for what enters Mexico. That sends the right signal.

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

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** I would really like my colleague to stop interrupting and let me speak.

We are well aware that the U.S. government agrees and clearly wants to make sure that aluminum entering Mexico is traceable.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Before I recognize the next person, I would like to remind members to be respectful and listen to the answers. We must show others the same consideration we would hope to receive.

If members have another question to ask, they must wait for the next round of questions and comments.

The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

• (1740)

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I come from the private sector and I am really glad to speak to this very important subject.

For Canadian businesses, when it comes to finding customers, Chicago and Toronto are separated by only 800 kilometres. Vancouver and Toronto are separated by 4,000 kilometres. For businesses in Vancouver, customers in Seattle are much closer than even customers in Calgary.

To put it into perspective, 66% of Canadians live within 100 kilometres of a border. It is closer to ship to the south. Geography is a part of it, but over 325 million potential customers is a powerful reason for businesses to look south before they look east or west. For any growing Canadian company, it is just a matter of time before it looks to expand south.

Business is just one part of this equation. Customers in the United States demand Canadian products and Canadians demand American products.

In terms of trade, no relationship compares to that between Canada and the United States: 75% of Canada's trade is done with the United States and \$2 billion worth of goods crosses the border every day.

Just because trade is mutually beneficial does not mean it is easy. Trade can be complex, with different regulations, safety concerns and government help to the industry in different countries. Free trade is never free of rules. That is why agreements need to be reached.

When Canada and the United States began to trade, we did it piecemeal until 1992. That is when Canada, led by then prime minister Brian Mulroney and the Progressive Conservative Party, signed the North American Free Trade Agreement. That created the world's largest economic trading zone. That agreement was an overwhelming success in growing our trade in both the United States and Mexico.

The deputy prime minister put it into perspective when she said, "Today, Canada, the United States and Mexico account for nearly one-third of global GDP despite having just 7% of the global population."

The clear benefits of NAFTA have helped establish free trade as a foundation of Canadian conservatism, a foundation that former Prime Minister Harper built on by signing trade agreements with South Korea, Jordan and Columbia, among others. Let me remind everyone that the new European Union trade deal was negotiated almost entirely under the previous government. Simply put, the Conservatives understand that.

I am here to discuss the next stage of our trade relationship with the United States and Mexico, the Canada-United States-Mexico agreement, CUSMA, also known as the new NAFTA.

We all know how we got here. On the campaign trail, President Donald Trump promised Americans a better deal with trade. Millions of Americans were concerned that jobs were flowing south to Mexico because of low wages, little regulation and few rights for workers. President Trump told them that they were right. On election night, many analysts pointed to these words as the reason that President Trump was able to carry the rust belt states. That delivered him the presidency.

*Government Orders*

Unfortunately for Canadians, as soon as President Trump was elected, it became clear that calls for a new deal were more than just hot air. Renegotiating NAFTA was a primary goal for his presidency. That meant Canada would be back at the negotiating table.

The talk around the negotiating table was not comforting. Statements made by the Canadian government made it look like it did not take the situation seriously. The Prime Minister threw personal attacks at President Trump, which showed an interest in scoring political points rather than securing a good deal for Canadians.

On the other side, statements by the President about Canada were often not true. At times, it seemed as if Canada was an afterthought, as President Trump focused on Mexico.

● (1745)

The good news is that the deal is done. After years of uncertainty, businesses can once again begin investing in Canada, and investors can be assured that trucks, ships and planes carrying goods between the United States, Canada and Mexico will not grind to a halt due to the repeal of NAFTA.

Many businesses and industries as a whole have made it clear that they want this deal signed, and they want it signed soon. Premiers across the country have also added their voices to that message.

I have already made it clear that the Conservative Party supports free trade. We understood that billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of jobs, if not millions, were at stake. We wanted the best deal possible for Canadians.

As my colleague from Prince Albert put it, we wanted a good deal that would last for the next 50 years, but that is not what we got. Instead, Canadians have a deal with new red tape and other barriers that hurt Canadian businesses, a deal that ignores ongoing problems and mutually beneficial economic opportunities.

The barrier I find most disturbing involves trade deals with other nations. Under CUSMA, if Canada continues expanding its free trade network, it will have to seek permission from the United States. This overreach into Canadian sovereignty is a hard pill to swallow. Canada should be free to pursue its trade interests with anyone.

That question of American oversight also made its way into the rules about dairy products. Canada gave up 3% of the market to American suppliers in the deal, but the concessions did not end there. Milk protein exports are now something the United States government has a say over. The Canadian government also negotiated away milk classes 6 and 7. With all these drastic changes, it should not be a surprise that the dairy industry will need help. That help will most likely come in the form of subsidies or payouts for which Canadians will be on the hook.

The new rules around aluminum have also raised concerns. Canada is a massive producer of aluminum. Globally we are the fourth-largest producer in the world. When CUSMA was being negotiated, it was clear we had to protect our market share in the United States, which, according to the *Financial Post*, is “just over half of it.” The new rules protect our steel industry but do nothing for aluminum.

As I mentioned before, one of the problems with this deal is the issues that were ignored. The issue that comes to the top of mind is the buy America policies. We failed to get rules in CUSMA that would stop the unfair boxing out of Canadian companies from government contracts in the United States. Mexico was able to strike a deal.

As for the lingering softwood lumber dispute, it was ignored and left in the hands of the World Trade Organization, an organization that has struggled to make any progress on the issue at all.

In terms of opportunities lost, a glaring example was not including more professions under section 16. That would have made it easier for companies to bring in high-demand low-supply professionals who they need to grow their businesses.

Instead of the 50 years of certainty, the new NAFTA gives 16 years, 16 years before we are back at the negotiating table, and that is if we can make it past the six-year formal reviews of CUSMA.

While there are many flaws, a deal is better than no deal, and we need to focus on the next steps. The agreement has put many industries at risk. There needs to be discussions on how Canada is going to ensure CUSMA is not a crippling blow for them. Unfortunately, that means Canadian taxpayers are once again facing new costs because of poor decisions by the Liberal government.

● (1750)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have had the opportunity to listen to a number of Conservatives speak, and it has become quite obvious that there is a Conservative spin such that no matter what would have been achieved, the Conservatives would have been highly critical of it. I believe we did get a good deal. That is one of the reasons we have received the support we have throughout the nation.

One of the things the Conservatives continue to bring up is the C.D. Howe Institute. They will say, for example, that Canada’s GDP has gone down, so they draw the conclusion that this agreement is a bad deal. What they do not mention is that it actually affects the GDPs of the U.S.A. and Mexico as well. All three go down. That is partly because of the issues surrounding the protection of our automobile industry.

Does my colleague across the way not believe that it is worthwhile to protect our automobile industry here in Canada?

**Mr. Bob Saroya:** Madam Speaker, when we talk about the industry, the negotiation, etc., this deal was negotiated by Mexico. The Prime Minister was calling the president names, and vice versa. That did not help. The deal was negotiated between Mexico and the United States. We signed it at the end of the day because we had no choice. There are many flaws.

