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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF CANADA

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table today, in both official languages, the Public Accounts of Canada 2023. The Auditor General of Canada has provided an unqualified audit opinion on the Government of Canada's financial statements.

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[*Translation*]

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 8(2) of the Auditor General Act, the report of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons entitled “Commentary on the 2022-2023 Financial Audits”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), this document is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

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[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), and consistent with the policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled “Convention on Social Security between Canada and the Republic of Tunisia”, done at Djerba on November 18, 2022, and “Amendment to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal”, adopted at Geneva on September 22, 1995.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise with the honour of presenting, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, entitled “Foreign Interference and the Threats to the Integrity of Democratic Institutions, Intellectual Property and the Canadian State”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

While I have the floor, I want to state how important this study is and what the committee heard. I want to mention the courage of the witnesses who came before our committee, in particular Pascale Fournier, who spoke truth to power, and members of our Chinese diaspora who deal with threats, intimidation and fear on a daily basis. They came before our committee to tell their stories. I hope that this report reflects those concerns accurately. More importantly, the report states what needs to be done in the recommendations to the government to deal with these threats of foreign interference, particularly by the Chinese Communist regime in Beijing.

While I am standing, I also want to thank the Clerk, the analysts, the technicians, all the witnesses and all members of the committee for putting their hearts and souls into the issue of threats as a result of foreign interference. This is a very important issue for our country. I present this report on behalf of the committee.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for presenting the report. Having been a member of that committee and that study prior to taking the Chair, I am glad the hon. member thanked the many people who were involved in it.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent that the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics presented to the House on Tuesday, October 24, be amended by appending an amended dissenting opinion of the official opposition.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

Routine Proceedings

It is agreed. The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

• (1010)

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to present the supplementary opinion from the official opposition for this important report from the standing committee. The comments of the chair are with respect to thanking our analysts, the clerk and the witnesses. Everyone who participated is incredibly important.

This is a very important report about a very important subject. Of course, there were some recommendations that the Conservatives did not concur with, which is why we have added a supplemental to the report.

There is important context included in this, and the official opposition wants it to be noted that an audit of the Trudeau Foundation is an important component that should be considered by the government and undertaken.

The official opposition rejects the 16th recommendation included in the report.

* * *

PETITIONS

AQUACULTURE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition of great concern to residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands. People throughout this region have a deep concern for the fate of our wild Pacific salmon. The subject of the petition is the report of Mr. Justice Cohen on the fate of the salmon. The report came out during the time it was commissioned, when Stephen Harper was prime minister; it has been in front of us now for close to a decade, which is extraordinary to people in the region.

Briefly, the petition deals with the ongoing crisis of wild Pacific salmon. The petitioners note that the report of Mr. Justice Cohen has been in front of the government now for many years. There is a commitment to get the toxic salmon factories, known as salmon aquaculture operations, along the areas of Vancouver Island, particularly near the Discovery Islands' channels, out of the water. This would be done to remove the wild salmon stocks that are contaminated with diseases and viruses from the so-called farms.

The petitioners ask that the government move rapidly to enact all recommendations of the report of Mr. Justice Cohen and do so without further delay.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope you will grant me some grace, given the gravity of the petition I am presenting today.

The petition arises from events that happened on September 16, 2021, with the horrific and preventable murders of Mchale Erica Busch, age 24, and her baby son, Noah Lee McConnell, age 16 months. The murders occurred in the victims' apartment building in

Hinton, Alberta, perpetrated by a known registered sex offender. The family had no idea that this individual was living there, and the offences happened a short 10 days after they moved in.

This petition has been signed by almost 22,000 Canadians, who are asking for the Government of Canada to do the following: require mandatory reporting by convicted sexual offenders to the nearest police station upon any change of residence; clarify that failure to report as required is an offence for which an arrest warrant shall be issued; and create a specifically designated offender classification for persons convicted of sexual assault offences against children where a sentence of more than two years is imposed, for offenders convicted of two or more violent sexual offences, or for offences involving the abduction of women and/or children.

We have a responsibility to this family and all victims of sexual violence in this country. I look forward to the government responding to this petition.

• (1015)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to submit a petition, in both official languages, on behalf of the residents of Nickel Belt and greater Sudbury region.

I am tabling a petition calling on the federal government to move forward immediately with bold emission caps for the oil and gas sector that are comprehensive in scope and realistic in achieving an interim and science-based target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

[*Translation*]

The petition states that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned us repeatedly that rising temperatures over the next two decades, if left unabated, will bring widespread devastation and extreme weather.

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise for the 17th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition.

The people of Swan River have had enough of the Liberals' soft-on-crime policies that allow criminals to run rampant in the community without fear of jail. Members of this small community do not recognize their once-safe town. Businesses are now forced to use a community group chat to alert each other to armed robberies, so the next business down the street can be prepared.

The petitioners are calling for action before it is too late. The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies, which directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by Canadians, calling on the government to use all tools at its disposal, including invoking the notwithstanding clause, to override the Supreme Court's unjust Bissonnette decision. This struck down a law passed by the previous Conservative government that gave judges the discretion to apply consecutive parole ineligibility periods to persons convicted of multiple murders, to take each victim into account.

The consequence of the Supreme Court decision has been to significantly reduce the sentences of some of Canada's worst killers. It has been more than a year, and the Liberal government has sat on its hands and done nothing.

The petitioners are calling on the government to take action.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I actually have three petitions to present. The first one is similar to one that my colleague just introduced, and it has to do with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's most recent warning.

The petitioners are specifically calling on the Government of Canada to move forward immediately with bold emissions caps for the oil and gas sector that are comprehensive in scope and realistic in terms of achieving the necessary targets that Canada has set to reduce emissions by 2030.

REMOTE-CONTROLLED MODEL AIRPLANES

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my second petition has to do with the subject of transportation.

This primarily comes from the Model Aeronautics Association of Canada. I know a number of petitions like this have been presented in the past. This one calls on the Government of Canada and, specifically, the Minister of Transport to review the decision of Transport Canada to cancel the MAAC members' exemption of part IX of the Canadian Aviation Act. It calls on the government to reinstate the exemption to MAAC members or remove fixed-wing RC models from the category of remote-piloted aircraft systems, as listed in the CAA.

CHILD SUPPORT

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition with 210 signatures from Canadians who are calling for the government's attention to a request about the way child support is determined in Canada.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to consider using household income instead of personal income in all cases, not only in undue hardship instances, as the standard for calculation of receiving child support in cases of joint and/or shared custody. This would allow for a common standard throughout departments.

Routine Proceedings

• (1020)

AQUACULTURE

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table this petition on behalf of residents from Hornby Island, Denman Island and Deep Bay on Vancouver Island.

The petitioners are calling on the government to postpone licensing further shellfish aquaculture facilities located near herring spawning and rearing habitat in Baynes Sound until a full ecosystem-based assessment is completed on the impacts of this industry's activities on the herring stock, and that they also establish a record of effectively managing their gear and equipment and pay for the cleanup of tonnes of plastic debris. Further, they ask for the development of a co-management plan for Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel with first nations; this should be area-based and ecosystem-based, recognizing the first nations' unceded traditional territories.

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present four more petitions on behalf of the residents of North Okanagan—Shuswap and Canada who are concerned about the current NDP-Liberal government's overreach into their lives.

The petitioners call on the Minister of Health to work with the natural health products industry to adjust Health Canada's cost-recovery rates, to accurately reflect the size and scope of the industry and to implement changes only once the self-care framework is adjusted.

We heard about this many times from residents over the summer, and I am very happy to present four more in a series of petitions that have been coming to me from residents who are concerned about the overreach of the current government.

JUSTICE

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting a petition on behalf of Canadians who wish to draw to the attention of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada concerns in regard to the Bissonnette decision by the Supreme Court.

As a result of that decision, some of Canada's most heinous mass murderers who had their parole eligibility period reduced will now, in some circumstances, be able to apply for parole after only 25 years. It is an unjust decision putting the interests of some of the worst criminals ahead of the rights of their victims.

The petitioners wish to urge the Attorney General and Minister of Justice to invoke the notwithstanding clause with respect to the Bissonnette decision.

Routine Proceedings

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it a pleasure to table today a petition signed by many residents of Manitoba. They are calling on the Government of Canada to work with the provincial jurisdictions in dealing with, in particular in this case, health care professionals, specifically nurses in the province of Manitoba, and the important role that Ottawa plays in working with the provinces to address credentials being recognized, the shortage of health care workers and so forth. It is a pleasure for me to table the petition.

JUSTICE

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too, along with many of my Conservative colleagues, rise today to present a petition related to the legal system in this country. Specifically, the petitioners draw to the attention of the Minister of Justice the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *R. v. Bissonnette* that struck down section 745.51 of the Criminal Code, which allowed parole ineligibility periods to be applied consecutively for mass murderers. As a result of this decision, many of Canada's most heinous killers are being let out of prison long before they should be.

Therefore, the undersigned petitioners from across Canada urge the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to invoke the notwithstanding clause and override this decision to ensure that justice is actually served within our justice system.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the petitioners who signed this petition are concerned about the ease of access to online sexually explicit material, including violent and degrading material. They are concerned that this is a public health crisis and a public safety concern. Petitioners note that a significant portion of commercially accessible sexual material has no age-verification software in place. Petitioners note that many serious harms associated with access to this type of material include favourable attitudes toward sexual violence and the harassment of women.