As I said earlier, I come from the private sector and I believe in private enterprise. Dairy products, the softwood lumber industry, the aluminum industry and many other industries will suffer with this new deal.

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my friend mentioned earlier some of the issues with this deal, but I have heard from many major stakeholders in the steel industry, the president of the Canadian Labour Congress and the president of Unifor that although they are not really entirely happy with this deal and are disappointed, they feel it is a much better deal than the original deal. Does the member agree with those comments?

**Mr. Bob Saroya:** Madam Speaker, back in 1992, if my memory is correct, when NAFTA was created, most of the unions and many other people said it was a bad deal, that it would never happen, that it would take jobs and many other things. However, at the end of the day, it was one of the best things the Conservatives did back in 1992. In today's deal, as I mentioned, there are many flaws.

I wish the Liberals had asked for advice from the member of Parliament for Abbotsford, who negotiated with the European Union and many other countries. The Conservatives could have given them advice at no cost, but the original NAFTA was the best deal possible for us.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Generally speaking, what I am noticing this afternoon from my Conservative colleagues' comments is a wilful blindness with respect to protecting aluminum. They seem to have difficulty understanding that my Bloc Québécois colleagues, our leader and I worked very hard with the Deputy Prime Minister to negotiate an agreement that includes the traceability of aluminum. Today, the greenest aluminum in the world is protected thanks to the efforts of the Bloc Québécois. Of course, this remains to be seen, but time will tell.

The Conservatives agree that we relinquished 3% of supply-managed markets in this agreement in addition to what was lost in previous agreements.

Today we are talking about compensation. Could my colleague tell us what compensation might be offered?

In his view, what is 3% of the dairy market worth and how much should we give farmers in the coming years?

[English]

**Mr. Bob Saroya:** Madam Speaker, yes, I agree with you that Quebec produces the greenest aluminum. That was left behind because the deal was not negotiated with Canada. The deal was negotiated with Mexico, and we ended up signing the deal for the sake of signing a deal.

### *Government Orders*

As I said, I come from the private sector, where we would rather have this deal than no deal, but the deal was not negotiated with President Trump in good faith and at the end of the day we took what he gave us.

• (1755)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind the member that he is to address all his comments and questions to the Chair because he started his intervention by addressing it directly to the member.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am very happy to be rising in the House again, this time to speak to Bill C-4 and also the aluminum industry.

I first want to acknowledge all those who worked hard to ensure that the Bloc Québécois could support the agreement. This includes elected officials, such as the mayor of Alma, Marc Asselin; the mayor of Saguenay, Josée Néron; union representatives, in particular Éric Drolet, Sylvain Maltais and Alain Gagnon; as well as economic stakeholders.

People were indeed expecting us to vote, but they wanted us to be voting for gains. Instead of ordering us to shut up and vote no questions asked, they instead chose to work with us, which worked out really well in the end.

Indeed, it was a pretty good idea. We used the full power of our positions to ensure that the fundamental interests of Quebec and its regions were protected. We were not simply criticizing without making any suggestions.

It may have been a long shot back in December, since the House seems to have forgotten that an opposition can do more than oppose for the sake of opposing. We had to believe that it was possible to make gains. Clearly, our belief ultimately paid off.

I will come back to the steps that finally led me to say that I would vote in favour of Bill C-4. I think they are worth mentioning, mainly for those who are watching at home and who are wondering what happened between two days before CUSMA was ratified and now regarding the loss of protection for aluminum.

On December 10, we learned that aluminum was no longer protected, as my colleague from Joliette so clearly pointed out. The government abandoned the aluminum industry even though aluminum is Quebec's second-largest export. What is worse, the government considered the matter to be closed for the next 10 years. That was a disaster for us and for many stakeholders in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, the North Shore and central Quebec.

*Government Orders*

On December 12, we clearly announced our intentions. We would not vote in favour of the agreement unless aluminum was given the same protections as steel. Even the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord was on our side. He told the media that he planned to vote against the agreement. He issued a press release with us, which basically said the following:

There are some good things in the agreement, but the lack of protection for the aluminum industry is unacceptable...my constituents will always come first. The aluminum industry was not respected...and unless something is done to secure our place on the North American market or unless export programs are put in place, I am seriously considering voting against the agreement.

That has changed, but that is what he was saying not too long ago.

I imagine that he trusted us to do the rest. The following week, on December 19, we took part in a demonstration, without him, but with many unions, business owners, and municipal and provincial officials from all across Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. More people turned out than for LNG.

Aluminum has been a big industry for us for 100 years. What is more, the aluminum produced in my region and in Quebec is the greenest in the world.

Fundamentally, however, what everyone needs to remember is that when all this started, the Bloc Québécois were the only ones saying aluminum had not received the same protection as steel, because we were the only ones who had read the agreement carefully.

Curiously enough, the steel industry is concentrated in Ontario, and the aluminum industry, as we now know, is almost exclusively located in Quebec. In fact, 90% of Canada's aluminum is produced in Quebec, and 60% of that comes from Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. It is no surprise, really. Quebec is starting to get used to being used as a pawn in international treaties and being sacrificed for the sake of Ontario's auto industry and western Canada's oil industry.

We were the only ones saying it, while the Liberals kept trotting out the same old convoluted talking points. After repeating our arguments and proving them in debate, we eventually got the NDP and the Conservatives on our side. However, the Liberals continued to deny the sad truth. Unlike our colleagues in the other opposition parties, we could not let down our aluminum workers. We could not vote for the implementation of the agreement. There was just no way we could do that.

I may have mentioned this before, but I stuck a little note to the side of my nightstand that says, "Who do you work for?" It is the first thing I see every morning. The answer to that question is that I work for my constituents, for the people of Lac-Saint-Jean and for Quebecers as a whole.

• (1800)

What do we do in this situation?

Some people said we were on our own. They did not reckon on the courage, strength and determination of our people. Our people mobilized, and we supported them politically and technically. We were not alone, and they were no longer alone. They all came here, to Ottawa, at the end of January, to air their concerns. Elected officials, workers and economic players from our regions came here to share their concerns, and they brought a study with them.

Basically, the study said that 30,000 jobs would be at risk if the expansion phases did not go through. Investments worth \$6.2 billion were in jeopardy. That would have been \$1 billion in economic spinoffs every year for 10 years gone if the agreement was not changed and a real solution not found. We needed a concrete proposal to provide better protection for aluminum.

Considering those massive numbers, should we have just sat there twiddling our thumbs?

We are talking about the vitality of our regions and of Quebec as a whole. We are talking about our families and our children, and that is why we all took a stand.

We did more than just criticize; that would not be our style. We also proposed a solution. Initially, no one on the other side of the House was listening to us. Life is like that, but only a fool will not change his mind. In the end, the Liberals did listen to reason. I will give them that, and I thank them for it.

The Liberals agreed to negotiate, and we finally reached an agreement. At the end of the day, some of my hon. colleagues were able to set partisanship aside and put the interests of their constituents ahead of the interests of the parties in the House.

There are many things that divide us in this place. For instance, I strongly believe that Quebec should become a country, and as soon as possible. Despite the obvious differences in our political perspectives, we were able to secure a win and ensure that aluminum would be better protected. It was a Bloc Québécois proposal, but it was the Deputy Prime Minister who brought that proposal to Washington. I thank her for that.

Imagine what would have happened if we had just remained in our seats and voted in favour of implementing the agreement without making any demands. It is not complicated. If the Bloc had acted like all the other parties in the House, our aluminum workers would have been left out in the cold. The regions in Quebec would have been abandoned. Quebec's economy would have once again been the big loser in another international treaty signed by Ottawa.

This House was then able to see the principles that guide the Bloc Québécois. Above all, we are guided by our conscience. There is no denying that we have had a positive influence on how work is done in the House. So much the better if the other parties represented here are inspired by our approach. In the end, it is the men and women we represent who come out on top.

Who do we work for? I know. Now it is up to all my hon. colleagues to answer that question.

*Government Orders*

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I can attempt to answer the question in terms of who I work for. I represent the wonderful, fine residents of Winnipeg North, but the residents of Winnipeg North believe that the well-being of the nation is really important to all of us, no matter what region of the country we live in.

Appreciating the importance of Canada's middle class is of the utmost importance. In providing different types of programs, whether it is health care or public education, the role that the national government can play is important. I would argue that my constituents are very similar to the constituents of all members of Parliament in all the different regions of our country.

When I look at the trade agreement as a whole, I see that it is in the best interests of my constituents, based on the type of feedback I receive from them. Would the member across the way not agree that this trade agreement is in the best interests of his constituents, as it is to mine?

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague would not be making that speech if he were the member for Lac-Saint-Jean. Obviously, the people of my riding were not really happy with this agreement.

The aluminum sector is one of the biggest economic engines in my riding, the biggest even. Right from the start, I will have to disagree with my hon. colleague.

Second, we worked with the Liberals on getting improved protection for aluminum because there was work to be done. When the agreement was ratified in December it was not as good as it is today. We collaborated in order to improve the agreement.

The people in my riding are knocking on my door to say that they are not happy and they are concerned for their job, their children, their family and their future. Clearly, I cannot agree with my hon. colleague.

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first, I would like to commend my colleague for his speech.

He very eloquently defended the interests of his constituents. I also want to tell him that there were many factors to consider in the negotiations.

Does my colleague recognize, like other elected provincial and municipal officials in Quebec, that the agreement that will be signed contains significant gains for Quebec?

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, there are good things and bad things in this agreement, as there are in any agreement.

That being said, I woke up one morning and realized, as I read the paper, that the aluminum industry, the economic backbone of my region, was being threatened. The Bloc Québécois worked hard to develop a proposal and persuaded a lot of people. Pre-

mier Legault also said that the way the aluminum industry was being treated was unacceptable. Of course, he had his own concerns and so he wanted the agreement to be signed. If we had sat back and failed to use the means at our disposal as MPs, we would not have gotten what we did. I agree with my hon. colleague that there are good things in any agreement. There is no doubt about that, and that is what we have been saying from the beginning. We simply needed to stand up and fight for our constituents, which is what we did. I am very proud of that.

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, since my colleague is so familiar with what happened on the aluminum file, I would like him to explain how the Bloc Québécois and the Liberal Party managed to come to an agreement. I would like the entire House to be able to hear his answer.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:** Madam Speaker, we certainly played our cards well. We maintained the same public stance by holding the government's feet to the fire and voting against Bill C-4 at first and second reading.

We negotiated with the government behind the scenes while keeping the pressure on it publicly. Ultimately, we made a great proposal. The government had no choice but to accept it and acknowledge that it was good. The collaboration started then. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs went to Washington, and we got a commitment from the government. All in all, I am pretty proud of the strategy used by the Bloc Québécois. We proved once again that we can get the job done.

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-4, which I will be supporting, as it turns out.

I am very satisfied with the work my political party did in the spirit of openness and collaboration. However, I would say this victory was bittersweet, because an economic sector was once again left out of this agreement. I am referring to softwood lumber. The forestry sector gets no respect from the Canadian federation and is constantly overlooked. That is holding me back from fully celebrating our victory on aluminum.

At a meeting of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, the Canadian negotiator told me that he did not include softwood lumber in CUSMA because he had to focus on other priorities. I think the phrase "focus on other priorities" says it all. It is the Canadian mantra. What are the priorities of Canada's economy? Ontario's auto industry and western Canada's oil industry, the same as for the past 25 years.

Is it perhaps because of a power imbalance? The Bloc Québécois now has 32 seats, and I feel like things are changing. However, Quebec's economic sectors are consistently ignored. The expression "focusing on other priorities" makes me think. Negotiations with the United States on softwood lumber are always pushed back.

### *Government Orders*

This makes me think of an expression I often hear among federalists: “The fruit is not ripe enough.” When we talk about constitutional negotiations, many federalists use this somewhat perverse rhetoric: “The fruit is not ripe enough.” It appears to me that the fruit of federalism is currently rotting on the tree when it comes to softwood lumber and our role within this federation.

I do not want to only play the blame game, but I would like to come back to the importance of Quebec's forestry industry. It is important to note that Quebec has 2% of the world's forests, an area of 760,000 square kilometres, or the equivalent of Sweden and Norway combined. The industry provides 58,000 direct and indirect jobs in Quebec. The forestry industry is currently the economic driver of 160 of our municipalities.

If you look at Canada as a whole, the forestry sector provides 600,000 direct and indirect jobs, which is not insignificant. I cannot stress enough that we are facing global warming, and many experts have identified the forestry sector as our best shot at fighting climate change.

Our greatest misfortune, however, is that the United States is our main trading partner in the forestry industry, taking in 68% of our forest product exports. I find that unfortunate because I have the impression that the Canadian government has never really made much of an effort to develop new markets.

I am always amazed when I go to France and I see all kinds of infrastructure, bridges and big buildings built of wood or glulam even though France lacks the primary resource that is wood. We have it, but I feel like we are not doing anything with it.

Since the 2000s, the forestry industry has gone through tough times because the pulp and paper industry has gone through tough times now that less and less newsprint is being sold. We need to find new market opportunities. All this was exacerbated by a string of crises during negotiations with the United States.

During a Standing Committee on Natural Resources meeting, Beth MacNeil, Assistant Deputy Minister for Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service, told us that the forestry industry is at a crossroads. I thought that was very interesting. If my girlfriend told me we were at a crossroads, I would definitely be afraid because that would mean I had not taken care of her and had a lot to make up for.

● (1810)

The Canadian government is now at a crossroads with the forestry industry because past governments, both Liberal and Conservative, have chosen to focus on the oil industry in the west and Ontario's auto industry, not on the softwood lumber industry at all.