As such, the petitioners are calling for the quick passage of Bill S-210, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act.

• (1025)

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I have today comes from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the Liberal government's decision to put themselves in place of parents and provinces. The petitioners support the Leader of the Opposition's comments when he said that the Prime Minister should butt out of these kinds of decisions. The petitioners want to support Premier Blaine Higgs and his policy 713.

The petitioners note that in the vast majority of cases, parents care about the well-being of their children and love them much more than does any state-run institution. The role of the government is to support families and respect parents, and not to dictate how they should make decisions for their children. Therefore, the

petitioners call on the Government of Canada to butt out and let Canadians raise their own children.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have comes from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about the Liberals' interference in charitable status. They note that in the Liberal platform, there was a values test on charitable status and that this could jeopardize the charitable status of hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other organizations. They also note that the Liberals previously used a test to discriminate against groups that were applying for the Canada summer jobs grant.

The petitioners are asking the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test. They also ask for affirmation of their freedom of expression as Canadians.

WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have is signed by Canadians from across the country who are concerned that women's shelters are seeing increased demand and that the high cost of living and the housing crisis have made it harder for women and children fleeing violence to find a place to live.

At this time, they note that the Liberal government has dramatically increased spending on bureaucracy and consultations but is cutting \$145 million of funding for women's shelters. The petitioners therefore call on the Government of Canada to restore the funding for these women's shelters.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last petition I have to present is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the increased risk of violence that happens to women who are pregnant. Currently, the injury or death of preborn children as victims of crime are not considered aggravating circumstances for sentencing. The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to recognize this and to legislate that the abuse of a pregnant woman and the infliction of harm on a preborn child be considered aggravating circumstances for sentencing in the Criminal Code.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Government Orders

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

REQUIREMENT OF ROYAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BILLS C-353 AND C-356

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise with respect to what the Speaker said on Thursday, October 19, when he raised two items for Private Members' Business that appeared to infringe on the Crown's financial imperative and asked members to bring forward interventions on these matters.

Without commenting on the subject matter of the two bills in question, I submit that Bill C-353, sponsored by the member for Thornhill, and Bill C-356, sponsored by the member for Carleton, both infringe on the Crown's financial prerogative and that both bills require a royal recommendation.

Subclause 21(1) of Bill C-353 relating to the programs to encourage co-operation provides that:

The Minister may, in cooperation with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, establish and implement programs designed to encourage individuals to co-operate with the Government of Canada to secure the release of Canadian nationals and eligible protected persons who are held hostage or arbitrarily detained in state-to-state relations outside Canada.

Subclause 21(2) of Bill C-353 further provides that “the Minister may pay a monetary reward to the individual who provides that information in an amount and manner determined by the Minister.”

I submit, respectfully, that there is no authority in statute or in an appropriation to establish such a program set out in subclause 21(1), nor the authority to make payments subject to the provisions set out in subclause 21(2). Therefore, subclause 21(1), *in toto*, seeks to impose a new and distinct draw on the consolidated revenue fund in a manner that is not currently authorized.

Turning to Bill C-356, I submit that the repurposing of \$100 million from the housing accelerator fund and the provision to give effect to a 100% GST rebate on the new residential rental property for which the average rent payable is below market rate both seek to infringe on the Crown's financial prerogative.

First, the housing accelerator fund was established as a program administered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and is funded by a voted appropriation by Parliament through the estimates process. The member is seeking to change the terms and conditions of the purposes of the housing accelerator fund in a manner that is inconsistent with the program parameters as established and that therefore deviates from the authority granted by Parliament. The tabling of the main estimates and supplementary estimates is preceded by the recommendation of Her Excellency the Governor General for voted appropriations. That royal recommendation sets the maximum amount, the purpose and the terms and conditions of the voted appropriations contained in the estimates documents and voted upon by Parliament.

Second, the 100% GST rebate on new residential rental property would be a rebate paid out of the consolidated revenue fund for which a builder, landlord or buyer could claim the said rebate. I

would point out that Bill C-56, which also proposes a 100% GST rebate for purpose-built rental housing, while different in design, was accompanied by a royal recommendation. Since, when brought into force, it would create a new and distinct draw on the consolidated revenue fund, it stands to reason that the program for which the terms, purposes and conditions of the GST rebate envisioned in Bill C-356 cannot rely on the royal recommendation provided with Bill C-56. Bill C-356 must, similarly, require a new royal recommendation to authorize a new and distinct draw on the consolidated revenue fund.

● (1030)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his input. I am, of course, looking at that closely.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023

The House resumed from October 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-57, Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as members know, free trade is very close and dear to my heart.

I want to ask the member about his own Ukrainian community, the diaspora that is gathered within his community and why they would feel that this agreement is really important to Canada. I would welcome his thoughts on that.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note the work my colleague from Abbotsford did in making sure that, under the previous Conservative governments, there were, I believe, 43 trade agreements with different countries from around—

Hon. Ed Fast: There were 47.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, my apologies. There were 47.

That member has probably forgotten more about trade than most Liberals will ever know, but he asked an important question concerning the Ukrainian diaspora within my community. As is the case for many rural prairie MPs, there are significant Ukrainian roots. The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, which is a great place to visit for families, is located just north of my constituency. It speaks to that richness, especially when it comes to those roots in agriculture.

Government Orders

We need to make sure that we take seriously the fact that we established, in 2013, the first Ukrainian free trade agreement, and now we have the opportunity to build on that. I want to emphasize that we have to get it right. It is before this House. We need to make sure that it goes through the process to ensure that every section and every subsection of this bill are done right for the Ukrainian diaspora in our country, for all Canadians and for a country that is facing incredible circumstances. It has shown itself to be able to stand strong against this unjustified and illegal Russian invasion.

For both sides, we need to make sure that we get it right. That is why I hope all members of this place take seriously the responsibility that is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that that happens.

• (1035)

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, liquefied natural gas is a great opportunity for Canada. There are currently 18 LNG products on the desk of the Prime Minister awaiting approval. If we look at the current situation in Ukraine, reducing reliance on Russian natural gas is something obvious we could do to help. Canada has this great opportunity.

Maybe my colleague could expand a bit on that in the context of the free trade agreement.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this being asked by an Ontario MP as it emphasizes to all Albertans that the question of energy security is not unique to the west or Alberta. It is truly a national issue.

To directly answer my colleague from Ontario's question, it is an international issue as well. Canada has the opportunity to ensure that we displace Russian crude oil and gas, that dictator and despot's crude oil and natural gas. Specifically, when it comes to LNG, we have the ability to make sure that dollars are not going to dictators, such as the tyrant Vladimir Putin, who is engaged in this illegal invasion of the sovereign country of Ukraine. The very people he is forcing to fight against that aggression are being forced to purchase natural gas that funds that very war machine. Canada is the solution to ensure that we have energy security for our allies and friends around the world. When that happens, our world becomes a safer place.

The regrettable reality is that, after eight years of the Liberal Prime Minister, we have seen the world become less safe because of his refusal to allow Canadian energy, and the expertise that comes along with it, to make our world a safer place. Let us get that done.

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a great pleasure to rise in the House. Today, we are talking about support for this important legislation and implementing the modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement.

As we all know, since Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine's territory, Canada has demonstrated an unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and independence. Today, we have another opportunity to demonstrate support to Ukraine with the implementation of a modernized CUFTA.

When I met with people from the Ukrainian community in Richmond Centre, they shared with me their support for our government's vision of a democratically strong nation that values the im-

portance of international collaboration, the rule of law, and global peace and security. I also want to take a moment to convey my appreciation to Ukrainian community organizations, such as the Ukrainian Community Society of Ivan Franko in Richmond Centre, for all they do in supporting the Ukrainian community here in Canada and promoting Ukrainian arts and culture.

Canada and Ukraine share these values and, most importantly, the people-to-people ties. On December 2, 1991, Canada became the first western nation to recognize Ukraine's independence, and today Canada will stand with Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes. When our allies need support, the Government of Canada has the responsibility to support them. I appreciate and am thankful for the Government of Canada's support for Ukraine since the war began. Canada has provided over \$8 billion toward financial, military, humanitarian, development and immigration assistance for Ukraine.

Recently, the Government of Canada announced a new investment of \$650 million over three years to supply Ukraine with 50 armoured vehicles, including armoured medical evacuation vehicles, built by Canadian workers in London, Ontario. The Russian illegal invasion affects global inflation, and it affects us. It increases food prices and affects the supply chain. Global peace and security are an essential part of our global economic prosperity.

By modernizing the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, we can provide the additional assistance that Ukraine needs with its reconstruction efforts, the cost of which the World Bank has estimated will be \$411 billion U.S. These efforts will involve sectors such as infrastructure, renewable resources and financial services, which are all areas in which Canada has strengths.