I see two big issues here. We have these trade agreements, which sometimes create barriers for the forestry sector, but we also have research and development. I find one statistic particularly interesting: From the early 1970s to the late 2000s, Canadians collectively invested \$70 billion in the oil sands because that technology was not profitable. My father would call that a pretty penny, not to mention it was a raw deal for us. Of that \$70 billion, \$14 billion came from Quebec.

One thing of note that is troublesome and that I want to focus on is Dutch disease. A few years ago, PricewaterhouseCoopers reported that when the Canadian dollar appreciates by one cent, there is an immediate domino effect and the forestry industry loses \$500 million. It is an export industry, which requires that it be competitive. Investing \$70 billion in the oil industry is a blow to the forestry industry. The circumstances are different today and I hope that the government will take action.

I would quickly like to review the impact on the forestry sector of the two main downturns. The first downturn, which began in 2003 and ended in 2008, resulted in the loss of 11,329 forestry jobs in Quebec alone. From January 2009 to January 2012, 8,600 jobs were lost. The government of the day took no action. I remember that the Conservatives promised to provide loan guarantees for the forestry industry in 2005.

What is troublesome is that the U.S. strategy is to ensure that major forestry producers are worn down. When that happens, they end up signing a cheap agreement. I believe that this happened often. There has been no agreement since 2017. Thus, I believe that this is happening again. They want to wear down the forestry industry so it accepts a cheap agreement. In the meantime, the government is not taking action. It is not offering loan guarantees. Neither Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions nor Export Development Canada has brought forward a strategy for developing new markets. There is no investment in research and development. No, the government prefers to focus on the usual sectors, the oil and automotive industries.

To sum up, from 2005 to 2011, Quebec's forestry industry lost 30% of its workforce, going from 130,000 workers in 2005 to barely 99,000 in 2011. From 2004 to 2005 and from 2012 to 2013, there was a 38% drop in jobs in silviculture and in timber harvesting, which reduced job numbers to a little more than 10,000 in those areas. It is disastrous for Quebec and again the government did not learn from its mistakes. In the CUSMA negotiation, it preferred to deliver that famous speech about the fruit not being quite ripe enough. At some point, we are going to take matters into our own hands and harvest our own fruit. We will become our own country.

*Government Orders*

• (1815)

[*English*]

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have sat here and listened to the attack on other industries in this country, and it is just so wrong. I have heard this time and again from the Bloc Québécois. I am just not going to sit here and listen to it anymore. To attack the oil industry is absolutely wrong. I hope the member knows that with respect to equalization, over the last five years, \$52 billion went to the Province of Quebec. Where did it come from? It came from higher wages in Alberta, oil in Newfoundland and Labrador, and fossil fuels in B.C. If those industries are healthy, we are all healthy.

I agree we need to do more for forestry, and we have done a lot for forestry over the years. There is the spruce budworm, the pine beetle and other things that need to be dealt with. We need to do that, but for heaven's sake, let us not try to make gains in one industry by attacking another in this House. We are all Canadians. We all need to be healthy with respect to the economy, and we need to do everything we can for all industries in this country so our economy can grow.

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Madam Speaker, if being ridiculous is not fatal, then my colleague will surely live.

It is rather surprising to begin by saying we must not sow division in Canada and end by talking about equalization. As far as I know, Quebec pays into the equalization program. Alberta pays \$2 billion annually into the equalization program, whereas Quebec spends \$3 billion to buy your oil. We can give you your \$2 billion back and keep our \$3 billion.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind members that we are in debate. When someone has the floor, they must not be disturbed.

I would remind the hon. member for Jonquière that he must address the Chair and not the member directly.

The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am really concerned about one particular issue with respect to this agreement, and that is the aluminum industry. The interpretation is very vague as to what protection there is.

I am wondering if the member is concerned that this will allow the doors to be opened for dumping aluminum through Mexico and there will be a loss of jobs in Quebec.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, which was far more sensible than others.

Will the current agreement allow aluminum dumped by China to be processed in Mexico?

The mechanism we managed to negotiate with the government will ensure that if any dumping occurs, we will be able to demand that aluminum receive the same status as steel and put an end to it.

Such a mechanism already exists. Every six months, checks are done to determine whether Mexico is importing aluminum from China or other countries tariff-free. If that is shown to be happening, we will be able to demand the same protection as steel gets, with the blessing of the United States, which is aware of the process.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member might want to double-check his facts when he talks about equalization and transfer payments, because I am pretty sure Quebec has been on the receiving end for quite a while in very large amounts, not paying out.

My question is with regard to jobs. The Prime Minister likes to talk about all the Canadian jobs he is supporting. Could the member elaborate on whether jobs would be supported with this deal in his area or not?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Madam Speaker, in my speech, I made it clear that the federal government is not supporting jobs in the softwood lumber industry with this agreement.

To come back to what you said about transfer payments, I would like you to know that we account for 21% of Canada's fiscal capacity but only 13% of federal public service employees.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Again, I would remind the member for Jonquière to address his comments and questions to the Chair.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Niagara Centre.

[*English*]

**Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure this evening to rise in the House to speak to the modernized NAFTA, specifically to the important outcomes contained in the labour chapter.

The Canada-United States-Mexico agreement preserves, as well as modernizes, the North American Free Trade Agreement, or as we know it NAFTA, by carrying forward key existing elements and improving outcomes in areas that will enhance our most important trading relationship. Moreover, the amendments agreed to in December 2019 strengthen enforceability provisions in this agreement, including new mechanisms specific to the implementation of labour obligations, which make a good deal even better.

Through the new labour chapter, the agreement seeks to protect and enhance workers' rights and improve working conditions and living standards across North America. Canada's practice is to negotiate comprehensive labour provisions in the context of its free trade agreements in order to promote and uphold strong labour standards.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Trade and labour protections are mutually supportive. Canada strives to demonstrate internationally that a competitive economy includes safe, healthy and co-operative workplaces. The original NAFTA includes a side agreement on labour called the North American Agreement on Labour Co-operation. The new NAFTA includes a comprehensive and robust labour chapter that is fully enforceable and represents a significant improvement over the original NAFTA, its side agreement and other language.

In particular, the new labour chapter includes commitments to protect and promote internationally recognized labour principles and rights as set out in the International Labour Organization's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, including the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The chapter also includes a non-derogation clause that prevents parties from deviating from their domestic labour laws in order to encourage trade or investment.

These commitments are all subject to the state-to-state dispute settlement mechanism that is contained within this agreement. Importantly, the new labour chapter has a number of key provisions to ensure that trade does not come at the expense of workers' labour rights. For instance, it includes enforceable obligations to address issues related to migrant workers, forced or compulsory labour, and violence against union members. To address labour rights violations in Mexico, it also includes an annex with specific requirements on worker representation and collective bargaining.

The terrible practice of forced or compulsory labour still exists in many countries. The International Labour Organization estimates that in 2016 approximately 25 million people worldwide were subjected to forced labour, and a disproportionate number of them were women and young girls.

The new NAFTA is a landmark deal, because it is the very first free trade agreement to include an obligation that commits parties to prohibit the importation of goods produced by forced labour. This is a milestone provision that will support workers' rights and human rights around the globe.

While these inclusive trade provisions will largely help workers outside of Canada, the modernized agreement will also help workers here at home. North American free trade has been an enormous benefit to Canadian businesses, workers and the overall economy. It means more good-quality jobs here at home and more affordable goods and services available domestically as well as internationally.

I will give an example of how the agreement will protect Canadian interests and help to curb the outflow of jobs. The rules of origin chapter addresses automotive manufacturing wages in North America by including a labour value content requirement.

Basically, this means that 40% of the value of a vehicle must come from a plant where the workers earn an average of at least \$16 U.S. per hour in order for the vehicle to be considered as originating from a NAFTA country. The provision, together with the labour chapter provisions on collective bargaining rights, may create upward pressure on wages in Mexico and help to level the playing field for Canadian workers, as well as businesses throughout our great nation.

• (1825)

It is also important to note that the labour chapter is subject to the dispute settlement chapter in instances of non-compliance to ensure that all labour obligations are well respected. The agreement provides an opportunity for parties to take the necessary actions and measures to enforce the agreement's obligations if prior attempts to resolve the matter through consultations prove ineffective.

• (1830)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Unfortunately, I have to interrupt the member, but he will have four minutes to complete his speech the next time this matter is before the House.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

HEALTH

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, GP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today as a follow-up to my question on funding for a national framework for mental health. I would like to start today by sharing how mental health has impacted my journey here.

I began my career as an educator. One day, a 14-year-old student got into some trouble in class and was sent down to see me. As we talked, it became clear there was a lot going on. I was aware of some social struggles in the friend group and I knew a bit of family history.

Suddenly and unforgettably, this student for whom I cared deeply, said the words, "I do not want to live anymore." The student had the means and the motivation to escape this painful experience. The weight of the suffering hung thick in the air. I did what any human would do under the circumstances. I did my best to stumble through the rest of the conversation with empathy, but I recognized very acutely that my colleagues and I were not equipped to navigate the complexities of these conversations with the youth who trusted us the most. I would spend many hours and resources finding the tools to tackle this crisis, and I wish many other Canadians would also have that opportunity.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I am acutely aware of the pain of suicide, as many of us are. We have all lost someone, a cousin, the child of a teammate, a co-worker, a friend, a grandmother. Research shows that approximately 90% of people who die by suicide suffer from mental illness or addiction. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth ages 15 to 24. Rates of suicide are three times higher for members of first nations communities than they are for non-indigenous people. Risk factors are directly linked to socio-economic characteristics, including household income, employment status, level of education and family support.

I have shared a story. I have shared the data. I would now like to look to the solution.

Canadian provinces and territories need financial support from the federal government to ensure they can address the mental health crisis impacting families and communities across the nation.

We need to invest in training for professionals across sectors, educators and everyday Canadians to access resources and learning opportunities to support those suffering from mental illness.

We need to invest in a timely diagnosis process. Service providers and families need access to early diagnosis to ensure early intervention.

We need to invest in a national pharmacare system. Canadians should never have the financial anxiety of needing to choose between buying groceries or life-saving medications.

We need to invest in support for sexual assault survivors. This is a massive missing link in this conversation.

We need to invest in support for elders, like intergenerational housing, to avoid isolation and loneliness.

That is why on February 26, I asked the Minister of Finance if the budget would include funding for a national framework on mental health so the provinces and territories could work together to find solutions to address this crisis. I look forward to hearing the response from the hon. member as to how we might come together to restore hope for Canadians across the country.

**Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member first and foremost for sharing her story and for providing the House with this opportunity to speak about mental health.

According to Statistics Canada, one in three Canadians will be affected by a mental illness in their lifetime. Mental health is influenced by a number of factors, including life experience and social and economic conditions. Our government recognizes the need for a comprehensive approach to mental health, one that embraces promotion and prevention alongside treatment and recovery.

For this reason, we have worked with our partners and stakeholders to put in place community-based programs and initiatives that promote mental health and contribute to the prevention of mental illness.

Our government is also committed to increasing the availability of high-quality mental health services for all Canadians. Through budget 2017, we provided provinces and territories with \$5 billion

over 10 years to improve access to mental health and addiction services. These targeted investments will address specific gaps in the availability of mental health services, including those for children and youth.

Allow me to illustrate, through concrete examples, how these investments are expected to directly help Canadians suffering from mental illness.

With this funding, in my province of Newfoundland and Labrador we will add new community crisis houses to provide a safe place for people experiencing a mental health crisis. Several models will be explored for these beds, based on the emerging needs of each of the province's regional health authorities.

Quebec will improve accommodation and community retention services to provide psychiatric hospitalizations and reduce psychiatric ward stays.

The Northwest Territories will contract an itinerant private counselling team that will provide surge capacity assistance to individuals struggling with mental illness through timely crisis supports when local resources are either unavailable or overwhelmed.

Saskatchewan will establish residential options that include intensive supports for individuals with serious and persistent mental health issues.

With federal funds, Ontario has committed to develop and provide new services in supportive units, such as daily living supports and case management for those living with mental illness, those with addictions, and those who are at risk of becoming homeless.

In Ontario, as well as in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, federal investments will also support other initiatives that integrate mental health and addictions services into supportive housing programs, justice services, and education settings, all of which will have a particular focus on youth.

To provide support for those struggling with suicidal thoughts, our government is also investing close to \$3 million over five years to support the development of the Canada suicide prevention service through Crisis Services Canada. This service connects people in Canada to confidential 24/7 crisis support and resources through trained responders.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Finally, to promote child and youth mental health, our government is also investing \$1.1 million in 2019-20, \$4.7 million in 2020-21 and \$4.9 million from 2021-22 and onwards through the mental health promotion innovation fund. The fund will support the development of new and promising interventions that aim to address the underlying determinants of mental health in children and young people throughout Canada.

To sum up, mental health is a priority for the federal government, and we will continue to work with all our partners to make improvements in this area.

• (1835)

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for that really wonderful response. There are lots of great initiatives taking place in Canada. I feel we have come a very long way.

I do want to highlight that there are still some missing pieces. Mental health has long been recognized as a fundamental aspect of one's health; however, under our current health regime, the majority of mental health services do not meet the eligibility requirement of "medically necessary".

I feel we need to have another look at this, and that is why I am asking for a national legislation framework. There is a patchwork of provincial and regional initiatives, but I feel we need a more unified approach. I am thinking of a story of a constituent who is searching for their son across provincial lines and is having a lot of difficulty because there is not a lot of collaboration and communication that occurs.

I am asking for a national strategy to be looked at and funded by the government.

**Ms. Gudie Hutchings:** Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague is passionate about this issue and I encourage her to reach out and work with all the departments.

I am sure the member knows that the provinces determine where most of the federal money given to them goes. That is why we were so adamant in earmarking that money for mental health initiatives.