Canadian firms have already indicated an interest in launching and expanding their operations in Ukraine, including with respect to reconstruction, and we would have a tool to support their involvement. I am referring to the newly added investment chapter, previously missing from the 2017 CUFTA. As you may be aware, Canada and Ukraine have an existing foreign investment promotion and protection agreement, which was signed in 1994. However, this new modernized investment chapter would not only bring this new agreement in line with Canada's model comprehensive FTAs, but would also update our investment protections to address modern investment issues and concerns.

Please allow me to briefly present this new investment chapter, which resulted from our efforts in negotiating the modernized CUFTA and which will support Canadian firms' participation in Ukraine's reconstruction efforts. The CUFTA investment chapter modernizes the framework of protections for investors and their investments with a comprehensive set of obligations in line with Canada's most ambitious trade agreements. I am also proud to announce that this investment chapter is the first to be negotiated using Canada's most recent model, which seeks to better ensure that investment obligations act as intended and that they provide the necessary policy flexibility for governments to act in the public interest.

• (1040)

As such, this new drafting for the investment chapter would allow Canada and Ukraine to maintain their right to regulate in key areas, such as environment, health, safety, indigenous rights, gender equality and cultural diversity. Additionally, this new chapter includes a modern dispute settlement mechanism, which would offer strengthened alternatives to avoid arbitration, as well as enhanced transparency of proceedings commitments. In all, these outcomes represent a significant improvement over the 1994 FIPA with Ukraine, which this chapter would replace, and would strengthen the environment within which Canadian investors can invest with more confidence in Ukraine's reconstruction.

I am thankful for this opportunity to describe what we can achieve on investment through the modernization of the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. I hope I have made clear why this modern and comprehensive free trade agreement would be instrumental in not only in building our long-term commercial relations with Ukraine but also supporting its forthcoming reconstruction efforts.

To this end, I urge all honourable members to support Bill C-57 and allow us to collectively move forward to implement the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement on a timely basis.

Once again, Canada will stand with Ukraine and its people as long as it takes. *Slava Ukraini*.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the major challenges facing Ukraine is energy security. Ukraine formerly depended on Russia for its natural gas supplies, and of course that opportunity has quickly evaporated.

Canada stands in a perfect position to sell natural gas to Ukraine. Unfortunately, our current government has been very reluctant to promote the sale of liquefied natural gas to the rest of the world, claiming that there is no business case to be made for it. However, now we have an opportunity within the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement to perhaps find a way of getting our natural gas to Ukraine and providing them with energy security. What component of this agreement, if any, would expedite and assist Canadian companies to export liquefied natural gas to Ukraine?

• (1045)

Mr. Wilson Miao: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. Prior to this free trade agreement, we never expected for Ukraine to be illegally invaded by Russia.

Government Orders

The importance of energy is something we all should be concerned about, especially when we have these resources available here in Canada. It is important for us to continue to support Ukraine, especially with its reconstruction. Hopefully, we will see the war end soon. As people are suffering on the ground, it is important for us, as a government, to look into potential resources to assist the efforts of fuelling the energy needs of Ukraine.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is quite simple. When it comes to international agreements, Quebec and the Canadian provinces are rarely consulted, if at all. I would like to know if my colleague knows whether this agreement has any impact on the constitutional jurisdictions of Quebec and the Canadian provinces.

If so, were Quebec and the provinces consulted on these provisions?

[English]

Mr. Wilson Miao: Mr. Speaker, as we move forward with the second reading, and as this bill is discussed at the Standing Committee on International Trade, I encourage the member to suggest any witnesses who should testify during the standing committee's meetings. It is important for us to understand that this free trade agreement is not specific to any province or territory, but to our nation as a whole.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this legislation was tabled in the House last week on October 17. I am hoping the member can enlighten me, because the government's own policy requires that before the tabling of legislation, 21 sitting days have to expire so that members of Parliament can take a look at the agreement before any enabling legislation is brought in. We did not have that presented to members of Parliament. We also do not have an economic statement.

The government has attached a lot of importance to Bill C-56, so I am just wondering why the government did not take the time to do those two key priorities. We have plenty of time to consider this legislation. Instead, maybe we should devote the House's time to Bill C-56, which the government often likes to complain is not moving ahead.

Mr. Wilson Miao: Mr. Speaker, I believe this agreement was signed in September. Of course, this is the time that we take the opportunity to hear from all sides to see the potential of this free trade agreement and if there is any room to improve it. It would be great if we can bring it forward to the standing committee and discuss it there.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-57. I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou, who did me a favour by allowing me to go first.

Government Orders

Let me say from the outset that, generally speaking, we are all in favour of free trade and we are in favour of this agreement with Ukraine. We know that we are in a partnership with the Ukrainians, whom we have been supporting intensively since the beginning of the conflict. This bill is a logical continuation. The new agreement will replace the 2017 Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, which was vaguer, less prescriptive and less clear. We think this is a positive change, especially when it comes to the implementation mechanisms, which have been amended to be more stringent.

This agreement sends a very clear message to the whole world, and especially to Ukrainians, that we are bound to their nation by ties of friendship and that we support them under the current circumstances. One positive element of this agreement is that it recognizes the Donbass and Crimea as being part of Ukrainian territory. This may seem symbolic, but it is important to make this kind of statement to send a clear message to the international community. I will be at the Asia Pacific Forum a few weeks from now, and I will convey the same message on behalf of everyone here.

The agreement, which was signed with the President of Ukraine during his latest visit, clarifies some technical details.

The problem we have with this kind of bill is that, once passed by Parliament, it allows for the creation of institutions or mechanisms to govern free trade agreements. However, we never get to have our say on what is actually in those agreements. We can only accept or reject them wholesale. It would be reasonable for parliamentarians to put forward proposals and analyze various texts to produce a better, more refined agreement whose every nuance has been studied in detail. The Canadian government's current system allows the executive to make all the decisions. The powers of Parliament itself are extremely limited because members cannot participate.

I will never forget what happened right after I was first elected in 2019. I had to vote in favour of ratifying the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, which forced supply-managed producers to accept yet more concessions. Although it pained us greatly, we were forced to vote in favour of the agreement knowing it would hurt people.

We do not want that to happen again. I can see that the parliamentary secretary is listening carefully. I am very honoured and very pleased that he is hearing my message. I invite all the parties to sit down together and figure out how we can change the process for adopting international agreements like this one. It is important.

Some people here agreed with Bill C-282, which limits concessions involving supply management in future trade agreements. It was the way these agreements are currently developed that forced us to be inventive and resort to a bill to protect supply management. This issue has now been resolved. However, in other trade agreements, there will be other delicate issues, where some groups are more impacted than others, and where balance will need to be restored. That is why we need to review the current system.

Another major flaw is that, once the agreement is signed, the provinces and Quebec will be called upon to apply and implement the provisions under their jurisdiction.

• (1050)

However, they were not asked for their opinion beforehand. There are still some people here who wonder why we want Quebec to be independent. This is another example that shows why. We want to control what is included in our international agreements. That is one justification for independence.

Yesterday, when I asked the Minister of International Trade a question, I was pleased to receive a very clear answer. The new agreement with Ukraine is good; it will replace the one from 2017. However, the government issued a unilateral remission order last year to allow all Ukrainian products to enter Canada tariff-free. That was fine because it was a measure to help the Ukrainian economy during the conflict. No one disputed that.

However, in its haste and panic, the government threw supply-managed commodities into the mix, which is unacceptable. Yes, it is important to help, and we have always been there. The Bloc Québécois has always been in favour of measures to help Ukrainians in this terrible ongoing conflict. However, we need to be able to help others without hurting ourselves.

Why put supply management in this order? It was difficult because it was becoming politically sensitive to complain about something that favoured Ukraine. It took a long time. Supply management groups lobbied the government. The opposition worked very hard. When the order was renewed, supply-managed commodities were taken out of it. That was a good thing.

That is why I put the question to the minister yesterday. Until Bill C-282 is passed into law, there will always be a tiny possibility of further concessions.

Now the rest of the bill is mechanical. It has to do with putting structures in place. I have another complaint about the bill. In the section on investor-state mechanisms, multinational corporations are still given an equal footing with states. That is beyond reprehensible. This is very serious because states must have the right to legislate in order to regulate and ensure the collective well-being of their citizens. As things currently stand, a multinational could sue a state for damages for interfering with its business. We must find a way to stop this, because it makes no sense. A lot of things make no sense.

One of the bill's last shortcomings concerns best practices, ethical practices and environmental protection practices. The bill seems like a series of good intentions that urge people and businesses to be careful and to follow best practices, but in no way obliges them to do so.

Since I do not have much time left, I will close by saying that this agreement is important. We are partners with Ukraine, and we will remain partners. It will also be important to contribute to rebuilding Ukraine, which I hope will happen soon, as soon as this horrible war is over. I think Quebec's expertise and businesses can play a part in the reconstruction.

Government Orders

During my speech, I talked a lot about helping others without hurting ourselves. Every now and then, I also want to make sure that people in this country get help. I must digress for a moment. Last week, we voted on a bill to increase old age pensions starting at age 65. Some representatives from FADOQ are visiting Parliament Hill today. I invite all parliamentarians to show some respect for these important people who are working to end social isolation. More importantly, I urge them to show some respect for people aged 65 to 74 who were shut out when the government created an unjustified form of discrimination based on age. This is very serious and has been going on for months. I do not understand why this has not been resolved. Let us fix this as soon as possible.