We are committed to a comprehensive approach to mental health, one that embraces promotion, prevention, treatment and recovery. We are investing in a range of culturally appropriate mental health initiatives and programs that take into account social, economic and environmental factors, such as income, housing and education. We are also working with our provincial and territorial partners to improve access to mental health services for Canadians.

As mentioned, through our commitment of \$5 billion over 10 years in budget 2017, investments have been made in appropriate and cost-effective mental health services for Canadians. We will ensure that the provinces continue to do so.

The challenge of addressing mental health issues requires the combined efforts of all levels of government and many stakeholders, as well as all members in this House.

SENIORS

**Mr. Paul Manly (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, GP):** Madam Speaker, Retirement Concepts runs 23 long-term care facilities for seniors in Canada. Nineteen are in B.C. and seven are on Vancouver Island.

Retirement Concepts provides independent living, assisted living and complex care for seniors.

In 2017, the government approved the sale of Retirement Concepts to the Chinese corporation Anbang Insurance. The following year, Anbang's CEO was convicted of corruption, and the company was taken over by the Chinese state.

The conditions at Retirement Concepts' Nanaimo Seniors Village in my riding were atrocious. The home was understaffed and provided substandard care. Seniors went for weeks without receiving a bath. They were left in soiled clothes and soiled beds. Bedsores and other related health consequences of neglect were common.

After numerous complaints by residents and their families, the Vancouver Island Health Authority took over Nanaimo Seniors Village and two other Retirement Concepts care facilities on Vancouver Island. Last month, another facility, in Summerland, had to be taken over as well.

Under the Investment Canada Act, Anbang had an obligation to maintain staffing levels. The federal government made assurances to the provinces that patient care would be protected. The B.C. Seniors Advocate has stated that she did not understand how the federal government could make such an assurance. The reporting and transparency required to make that promise do not exist. The federal government should not be permitting foreign ownership of businesses that provide taxpayer-funded health care services. When seniors are hospitalized as a result of neglect and substandard care, we all carry the cost. Our seniors deserve better than for-profit care run by foreign corporations that lack accountability.

Recent analysis by the B.C. Office of the Seniors Advocate found that the not-for-profit sector spends 59% of its revenue on direct care. That is 24% more per resident per year than the for-profit sector. The for-profit sector failed to deliver 207,000 hours of funded care. The not-for-profit sector provided 80,000 more hours of direct care than it was paid to deliver. Wages for care workers in the for-profit sector were 28% less than the industry standard. Nanaimo Seniors Village had a hard time attracting workers, with an average wage of \$18 per hour, rather than the industry standard of \$24 an hour.

There is a waiting list for every government-funded care bed. There is no competition to provide these services, no free market. These beds will be filled, whether or not a facility is properly staffed and delivering appropriate care. That revenue stream is guaranteed.

The abuses that have resulted from this situation are horrifying. We have failed to protect our seniors. We must remove the financial incentive to provide substandard seniors care. Corporations cannot be permitted to squeeze profit out of the health care system through vague accounting, paying below-average wages and neglecting vulnerable seniors. That is unacceptable.

The operation of seniors long-term care facilities is under the jurisdiction of the provinces, but the government must be actively involved in creating a solution to these problems. The government needs to mandate national standards to ensure the safety and dignity of Canadian seniors. Going forward, the government should not permit foreign ownership of businesses that provide taxpayer-funded health care services.

• (1840)

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry (Innovation and Industry), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to respond to the comments made by my hon. colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith regarding the acquisition of Retirement Concepts by Cedar Tree in 2017.

Let me begin by saying that the safety and well-being of our seniors is of paramount concern to our government. We also recognize that global investment can benefit Canadians and the Canadian economy. Investment flows into this country are important, and Canada has a robust framework in place to promote trade and investment.

The Investment Canada Act is one part of that robust framework and is the primary mechanism for reviewing foreign investments in Canada. Acquisitions of Canadian businesses are subject to a net benefit review. Consequently, they are carefully considered in light of factors set out in the act, and it is only after that act has been consulted that approval is forthcoming. Of course the determination has to be made that the acquisition is of overall economic benefit to our country.

In the course of the review of this specific investment, the minister considered submissions from a number of health care advocacy groups, associations and professionals. The minister also considered submissions from academics and individual Canadians. These parties raised important policy issues regarding the quality and availability of care for seniors in Canada.

The minister also consulted with the relevant provincial regulators of senior care facilities, such as the Government of British Columbia, which further informed the review and the ultimate decision.

I wish to emphasize that existing provincial regulations set out licensing obligations and standards of care for all operators of residential care and assisted living facilities, regardless of ultimate ownership. Retirement Concepts continues to be required to meet

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

or exceed these requirements, and it is also required to work with the Government of British Columbia to remedy any concerns.

Additionally, through the Investment Canada Act review, legally binding commitments were put in place. Federal officials consult their provincial counterparts to actively monitor compliance with the Investment Canada Act.

• (1845)

**Mr. Paul Manly:** Madam Speaker, now that the Chinese state has created a new corporate entity called Dajia, which owns Retirement Concepts, it is time for the federal government to review the original purchase and rescind the agreement.

The Canadian seniors of today are the workers and business owners of yesterday. They worked hard, paid their taxes and contributed to building what they believed to be retirement security. They are also our parents and grandparents. We owe them dignity and care in their final years. No one in a care facility in Canada should be left in a soiled bed for hours until he or she gets a septic wound. No one in a care facility in Canada should be left without a bath for weeks on end.

We should not have allowed this critical health care service to be sold to the highest foreign bidder. This crisis must be fixed.

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi:** Madam Speaker, Retirement Concepts, as the operator, continues to work with the Government of British Columbia to remedy any and all concerns. However, I feel it is fitting that I close by recognizing the first Canadian death from COVID-19: a resident of a British Columbia residential care facility. We extend our deepest condolences.

Our absolute priority will always remain the health and safety of Canadians. The federal government will continue to provide leadership and partnership with the provinces, territories and all Canadians.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am thankful for this opportunity to speak during adjournment proceedings tonight.

I will speak to the first two questions I was able to ask in the House of Commons as a member of Parliament. They pertain not only to my riding of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry and its rural municipalities and rural projects, but to every corner of this country, whether it is a small, rural municipality, of which I have several in my riding; the city of Cornwall, a mid-sized Ontario urban community; downtown Toronto, Ontario; or the west or east coast.

I have had two opportunities to ask questions about the delays we have seen in getting infrastructure funding out the door. The announcement that dollars are there is one thing, but giving the okay to municipalities so that shovels can get in the ground is something we have not seen quickly, which has been very concerning.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

This issue is a bit of a passion of mine. Before I came to the House, I served at the municipal level as a mayor in the township of North Dundas and a warden of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry for 12 years. I am a self-professed technocrat when it comes to this subject.

I requested the time tonight not just to complain about these delays. As I committed in my maiden speech and in my community, I will not just complain about things, but rather offer some solutions or feedback to my colleagues in the House.