I look forward to answering my colleagues' questions.

• (1055)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the Bloc is supporting the bill. This trade agreement, from an economic point of view, is an agreement that would benefit both Canada and Ukraine, but that is not the aspect I want to pick up on.

The member spoke a great deal about the special and wonderful relationship between Canada and Ukraine. We have an opportunity here with the passage of this legislation to make a very powerful statement that would go far beyond just the economics. It could deal with everything from the illegal invasion of the Putin war to morale boosting on the front lines of Ukrainian freedom fighters.

The question I have for the member is this: Would he not agree with me that it would be a wonderful thing to ultimately see this bill pass through all stages, including the Senate, before the end of this year?

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, this does not happen very often, but I have to say that I again agree with the member for Winnipeg North. I am always happy when that happens.

I am a regular guy who is in touch with the people. Since becoming a member of Parliament four years ago, I have found that things move so slowly that any time we are asked to move quickly, I answer “yes”. Let us move forward carefully and intelligently. Let us take the time to analyze the text, but let us do it.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I represent a region that has been very negatively affected by a free trade agreement. As a result, my riding has lost good jobs, particularly in the natural resources sector.

The member was very enthusiastic about saying that he supports free trade agreements. Knowing that Quebecers were also affected, is it not important to do a good job to ensure that jobs and key sectors here in Canada are protected and that we do not lose good jobs and the industries we have in Quebec and Canada?

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I agree that we must work diligently and intelligently. That is what I was saying earlier.

That is why, during my statement, I mentioned Bill C-282, which is currently before the Senate. The purpose of that bill is to protect a very important sector. We can be in favour of free trade and adopt agreements that are smart, that do not sacrifice certain groups to the benefit of others.

I think we are capable of negotiating intelligently, and that is why we will do so together.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his excellent speech, my colleague noted the more general aspect of relations between multinational corporations and the state and how they are put on an equal footing. We know that the Liberals and Conservatives are obsessed with exporting oil, the dirtiest oil in the world. When we put multinationals on an equal footing with governments, it is a bit like telling Ukraine and our other trade partners that we want to export to their country as much of the dirtiest oil in the world as we can, implying that if, some day, these countries impose environmental regulations that are good for the planet, they will be seen as enemies of free trade.

I would like to know whether my colleague has any thoughts to share on the right of countries to respect the environment, even in the context of free trade.

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague from Mirabel for his intelligent question.

I agree wholeheartedly. That is why I addressed the issue in my speech. It requires urgent action. It reflects a trend we are seeing not only in Canada and Quebec, but also around the world. Governments are increasingly off-loading their responsibilities onto private states. The gene editing regulations that I recently spoke about in the House are one example that comes to mind.

After realizing that the private sector provided the studies and wrote most of the documentation, or almost certainly suggested the wording, at the very least, we should be hearing alarm bells. I think that the state has to assume its responsibilities and, above all, limit the power of private corporations. We must never lose sight of the fact that the government represents the people.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is always difficult to speak after my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé, since he is so brilliant and knowledgeable on this subject.

To begin with, I want to recall the historical context of the agreement, which Bill C-57 will implement without actually modifying. It was first negotiated under the Harper government and finally signed in 2017 by the current government. In 2023, various aspects of the 2017 Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement were improved. That is what I am going to cover in my speech.

Essentially, the 2023 agreement codifies in a treaty the idea that the territory of Ukraine also includes the Donbass and Crimea, two regions that have been invaded by Russia over almost the entire past decade. The 2023 agreement is more comprehensive than the one signed in 2017. The latest agreement was signed by President Zelenskyy on September 22, during his visit to Canada.

Government Orders

Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement implementation act, is about 15 pages long. It is an implementation bill, not the agreement itself. It essentially contains provisions that change the names of certain references, from 2017 to 2023, for consistency. The bill authorizes the establishment, recognizes the authority, and allows for the funding of the various institutional mechanisms provided for in the agreement, including the secretariat responsible for overseeing the agreement signed on September 22. For example, it creates a secretariat responsible for the smooth running of this trade agreement.

How can anyone be against apple pie? How can any Quebecker be against poutine? Generally speaking, trade agreements are good. However, the agreement we are talking about is 1,000 pages and 30 chapters long. It is more than apple pie. It is more complicated than making a really good poutine.

This agreement covers goods and services, investments, government contracts, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and labour and environmental law. There are even provisions that favour small businesses, women and indigenous entrepreneurs. There really is a lot of complexity to this agreement, and it calls for a close look. As my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé said, Bill C-57 should take a much deeper dive into the substance of the agreement than it does.

Not only are there questions about supply management, but we have already seen in the past that Quebec aluminum was not protected under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, while Ontario steel was. Is that still the case? That is why we have to take the time to carefully study agreements before signing them. That is just one of many examples.

The 2023 agreement contains 11 new chapters, relative to the 2017 agreement. It addresses cross-border trade in services by specifying the rules applicable to services. Measures are being developed and administered to ensure predictability and consistency in administrative practices. That is important. Entrepreneurs often talk to us about the predictability of future events. This agreement clarifies that. The 1994 agreement on investment protection is being improved, particularly with respect to the definition of direct or indirect expropriation. The definition has been tightened up to ensure that there is no unjustified expropriation.

● (1105)

Then again, the current agreement opens the door to a rather serious problem by allowing investors to sue a foreign state. This is a problem, because an international agreement is an agreement between nations, and now corporations are being put on the same footing as states. This is not a good precedent to set. We can certainly discuss ways of protecting our states in committee. We are negotiating nation to nation, not investor to nation. Is there a solution? As I said, we can discuss this in committee, but the simplest solution is to bring multinationals back under the state umbrella, rather than putting them on an equal footing.

With regard to trade, this agreement completes the chapter on cross-border trade in services. I have already talked about this. It clarifies how it is to be applied in various areas, as well as the exceptions that Canada and Ukraine want to preserve. There is also a chapter on including business people and one on telecommunica-

tions. The agreement guarantees access to infrastructure, but does not affect broadcasting and cultural policies, which is great. While we may share certain similarities with various aspects of Ukrainian culture, their culture is quite different from ours. Even within Canada, we have cultures that are very different from one another and that we want to protect, particularly francophone culture and indigenous cultures.

The current agreement defines the rules applicable to financial services by immediately establishing rules that facilitate the use of financial services and the simple flow of capital in both countries. There are three chapters on the participation of SMEs, women and indigenous peoples that make it possible to implement preferential measures. Finally, the agreement codifies the regulations adopted to ensure that they are transparent and predictable. Those are two important things for both the public and business people.

The new 2023 Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement amends eight chapters of the 2017 CUFTA, including “Rules of Origin and Origin Procedures”, “Digital Trade”, “Competition Policy”, “Designated Monopolies and State-Owned Enterprises” and “Government Procurement”. The “Environment” and “Labour” chapters, which used to be statements of intent, will now be binding, so these chapters represent progress. Finally, the chapter entitled “Transparency, Anti-Corruption, and Responsible Business Conduct” is amended and improved.

In short, Bill C-57 implements an agreement that is more comprehensive than both the 2017 and 1994 agreements. However, as with every other free trade agreement, we had practically nothing to do with the content of this 1,000-page agreement, even though it will impact ordinary people, since they are the ones producing the goods and services. We, who represent the people, have almost no say in the matter, except to indicate whether the agreement should be implemented or not. Basically, that is what Bill C-57 does. We did not have much say in regard to the content of the 1,000-page agreement. This is problematic, but it does not have to be this way. The government could hold consultations with the provinces, businesses and parliamentarians.

What is more, we are rather limited in the amendments we could propose for Bill C-57. We can amend the bill, but not the agreement. That is why we are limited in what we can amend. As I was saying, the provinces are not really involved in the process, which means the agreement can affect the constitutional jurisdictions of Quebec and the Canadian provinces, given that they were not consulted. Quebec and the Canadian provinces will essentially suffer the consequences, when it is their jurisdictions that are involved and it would be up to the provinces to manage them. That is something that needs improvement.

● (1110)

We will vote in favour of this bill because this free trade agreement is good not only for Canada, but also for Ukraine, essentially because it will contribute to the economic and physical rebuilding of Ukraine.

Government Orders

• (1115)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect on the member's concerns with the consultations.

I am sure she can appreciate the fact that we have a negotiating team representing Canada. This is a team of individuals who have great experience. They have an understanding and, no doubt, have had considerable dialogue with respect to all the different issues, including what has happened in some of the debates that have occurred in here in the past with respect to trade agreements and the concerns about them.

A good example of that would be the issue of supply management. These individuals know full well how political entities and others feel about supply management. The general feelings of Canadians are reflected at the beginning of the negotiations and throughout the negotiations to ensure that Canadians are best served.

Would the member not agree that at some point we have to allow the Canadian negotiators to actually get the agreement, so that the heads of both governments are able to sign off and we are afforded the opportunity to have further ongoing discussions?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Speaker, I have faith in the negotiating skills of our professionals, in that they speak for Canada. That being said, sometimes there are some blind spots. I would point to what happened with aluminum during CUSMA. We had to fight for it in the House. We were told that it was protected just as much as steel was, only to realize later that it was not. A letter had to be added in a schedule. I would also mention supply management, which is essentially our farmers' income pool, and that gets dipped into a bit more time after time.

The negotiators are indeed skilled, but there are blind spots. That is what I am talking about. Those blind spots include the jurisdictions of Quebec and the Canadian provinces because “federal” seems to be the default mindset, and the details are not necessarily considered.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank my colleague for an excellent speech.

This is a good agreement, but the federal government negotiated it without consulting the provinces. Parliament is somewhat superfluous in this matter. As everyone knows, these agreements are temporarily in effect while we vote on implementing them.

We are obviously sovereignists, and there are a lot of sovereignists in Quebec. These people are told that if Quebec became a country, it would have to negotiate everything. It would have to negotiate free trade agreements. However, today we have proof that agreements can be negotiated, modified and renegotiated.

Does my colleague think that an independent Quebec could have negotiated a free trade agreement with Ukraine on its own?

I would also like to know if she thinks that Ukraine would have turned its back on us or if it would have wanted to trade with Quebec.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting question. In an independent Quebec, Quebec would negotiate for itself.

Some might say that Quebec is far too small to negotiate for itself, that it is not big enough or important enough. Quebec is never “enough”. It is always too small for someone.

Geographically speaking, Quebec is bigger than Ukraine. Demographically, it has roughly the same population. If Ukraine is capable of negotiating on its own, like a big country does, an independent Quebec would be very capable of doing so too.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in her speech, my colleague gave us some good examples of sectors and workers that were forgotten during our free trade negotiations.

I would like to ask her once again how important it is to take our time and make sure we are protecting important economic sectors here at home along with good jobs in our communities.

• (1120)

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Speaker, when we enter into free trade agreements, the ultimate goal should be not only to come out ahead as a country but also to help another country come out ahead. We cannot come out ahead if we do not protect our own economy and if we allow another country, any other country, to get the upper hand. A free trade agreement has to be equitable and egalitarian. It has to protect the jobs and economic resources of both countries. Elements of the trade relationship have to be complementary.

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to speak on behalf of the wonderful residents of my riding of Davenport.

Today I will be speaking to Bill C-57, an act to implement the 2023 Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Ukraine, but before I begin my formal written remarks, I want to take a few minutes to make a few comments.

First, I am happy the bill has been introduced in the House. I am also grateful to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development for her leadership and work. In a time of war, it is really important for us to be thinking about the Ukrainian economy, both today and tomorrow. Therefore, a huge thanks to her for this.

I am very grateful to my colleagues on the Canada-Ukraine Friendship Group for their focus and attention on this, particularly my colleague, the member for Etobicoke Centre.

Government Orders

I also want to express how grateful I am to a number of key stakeholders who have helped to shape this agreement, including the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce, the Ukrainian Canadian Professional and Business Association of Toronto, the Ukrainian Canadian Social Services of Canada and the Ukrainian Canadian Bar Association. I thank all of them.

I also want to acknowledge the context in which we are living today, one in which we are introducing this modernized trade agreement.

As we all know, something that troubles us every day are the major wars under way in the world today. In February of 2022, Russia started the unprovoked and illegal brutal war in Ukraine, which continues today. More recently, on October 7, Hamas initiated a brutal and violent war against Israel, which, unfortunately, also continues today. Both are clear illustrations of an attack on our democracies using war and terrorism.

I put out statements to my constituents constantly to update them on what is happening. In my latest update on Friday, I said the following, “We are in a struggle to defend our values, our humanity, and to stand up against these attacks on democracy. There is no simple solution to the conflict, but the work to find a humanitarian path to end the violence should be driven by one basic principle, and that is the most basic value of all, to protect and cherish human life.”

Some will ask me why I am mentioning this during a speech on the modernization of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. It is because in a time of war, when we are fighting for our values, for democracy, for the right to continue to choose the way we live, real, everyday life continues. It is important to not only support the current economy in Ukraine but also the one it is trying to build after the war it is fighting eventually ends. I am really glad Canada is there.

I have one other aside. It is my privilege to currently serve as the chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association. At the international meetings where NATO parliamentarians assemble, we talk about rebuilding Ukraine after the war. We know that the work begins now. I am very proud that Canada is stepping up and very much playing its part.

It is a true honour for me to rise in the House today in support of legislation to implement the modernized Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, otherwise known as CUFTA.

As we all know, Canada and Ukraine have enjoyed very close bilateral relations since 1991, when Canada became the first western country to recognize Ukrainian independence, an issue that we are sadly still fighting for to this day. These bilateral relations are strengthened by shared values and warm people-to-people ties rooted in the Ukrainian Canadian community of nearly 1.3 million people. My family is very much part of this community.

Recently, the Canada-Ukraine bilateral relationship has been marked by Canada's steadfast support to Ukraine independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of protracted Russian aggression. Whether it was in 2014 when Russia illegally occupied Crimea or, today, following Russia's full-scale invasion in

February 2022, Canada has stood steadfast beside our Ukrainian allies to support them as they fight for their independence, democracy and freedom.

As such, since the beginning of the conflict in February 2022, Canada has committed almost \$9 billion in multi-faceted support to Ukraine, which includes \$5 billion in financial assistance, including \$4 billion in loans through the International Monetary Fund's administered account for Ukraine, as well as \$500 million through a Canada-Ukraine sovereignty bond; over \$2 billion in military assistance and defence, of which I know that our Minister of Defence has recently made an additional announcement; \$352 million in humanitarian assistance, a lot of which goes to the Ukrainian Women's Fund, which is for much-necessary work in the country; \$147 million in development assistance; \$102 million in security and stabilization assistance; and \$4.8 million in cultural protection.

● (1125)

Additionally, Canada has established new immigration measures for Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion, for which we have committed \$1.2 billion.

Today we have yet another opportunity to demonstrate our continued support to Ukraine through other means, means that will not only offer assistance in the short term but will extend well beyond the current unfortunate situation and will form the basis on which Canada can support the reconstruction of Ukraine for years to come. I am, of course, referring to the modernized CUFTA, which is the reason I am addressing members today.

The original CUFTA entered into force in August 2017 and immediately eliminated tariffs on 99% of imports from Ukraine. Similarly, the 2017 CUFTA immediately eliminated tariffs on 86% of Canadian exports to Ukraine, with the balance of tariff concessions to be implemented over a seven-year period, or by January 1, 2024.

While reductions in coal supplies from Canada caused a slight drop in total trade following the 2017 CUFTA's entry into force, non-coal exports grew at a rapid pace and, in 2021, total bilateral trade reached its highest point ever at \$447 million before dipping to \$421 million in 2022 due to Russia's invasion.

In 2022, top Canadian exports to Ukraine included armoured vehicles, fish, medicine, motor vehicles and parts, and pet food. Top imports from Ukraine included fats and oils, iron and steel, electrical machinery, and processed foods. Canadian investment in Ukraine in 2022 amounted to \$112 million.

While comprehensive from a trade-in-goods perspective, the 2017 CUFTA did not include chapters on trade in services or investment. These areas were left out of the agreement due to divergent approaches at the time. Rather, the CUFTA contained a clause committing Canada and Ukraine to review the agreement within two years of its entry into force, with a view to expanding it. The review clause specifically identified services and investment as potential additions, but did not restrict the parties from exploring other areas.

Pursuant to this review clause, in a visit to Ottawa in July 2019, our Prime Minister and the Ukrainian president, President Zelenskyy, announced their intention to modernize the CUFTA. Our federal government then held formal public consultations on the modernization of the CUFTA in the winter of 2020. Submissions supported the initiative as a means of strengthening the bilateral relationship, building on Canada's commercial engagement with Ukraine, and further promoting an open, inclusive and rules-based trading environment for our businesses and investors.

The Government of Canada also received positive feedback from the provinces and territories, several of which were particularly supportive of the potential inclusion of new or modernized chapters on cross-border trade in services, financial services, investment, digital trade and additional commitments to support small and medium-sized enterprises. All of these areas have been successfully included in the modernized CUFTA, as well as new chapters or provisions on trade and gender, trade and indigenous peoples, digital trade, transparency, labour and environment, among many other areas.

Following these internal consultations, and delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we know there was an announcement to launch the negotiations for a modernized CUFTA in January 2022.

Unfortunately, only weeks later, on February 24, 2022, Russia began its full-scale illegal invasion of Ukraine. This caused another delay in progress, with Canadian trade officials relaying to their Ukrainian counterparts that they stood ready to proceed with CUFTA modernization discussions in accordance with Ukraine's capacity and willingness to do so.

● (1130)

Negotiations started in June 2022 and, despite compressed timelines and difficult circumstances for our negotiating partner, they were highly constructive. Both sides demonstrated an eagerness to reach an ambitious and high-standard agreement that would be on par with Canada's most comprehensive trade agreements. This was done with the aim of facilitating increased trade between our two nations long into the future.

During a visit from the Prime Minister of Ukraine on April 11, 2023, he and our Prime Minister announced the conclusion of negotiations for the modernized CUFTA. Each committed to undertaking their respective domestic processes to facilitate its signature and entry into force as soon as possible.