I will remind members of my question on a specific project, which is just as an example of hundreds across Ontario and, I am sure, in other provinces and in rural communities across the country. The example I used is the Morrisburg streetscape project. Last May, the Municipality of South Dundas and many counties came together and applied to the investing in Canada infrastructure program through the stream of the rural and northern lens.

Most relationships that have been done by Conservative and Liberal governments over the years have been one-third federal, one-third provincial and one-third municipal. Municipalities put their projects forward and commit one-third. Last summer, in July, many projects, including the Morrisburg streetscape project, got the okay from the provincial government and they were given their one-third.

I had a concern as an outsider at that point, as I was not a member of the House, when we were coming into an election period: Will dollars get out the door before the election? Unfortunately that did not happen. My thinking at the time was to give the benefit of the doubt, since the government cannot make announcements or okay projects during a writ period. I understand and respect that. However, one thing I have said as well is that bureaucrats are not off during an election. We are often out and about, just as ministers are, so bureaucrats here in Ottawa or across the country can prepare lists for approvals for our communities.

What could have happened? The first day the new minister was back in Ottawa, we could have signed off and had these projects. Unfortunately it is five months after the election and hundreds of applications are still outstanding, waiting to hear yea or nay on those projects.

These delays are frustrating. One of the reasons for that is municipalities have now done their 2020 budgets. They have allocated the money and are waiting to go, but they need an answer from the federal government on whether these projects can happen.

One of the other concerns I have is with the time frame we have now. By the time we get approvals out and RFPs go out for tenders on these projects, costs are going up because it is later in the season.

I have two questions for the parliamentary secretary, whom I appreciate being here tonight to respond. Would she agree that these delays are excessive and unnecessary when it comes to approvals, when the other two levels of government have agreed? Does she agree that while it is one thing to announce funding, we need to get it out the door and give those dollars to get the shovels in the ground?

• (1850)

**Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry for his recent election and passionately representing his constituents in the House. I too am from a very large rural riding. I love to say the land mass of my riding is bigger than Switzerland. I have 217 beautiful little communities. Therefore, the member should come and visit the west coast of Newfoundland at any time.

The Government of Canada believes in the importance of investing in infrastructure. We believe in the promise we made to Canadians to create good jobs, grow the economy and invest in resilient and sustainable communities.

The over 52,000 projects across the country that we have supported through the investing in Canada plan are tangible proof of how we are delivering on that promise. Over 4,800 of those are right here in Ontario.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to talk about how we review the projects submitted for funding approval and to highlight how the federal funding is available now for provincial, territorial and municipal priorities. We want all Canadians to see and feel the impacts of the investments.

Under the majority of Canada's infrastructure programs, once the projects are approved, partners can start their projects and spend immediately. The flow of federal funds occurs when the claims are submitted to the department for reimbursement. We want to ensure that the projects are reviewed and approved as quickly as possible. That is why we continue to work closely with our partners to explore how we can improve the timeliness of our flow of funds.

Through the investing in Canada infrastructure program, we are investing over \$33 billion across the country through bilateral agreements with each and every province and territory. The program investments all aim to improve the quality of life of Canadians by investing in infrastructure through four funding streams: public transit; green; community, culture and recreational; and rural and northern communities' infrastructure.

Specifically, the rural and northern communities' stream of the program dedicates \$2 billion to addressing the unique infrastructure needs of these really rural and remote communities. Our investments are increasing economic growth and creating jobs within the infrastructure that improves people's quality of life. The investments are benefiting rural and remote communities across the country, but before a project can begin, an application has to be submitted.

Under this program, it is then up to provinces and territories to identify the projects, prioritize the projects and submit those projects for approval. Each application is then assessed to determine whether it fits within the applicable funding stream or whether federal environmental assessment or indigenous consultations are required.

By working closely with our partners, we are aiming to get shovels in the ground faster to deliver real results for Canadian communities.

I understand the member's question about during the writ period. I too was impacted by that, and that is just the way things go. During the writ period, nothing happens. If it is a sitting member, it is considered a feather in his or her cap, so to speak. That is why nothing goes on during the writ period.

In fairness to my colleague, as he is new in the House, it takes a while for the new departments to get staffed up and under way, especially when a new minister is in place.

I am proud of the work our government is doing to ensure our communities grow and succeed now and into the future. I look forward to working with my colleague anytime we can address this issue further.

• (1855)

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Madam Speaker, I am going to follow up on a few of those aspects.

I agree with her. There has been an improvement in the after aspect of municipalities getting the actual cheques when the projects are done. I am speaking more specifically of that time lag between the deadline of those applications being received and that okay.

I appreciate her comments about the writ, and again I understand and respect that. However, regardless of elections or not, perhaps we could tighten up that time frame in terms of how we can do that.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

As for the multi-year agreements we saw between the federal government and different provinces and municipalities, there are ways of improving that process. I want to be collaborative, like I have said before.

My colleague teased the other day and said it was “A” for announcement and “D” for delivery with respect to these things sometimes. We should ensure the dollars get out in a timely manner. Equally as important is getting it out at the right time so when tenders to municipalities go out, they are getting the best price and maximizing Canada's weather patterns as best as they possibly can.

I look forward to working with colleagues on that issue going forward to help all municipalities across Canada.

**Ms. Gudie Hutchings:** Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, we are investing \$33 billion through the bilateral agreements with each of the provinces and territories. The funding is available now for them to start their projects immediately.

We have made important investments in infrastructure in every region. Our goal remains to work collaboratively, responsibly and quickly to invest in infrastructure. However, the application process is critical and it is incumbent on all of us to ensure these investments will make the lives of Canadians better.

My colleague commented about the weather. This winter, Newfoundland and Labrador has seen mountains of snow and I know it will have an impact on its construction season as well. I agree with the member that we need to do all we can to ensure we get the funding out to the respective communities in a timely manner.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:58 p.m.)



# CONTENTS

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

<b>Nowruz</b>	
Mr. Jowhari .....	1925
<b>Kinsmen Telemiracle</b>	
Mr. Steinley .....	1925
<b>Model United Nations</b>	
Mr. Dhaliwal .....	1925
<b>Léone Forget</b>	
Ms. Gaudreau .....	1925
<b>National Engineering Month</b>	
Mr. Alghabra .....	1926
<b>Global Institute for Water Security</b>	
Mr. Redekopp .....	1926
<b>International Women's Day</b>	
Mrs. Brière .....	1926
<b>International Women's Day</b>	
Ms. Sidhu (Brampton South) .....	1926
<b>Organisation internationale de la Francophonie</b>	
Mr. Godin .....	1927
<b>Thomas Wilson</b>	
Mr. Kusmierczyk .....	1927
<b>Government Priorities</b>	
Mr. Morantz .....	1927
<b>Peter Snelson</b>	
Mr. Calkins .....	1927
<b>COVID-19</b>	
Ms. Mathysen .....	1927
<b>Simon Thibault</b>	
Ms. Larouche .....	1928
<b>Rare Disease Day</b>	
Mr. Kmiec .....	1928
<b>Terry Fox</b>	
Mr. McKinnon .....	1928