During his most recent visit to Ottawa on September 22, 2023, President Zelenskyy and our Prime Minister signed the final modernized CUFTA text. This was a historic milestone in the Canadian-Ukrainian bilateral relationship, and it served as another clear

Government Orders

demonstration of Canada's unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. With the final agreement officially signed, both sides are now taking the next steps to bring the agreement into force as early as January 1, 2024. That is why we are here today.

If I may, I will say a few words about the modernized agreement and some of the benefits and opportunities it presents for Canadians and Ukrainians alike.

Substantive negotiations have resulted in a modernized CUFTA, which includes nine dedicated new chapters and upgrades to nine existing chapters from the 2017 CUFTA. I will begin with an overview of the new chapters that have been added.

First, the agreement includes a dedicated new chapter on cross-border trade in services, which puts both Ukrainian and Canadian service suppliers on a comparable footing vis-à-vis our main services trading partners. Additionally, this chapter includes provisions on the recognition of professional qualifications that would facilitate trade and professional services, which are strategically important for both parties in a knowledge-based and digital economy.

The parties have also added a new chapter on investment that would replace the Canada-Ukraine FIPA. It features modern drafting to ensure investment obligations operate as intended and provide necessary flexibility in key policy areas. The new chapter includes a modern dispute settlement mechanism that would help Canadian investors participate with more confidence during Ukraine's reconstruction and beyond.

The modernized CUFTA has a financial services chapter, which includes core obligations related to market access, national treatment and most-favoured nation treatment. It would also maintain flexibility for regulators to preserve the stability of their financial systems. The financial services chapter would support a predictable, stable and transparent investment environment for investors, and it would allow Ukraine a 10-year period to transition from its existing World Trade Organization commitments to those included in this agreement.

There is also a new chapter in telecommunications, which would promote competition and provide enhanced certainty for telecommunications service suppliers when operating in Canadian and Ukrainian markets. The chapter also includes commitments to ensure that regulators of the telecommunications sector would be independent, impartial and transparent.

The parties have also added a chapter on temporary entry for business persons, which would provide new access for Canadians and Canadian companies to do business, invest and work in highly skilled occupations on a temporary basis in Ukraine while providing Canadian employers with easier access to highly skilled Ukrainian workers.

Government Orders

New chapters on inclusive trade, including trade and gender, trade and small and medium-sized enterprises, and trade and indigenous peoples, seek to empower and create opportunities for these under-represented groups, increasing their participation in and expanding their benefits from the modernized CUFTA. Notably, the trade and indigenous peoples chapter is the first of its kind included by either party in a free trade agreement.

Lastly, there is a chapter on good regulatory practices. It demonstrates to current and future trading partners that Ukraine is able to take on commitments that support a regulatory environment conducive to trade.

In addition to the new chapters I have outlined, we have also agreed with Ukraine to update nine chapters from the existing agreement. This includes rules of origin and origin procedures, where Canada and Ukraine have agreed to activate an article from the 2017 CUFTA on cumulation of origin.

● (1135)

This would allow materials of any non-party with which both Canada and Ukraine have an existing free trade agreement, such as the European Union, to be taken into consideration by the exporter when determining whether a product qualifies as originating under CUFTA, which would make it easier for Canadian and Ukrainian businesses to participate in regional value chains. It reflects a shared desire to support trade among like-minded partners.

The new digital trade chapter aims to improve regulatory certainty for businesses seeking to engage in the digital economy in both markets, as well as those specifically looking to engage in cross-border digital trade between Canada and Ukraine. The modernized CUFTA also includes a stand-alone competition policy chapter, which would enhance both parties' objective for a fair, transparent, predictable and competitive business environment through enhanced obligations for procedural fairness, and the identification and protection of confidential information by authorities.

The monopolies and state enterprises chapter has been upgraded to include important definitions for state-owned enterprises and designated monopolies, and updated commitments on transparency and technical co-operation. In the modernized government procurement chapter, Canada and Ukraine have agreed to provisions clarifying that the parties are not prevented from undertaking policies and programs to support domestic initiatives, such as green and social procurement.

The modernized CUFTA also includes perhaps the most comprehensive and ambitious environment chapter ever achieved in a Canadian free trade agreement. The updated chapter seeks to promote robust, ambitious and transparent environmental governance, and for the first time, includes a dedicated article reaffirming the parties' commitment to addressing climate change.

There is also an updated labour chapter, which shows that Canada and Ukraine are committed to the highest labour rights standards. Fully subject to the dispute settlement mechanism of the agreement, the chapter commits Canada and Ukraine to implement, in their labour laws, the content of the core conventions of the International Labour Organization.

The transparency, anti-corruption and reasonable business conduct chapter promotes transparency and integrity among public officials, private sector and society, and it advances enforceability of anti-corruption laws. It includes a new section to encourage responsible business conduct.

These negotiated outcomes would not only position Canadian firms to better participate in the economic reconstruction of Ukraine, but also support Ukraine's trade policy interests globally. Our Ukrainian colleagues have already expressed to us the value of the modernized CUFTA as the model of a modern, comprehensive and high-standard agreement with prospective trading partners around the globe. Domestically, the modernized agreement would reinforce the regulatory framework of a more inclusive, predictable and transparent trading and investment environment, which would benefit Canadian workers, businesses and entrepreneurs.

While the war continues to hinder trade both globally and bilaterally between Canada and Ukraine, the benefits and opportunities our countries have secured through this FTA are varied and long term, and would support growth in our commercial relationship now and for years to come.

During President Zelenskyy's recent visit, he and Prime Minister Trudeau had the opportunity to participate in a business round table in Toronto. At this event, we heard from business leaders from across Canada about the scope of commercial trade and investment interests in Ukraine, the risks associated with doing business in Ukraine and how to overcome these risks to ensure the private sector in Canada is well-positioned to invest and support Ukrainian reconstruction. Indeed, Canadian reconstruction companies, such as Aecon, are already moving forward to form partnerships with Ukrainian companies and to aid reconstruction.

This agreement is not just about economic gains. It also represents a landmark in the Canada-Ukraine relationship and serves as another clear demonstration of Canada's unwavering support to Ukrainian sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We stand with Ukraine, and this agreement is another bond between us.

To that end, I urge all hon. members to support the legislative amendments contained in Bill C-57 and support this legislation.

● (1140)

The Deputy Speaker: I would just like to give a quick reminder that, when referring to members of the House of Commons, members are to use their title or riding name.

We will move on to questions and comments with the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Government Orders

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that we have seen in previous trade deals, and I am thinking of the free trade agreement with China that the Harper government signed back in 2014. While I am being heckled by Conservatives, I will just remind them that they signed a trade agreement with China for 31 years. That trade agreement—

An hon. member: It's not a free trade agreement.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to get up on a point of order, he can clarify. While he is heckling me, I will remind him that they signed a trade agreement with secret tribunals, and even Canadians do not know about what is in those secret tribunals when there is an appeal from the Chinese government that wants to override, say, Canadian rights.

There was a woman in my riding, Brenda Sayers, a lawyer, an esteemed lawyer from the Hupacasath First Nation, who took the Harper government to court and appealed that this was violating indigenous rights. One thing I like in this agreement is the chapter on trade and indigenous peoples. It reaffirms the parties' commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Does my colleague agree that focussed chapters should be included in all free trade agreements moving forward so that we do not end up in the same position we are in because of the Conservatives and their trade agreement with China and the other trade agreements they signed?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, on my side of the House I heard some of my colleagues say that that was a good question, which is really great.

As I mentioned in my speech, there is a chapter that includes trade and indigenous people, which seeks to empower trade opportunities for this under-represented group. I think it is the first of its kind that either Ukraine or Canada has ever included in a free trade agreement. I think we included that because we think it is important. I do think it is something we should be considering for all other future trade agreements moving forward.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just following up on the previous question from my NDP colleague, who has suggested time and time again that Canada has a free trade agreement with China. That is patently false, and I think he knows that. What he is actually referring to is a foreign investment promotion and protection agreement, or FIPA.

I would ask the member, who just gave a very good speech on Ukraine, if it is her understanding that Canada has gone so far as to sign a trade agreement with China and why it is that Ukraine is the priority right now when it comes to negotiating free trade.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I will keep my comments to the current trade agreement.

We have stood with Ukraine forever. The Ukrainian diaspora is one of the largest diasporas here in Canada. We stand with them, as Ukraine fights this brutal and illegal war against Russia in their fight for democracy, because it is a fight they are also fighting on our behalf.

For us, this is our way of helping to support their current economy and to create a foundation for their economy from which to build once the war is over. We stand with Ukraine today. We stood with them yesterday, and we will stand with them for as long as it takes after this war. We will be there as they are growing their economy after this war, moving forward.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague on her speech and my other colleagues on their questions.

Today, we are debating Bill C-57, an act to implement the 2023 free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine. I think this is a subject on which everyone in the House agrees. It does not seem as though many members will oppose the bill when we vote on it. However, this is still an opportunity to talk about Ukraine and the importance of free trade agreements, as well as to reflect on those agreements. Obviously, we hope that Ukraine will recover as quickly as possible. I think that having a free trade agreement that normalizes our trade with Ukraine will only help with that.

I am wondering why these free trade agreements are negotiated behind closed doors without any real mandate. The executive branch, or government, is the one responsible for those negotiations, and Parliament can only say “yes” or “no” to the final agreement. Does my colleague think it is right that we have almost no say as to the content of the agreement, whether it is good or not?