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>The Economy</b>	
Mr. Scheer .....	1928
Mr. Trudeau .....	1929
Mr. Scheer .....	1929
Mr. Trudeau .....	1929
Mr. Scheer .....	1929
Mr. Trudeau .....	1929
Mr. Scheer .....	1929
Mr. Trudeau .....	1929

<b>Ethics</b>	
Mr. Scheer .....	1929
Mr. Trudeau .....	1929

<b>Health</b>	
Mr. Blanchet .....	1930
Mr. Trudeau .....	1930
Mr. Blanchet .....	1930
Mr. Trudeau .....	1930

<b>Employment Insurance</b>	
Mr. Singh .....	1930
Mr. Trudeau .....	1930
Mr. Singh .....	1930
Mr. Trudeau .....	1930

<b>Ethics</b>	
Mr. Rayes .....	1930
Mr. Trudeau .....	1930
Mr. Rayes .....	1931
Mr. Trudeau .....	1931
Mr. Barrett .....	1931
Mr. Trudeau .....	1931
Mr. Barrett .....	1931
Mr. Trudeau .....	1931
Mr. Deltell .....	1931
Mr. Trudeau .....	1931
Mr. Deltell .....	1931
Mr. Trudeau .....	1931

<b>Government Priorities</b>	
Mr. Blanchet .....	1931
Mr. Trudeau .....	1932

<b>Health</b>	
Mr. Thériault .....	1932
Mr. Trudeau .....	1932

<b>Ethics</b>	
Mr. Deltell .....	1932
Mr. Trudeau .....	1932

<b>Health</b>	
Mr. Jeneroux .....	1932
Mr. Trudeau .....	1932
Mr. Paul-Hus .....	1932
Mr. Trudeau .....	1932
Mr. Paul-Hus .....	1932
Mr. Trudeau .....	1933

<b>Indigenous Affairs</b>	
Ms. Gazan .....	1933
Mr. Trudeau .....	1933
Mr. Angus .....	1933
Mr. Trudeau .....	1933

<b>The Budget</b>	
Mrs. Shanahan .....	1933

Mr. Morneau .....	1933
<b>Health</b>	
Ms. Bergen .....	1933
Mr. Trudeau .....	1934
Mr. Falk (Provencher) .....	1934
Mr. Trudeau .....	1934
<b>The Environment</b>	
Ms. Finley .....	1934
Mr. Trudeau .....	1934
Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) .....	1934
Mr. Trudeau .....	1934
<b>Health</b>	
Ms. Michaud .....	1935
Mr. Trudeau .....	1935
Ms. Normandin .....	1935
Mr. Trudeau .....	1935
<b>Natural Resources</b>	
Mr. Martel .....	1935
Mr. Trudeau .....	1935
<b>The Economy</b>	
Mr. Poilievre .....	1935
Mr. Trudeau .....	1935
Mr. Poilievre .....	1936
Mr. Trudeau .....	1936
<b>Diversity and Inclusion</b>	
Mrs. Lalonde .....	1936
Mr. Trudeau .....	1936
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Mr. Saroya .....	1936
Mr. Trudeau .....	1936
Mr. Kurek .....	1936
Mr. Trudeau .....	1936
<b>The Economy</b>	
Mr. Morantz .....	1936
Mr. Trudeau .....	1937
<b>Telecommunications</b>	
Mrs. Zahid .....	1937
Mr. Trudeau .....	1937
<b>Health</b>	
Mr. Garrison .....	1937
Mr. Trudeau .....	1937
<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>	
<b>Parliamentary Budget Officer</b>	
The Speaker .....	1937
<b>Government Response to Petitions</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1937
<b>Committees of the House</b>	
<b>Canada-China Relations</b>	
Mr. Regan .....	1937

<b>Fisheries and Oceans</b>	
Mr. Hardie .....	1937
<b>Liaison</b>	
Ms. Sgro .....	1937
<b>National Cycling Strategy Act</b>	
Mr. Johns .....	1938
Bill C-239. Introduction and first reading .....	1938
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	1938
<b>Petitions</b>	
<b>Wild Salmon</b>	
Mr. Johns .....	1938
<b>India</b>	
Mrs. Zahid .....	1938
<b>Powell River Gasoline Prices</b>	
Ms. Blaney (North Island—Powell River) .....	1938
<b>Women's Economic Equality</b>	
Mr. Manly .....	1938
<b>Indigenous Affairs</b>	
Mr. Manly .....	1939
<b>Canadian Chinese Political Affairs Committee</b>	
Mr. Genuis .....	1939
<b>Carbon Pricing</b>	
Mr. Drouin .....	1939
<b>The Environment</b>	
Ms. Collins .....	1939
Ms. Collins .....	1939
<b>Indigenous Affairs</b>	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	1939
<b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</b>	
Ms. Zann .....	1939
<b>Human Organ Trafficking</b>	
Mr. Viersen .....	1940
<b>Poverty</b>	
Mrs. Atwin .....	1940
<b>Indigenous Affairs</b>	
Mrs. Atwin .....	1940
<b>The Middle Class</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1940
<b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1940
<b>Questions Passed as Orders for Returns</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1940
<b>Motions for Papers</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1941

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement Implementation Act

Bill C-4, Third reading .....	1941
Mr. Bagnell .....	1941
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	1942
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1942
Mr. Cooper .....	1942
Mr. Johns .....	1942
Ms. Mathysen .....	1943
Mr. Gerretsen .....	1945
Mrs. Wagantall .....	1945
Mr. Duvall .....	1945
Mr. Manly .....	1945
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1947
Mr. Johns .....	1947
Mrs. Wagantall .....	1948
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1949
Mr. Duvall .....	1950
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	1950
Mr. McCauley .....	1950
Mr. Samson .....	1950
Mr. Saroya .....	1952
Mr. Plamondon .....	1952
Mr. Duvall .....	1952
Mr. Cooper .....	1952
Mr. Gerretsen .....	1953
Mr. Duvall .....	1954
Mr. Samson .....	1954
Mr. Perron .....	1954
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1956
Mr. Duvall .....	1956
Mr. Ste-Marie .....	1956

Mr. Vis .....	1957
Mr. Gerretsen .....	1958
Mrs. Charbonneau .....	1958
Mr. Ste-Marie .....	1959
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1960
Mr. Berthold .....	1960
Mr. Saroya .....	1961
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1962
Mr. Duvall .....	1963
Mr. Trudel .....	1963
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe .....	1963
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1965
Mr. Dubourg .....	1965
Mr. Simard .....	1965
Mr. Simard .....	1965
Mr. Easter .....	1967
Mr. Duvall .....	1967
Mr. Patzer .....	1967
Mr. Badawey .....	1967

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

### Health

Mrs. Atwin .....	1968
Ms. Hutchings .....	1969

### Seniors

Mr. Manly .....	1970
Mr. Ehsassi .....	1971

### Infrastructure

Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) .....	1971
Ms. Hutchings .....	1972

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