I think that everyone agrees that we want a free trade agreement with Ukraine. However, it would be worthwhile for parliamentarians to have more of a say as to the agreement's content. That is why we were elected, to represent the people and defend their interests, but the government is preventing us from doing that to some extent.

● (1145)

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the hon. member. I think there are a number of opportunities for members to provide their input.

If the bill manages to get a vote in this House to move it to committee, there will be an enormous opportunity for comments from members of all sides of the House at that point in time. I will also say that none of these negotiations are ever conducted in secret. I think there are many opportunities, such as through the various different stakeholder groups I had mentioned at the onset of my speech, for there to be input.

The minister is always open to feedback from anyone in this House. For us, it is important to have the best agreement possible, and we will take the best ideas. It does not matter where they come from.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to get in on this round, because there has been a very interesting discussion between the member for Courtenay—Alberni, the member for Abbotsford and the hon. member for Danforth about investor protection agreements.

Government Orders

They are not trade agreements, so the member for Courtenay—Alberni is correct that the previous government under Stephen Harper executed a secret agreement. It never came before Parliament for a vote but was done as an order in council, committing Canada not to a trade agreement with the People's Republic of China, but to an investor protection agreement, as the member for Abbotsford referred to, a FIPA, that binds Canada for more than 31 years and in which challenges against Canadian law by corporations of the People's Republic of China do not require any public notice to Canadians and can proceed in secret.

I want to ask the hon. member for Danforth this. The current Canada-Ukraine agreement includes an investor protection agreement. When Canada renegotiated NAFTA with the U.S., it removed chapter 11, the investor protection agreement. Was any thought given, when renegotiating the agreement with Ukraine, to remove this quite anti-democratic provision? It is almost ubiquitous across the globe in trade agreements these days to include an investor protection agreement. Was any thought given to removing it from the Canada-Ukraine agreement?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the record. I am the member of Parliament for Davenport, which I am very proud of. I do not mind being confused with my wonderful colleague, the member of Parliament for Toronto—Danforth, as our ridings are often confused, but I wanted to correct the record on that.

Canada and Ukraine I believe already had a foreign investment promotion and protection agreement. The new investment chapter in the modernized agreement features modern drafting to ensure that parties remain flexible from a policy perspective and to ensure their right to regulate in key areas. It also includes a new chapter with a modern dispute settlement mechanism, which will, among other important updates, strengthen alternatives to avoid arbitration and enhance the transparency of proceedings and commitments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, can I get the member's comments on how trade agreements are to the economic advantage of both Canada and Ukraine? Obviously, the war is on all of our minds. What are the impacts of having a trade agreement, whether for morale or just to make a very strong political statement at the same time?

• (1150)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, the introduction of this legislation is an important milestone in the implementation of a modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. It is the first trade agreement Ukraine has signed since the onset of Russia's illegal war. I know it wants to use this as a model for signing other trade agreements, as it is trying to support its economy while undergoing an illegal, brutal war. It wants to set itself up for a good economy once the war is over. Canada will be with Ukraine and will support it with whatever it takes, for as long as it takes.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis: It's Canada's number one riding.

Mr. Gerald Soroka: I think it is number two.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-57, a piece of legislation that would formalize the modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. This agreement offers the chance for us to look back on the opportunities that Canada had on the world stage and some of the context as to where we are now with Ukrainian trade and, more generally, European trade as whole.

When Russia invaded Ukraine, Europe found itself in a tough spot. Almost overnight, countries had to look for new sources of energy, oil and gas. They needed to act fast. Canada was in a prime position to fill that void, to be the reliable country that Europe needed in that critical moment, but what happened? We dropped the ball. We did not seize the opportunity. Germany, for example, one of the most advanced nations on earth, had to scramble to keep houses warm in the winter when Russian natural gas was no longer an option.

In an era when we talk day and night about green energy and reducing emissions, Germany had no choice but to look toward other sources of energy to power the country. Why were we not prepared? We tied our own hands with endless red tape, long wait times and bureaucratic hurdles. Our energy industry, once a global leader, has been reduced to a shadow of its former self, unable to act when the world needed it the most.

We did not just fail Ukraine or Europe; we failed ourselves. We missed a golden opportunity to make a real, meaningful impact on the world stage, to help Ukraine in a tangible way and to quickly divert European reliance on Russia. This is not just about missed business opportunities. It is about missing the chance to do good when it was needed the most.

There is a narrative we need to correct. The idea that all oil and gas is created equal and that it all has the same environmental footprint is simply not true. Canadian liquid natural gas, known as LNG, is among the cleanest in the world. If Europe were to replace its current oil and gas imports with Canadian products, there is a good chance we would be replacing imports from countries that have lower environmental standards. Our oil and gas sector has invested heavily in technology to minimize environmental impact.

It is not just about economics; it is also about responsible energy production. Using Canadian LNG would offer European countries a cleaner alternative to what they are strongly sourcing. This is an important aspect when looking at trade with other countries. We need to make sure we are creating access to our reliable and clean energy for Ukraine and other European nations.

Government Orders

It is a win-win situation, one that would benefit both our economy and the global environment. When we talk about missing opportunities, we are not just talking about financial gains. We are talking about missing an opportunity to make a real, meaningful impact on global carbon emissions, something the NDP-Liberal government should care deeply about. Instead, Canada missed out on this opportunity. We could not help Ukraine with energy reliance, and we could not help the rest of Europe either.

There is another layer to this as well, an ethical one. If we do not step up, Europe has no choice but to buy oil and gas from dictatorships that do not share our values, places where human rights and environmental concerns take a back seat. We have a moral duty to offer a better alternative, and Canadian LNG is that alternative.

Ethics matter. Where we get our energy is not just a question of economics or even of environmental protection. It is a question of values. When Europe buys energy from autocratic regimes, what message does that send? What sort of behaviour does it endorse? These regimes do not think twice about suppressing their own people or destabilizing their regions.

• (1155)

We saw this immediately after the onset of the war in Ukraine. However, this is not an isolated situation. There are several exporting countries that fall under this umbrella of unethical or autocratic governance.

Canada stands as a beacon of democracy and human rights on the world stage. When people buy Canadian, they are not just buying a product. They are buying into a set of values, values that respect human dignity, prioritize environmental sustainability and advocate for peace. Imagine if Europe could shift its dependency from other oppressive regimes to a country that shares its core principles. It would not only send a powerful message to the world but would have a direct, positive impact on our allies such as Ukraine. By strengthening our energy infrastructure and expanding our LNG capabilities, we can offer that alternative, an alternative that aligns with the values we hold dear in both Canada and democratic societies around the world.

Last year, the leader of the official opposition hit the nail on the head when he spoke about Canada's missed opportunities in the energy sector. While Europe, including Ukraine, was scrambling for alternatives to Russian gas, we sat on the sidelines. Why? It is because we lacked the necessary infrastructure and political will. Our inability to provide Europe with a viable alternative made it turn back to less than ideal options.

The leader of the official opposition was absolutely right. We had a shot at not just benefiting our economy but also elevating our role on the global stage. We could have been the solution that Europe, including Ukraine, was desperately searching for. What stopped us was red tape and a lack of foresight from the Liberal government.

This is not just about energy. It is about seizing strategic opportunities when they present themselves. As we discuss Bill C-57, I urge all of us to reflect on the broader implications of our international trade policies. We are always looking at the possibilities of strengthening our free trade around the world. However, we must

also address missed opportunities that have significant global impacts.

This bill will likely bring up the topic of energy as it develops, a sector where Canada has failed to take the lead at crucial moments. The leader of the official opposition was clear last year about the shortcomings of the Liberal government. We need to move beyond the endless paperwork and bureaucracy that stall progress. I cannot help but stress that Canada had a chance to supply Ukraine and Europe as a whole with our natural gas, which is a cleaner, ethical option compared to what they are getting now. Instead, European countries, including Germany and Ukraine, were forced back to less desirable options because we did not have the infrastructure to support their need.

As we consider Bill C-57, let us not just look at words on the paper. Let us think about what those words mean in the context of Canada's role on the world stage. Are we simply going to be participants or will we be leaders?

As we look to possibly expand our trade with Ukraine, let us also make sure we are positioned to make the most of similar opportunities in the future. It is not just about economics. It is about taking a stand for cleaner and ethical trade that benefits us today and sets us on the right path for future generations.

I look forward to questions.

• (1200)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, toward the end of his comments, the member said that we could be leaders here, and the member is right. What we are seeing is legislation that would clearly demonstrate Canada's leadership in the world.

This would be the first trade agreement for Ukraine at a time when it is going through a war, as we all know. We all want to give that support to Ukraine in whatever way we can. The general consensus seems to be that the House is in favour of the legislation. The legislation, if passed, would not only be economically in the best interests of both Canada and Ukraine, but would send many other positive messages.

We are the first country that would have an agreement with Ukraine during a war. I am wondering if the member will join the leadership being demonstrated, get behind the bill and hopefully agree we need to see it pass before Christmas. Would he not agree with that?

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, I am not really certain what kind of question there was in the member's long statement, but I know he is saying he wants the bill to pass before Christmas.

Government Orders

With any trade agreement we need to make sure that everything is proper for both countries. We do not want to see one country taking advantage of another, and right now Ukraine is going through a war situation. The whole purpose of this free trade agreement is to make sure that it aligns not only with Canadian values but also Ukrainian values, and make sure that it is also economically viable for each country. As well, there are morals and values that should be placed forward in this free trade agreement.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague said that we need the political will and the infrastructure to export oil and gas. Even if the political will had been there, it would have taken 10 years to put the necessary infrastructure in place. In Quebec, building the necessary infrastructure would have meant running pipelines on, beside or under 800 waterways, including the St. Lawrence River, which supplies drinking water to the majority of Quebecers.

Pipelines are relatively safe, but accidents happen. What would we do if an accident deprived a population of its water supply?

[*English*]

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, I think that everyone tries to fearmonger a lot and talk about the issues they are having. What I am talking about is replacing liquid natural gas with either coal or other types of energy that are very reliable.

I love how people talk about going to wind and solar. Every time we seem to save one tonne of carbon in Canada, we go to solar energy that is produced mainly in China, which uses coal electricity. It produces two or three tonnes more than what we take out, and we are saying how green this is. If we are talking about the climate crisis around the world, why are we not limiting the amount of emissions that are coming out of China? Why is our first choice always to go to China in order to get things built? This is why I propose we go with natural gas in countries such as those in Europe to offset all the carbon emissions that China is producing in this world.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about doing business with China, but I will go back to FIPA, the agreement the Conservatives signed under Stephen Harper. It is like people have amnesia around here, because before they signed that agreement, they forgot to tell us that they brought 30 executives, CEOs, including oil and gas executives, to China, and guess who paid for it? It was the Canadian taxpayers.

Does my colleague agree that trade missions and the Government of Canada should fund CEOs going to another country before we have a trade agreement? If he does think that, does he think that labour should be invited to jump on the plane that is being funded by Canadian taxpayers?

• (1205)

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, I think the member misunderstands that we are actually talking about the free trade agreement with Ukraine. I am really not certain why he keeps bringing up China and talking about how it was a free trade agreement that Harper signed. It was never a free trade agreement. He is well aware of that, yet he continues to push that aspect. After 10 years of

being in operation, there have not been any trade issues related to that.

I think the member needs to focus on Ukraine as opposed to China.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, the relationship between Canada and Ukraine is special. Our country is home to more than 1.3 million Canadians of Ukrainian descent. The size of the Ukrainian diaspora is matched by few others in Canada, and it only continues to grow.

As was mentioned by my colleague, the member for Abbotsford, our city is now home to a Ukrainian village. In the spring of 2022, I had the opportunity to hire a Ukrainian student, studying here in Canada, as an intern. The city of Mission is home to a vibrant Ukrainian Orthodox community. We have people-to-people ties that run deep and are only growing.

In fact, before I begin my speech, I would be remiss if I did not mention the multitude of service organizations, such as MCC, which have been at the forefront of welcoming Ukrainian refugees into Canadian society and integrating them into our community and civic organizations. When I think about the Canadian spirit, that is what it is all about. I thank all the organizations that continue to do this very important work today.

As Ukraine has established itself as a modern, democratic nation, Conservatives have been steadfast in our support of expanding economic ties and standing with Ukraine as it distances itself from Putin's Russia. That is why Conservatives were committed to getting a free trade deal with Ukraine done when we were in government.

Since Russian troops invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Conservatives have remained steadfast in our support of the Ukrainian people as they fight against authoritarianism and to protect their sovereignty as a modern, democratic nation. Ukraine will win this war. Canada must ensure that we are prepared to assist the Ukrainian people as they rebuild, and we must ensure that it is the aim of any trade agreement with Ukraine going forward.

On December 2, 1991, the day after Ukraine officially declared its independence from the U.S.S.R., Canada joined Poland as the first two nations to officially recognize a sovereign, independent Ukraine. As was mentioned yesterday by my colleague from Prince Albert, it was Canadian farmers who exported technology to Ukraine, allowing Ukraine to modernize its farming practices and turn itself into a powerhouse of agriculture that feeds many other nations.

Canada can, and should, step up to the plate again, and we could do it by giving Ukraine a hand-up through trade. That begs the question: Does this agreement allow us to do that? Can this agreement help us provide a hand-up to the Ukrainian people? Does it have the necessary tools to provide for a prosperous Ukraine after the war? These questions must be answered as we debate this bill and as it moves through the legislative process.

Government Orders

Let us briefly touch upon the history of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. The original agreement entered into force on August 1, 2017, and eliminated tariffs on 86% of Canada's merchandise exports to Ukraine. It was initially an asymmetrical agreement that was designed to provide more benefit to Ukraine than Canada.

Following the ratification of the original CUFTA, non-coal exports to Ukraine grew 28.5% between 2016 and 2019. In July 2019, the governments of Canada and Ukraine agreed to modernize the CUFTA. Canada-Ukraine bilateral trade reached its highest level ever in 2021. Canada's merchandise exports to Ukraine totalled \$219 million, and merchandise imports from Ukraine amounted to \$228 million.

Canada and Ukraine announced the launch of modernization negotiations in January 2022. However, the Russian invasion in February 2022 has obviously had a very negative effect on our overall bilateral trade and investment, leading to a 31% fall in Canada's exports to Ukraine.

• (1210)

In 2022, Canada's top three exports to Ukraine were motor vehicles and parts, fish and seafood, and pharmaceutical products. Canada's top imports from Ukraine were animal and vegetable fats and oils, iron and steel, and electrical machinery and equipment. Total merchandise trade with Ukraine was \$420 million: \$150 million in exports and \$270 million in imports.

The CUFTA updates the following chapters: rules of origin, government procurement, competition policy, monopolies and state enterprises, digital trade, labour, environment, transparency and anti-corruption. For the first time in a Canadian FTA, the environment chapter includes provisions recognizing the importance of mutually supportive trade- and environment-related policies. The CUFTA has new chapters in investment, cross-border trade in services, temporary entry for business persons, development and administration of measures, financial services, telecommunications, trade and gender, trade and SMEs, trade and indigenous peoples and regulatory practices. For the first time ever, a Canadian FTA will include a chapter on trade and indigenous peoples. The CUFTA now replaces the 1994 FIPA in the investment chapter as well.

When Conservatives took office in 2006, Canada had trade agreements with just five other countries: the United States, Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica and Israel. By the time Prime Minister Harper left office in 2015, Canada had free trade agreements with an astounding 47 additional countries. I would like to thank the hon. member for Abbotsford for all his hard work.

The Harper government began negotiating with Ukraine all the way back in 2010. Ukraine had a weak economy at that time and, of course, it was struggling to deal with Russia. Despite this, as my hon. colleague from Abbotsford mentioned yesterday, Prime Minister Harper was adamant that Canada pursue free trade with Ukraine.

Building a strong economic relationship with Ukraine and giving it a leg up in establishing itself as a modern democratic nation with a strong economy remains a priority for Canada today and one that I am proud of. As we reflect on the broader implications of Canada's trade policy, we have to look to supporting a country like

Ukraine. The Conservatives will continue to stand with Ukraine as it continues the fight against Putin's authoritarian regime.

Canada should be looking for ways to use our economic strength and strategic advantages to support the Ukrainian people, including by exporting Canadian LNG to break European dependence on natural gas from Russia.

I look forward to questions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member has to know I am going to challenge him on saying that Stephen Harper had 40-plus signed trade agreements. History and the facts will very clearly show that the member is wrong. In fact, those were agreements that were signed by this government. The bottom line is it is good. The Conservative Party supports the agreements that we actually were able to bring across the goal line and get signed. I see that as a good thing.

The trade agreement that we are debating today goes far beyond just the economic benefits for both Canada and Ukraine. At a time when we are seeing the war taking place, the illegal invasion of Russia into Ukraine, we can send a very powerful message that goes well past the economic benefits. I wonder if the member can provide his thoughts on the importance of that message, whether that is to Putin, that we are moving forward with a trade agreement with Ukraine, and that is a very positive thing for both countries.

• (1215)

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, to my colleague from Winnipeg's first point, I remember fondly when I was still a political staffer a historic moment in the House of Commons when the Deputy Prime Minister walked across the aisle and the member for Abbotsford walked across the aisle and they embraced each other in love and friendship over Canada's long-standing policy, supported by our two major political parties' support for trade. That was a positive moment—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members that, if they want to have conversations, they are to go outside, and if they have follow-up questions, they are to wait until it is the appropriate time.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon has nine seconds left to respond.

Government Orders

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North, during this debate, has spoken often about all the trade agreements the Liberal Party of Canada has signed. I would be remiss if I did not mention the challenges caused by the government's policies on trade when it took the CPTPP and tried to put those different clauses at the end—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do have to allow for other questions. I know the time goes by really fast.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, sometimes, especially when treaties are involved, partisan politics needs to be left at the door. A treaty is usually the outcome of lengthy negotiations. A government of a certain stripe negotiates the treaty, but a government of another stripe signs it. Sometimes this happens for the best, sometimes, for the worse. One example of the worse is Phoenix, which was negotiated by one government and implemented by another.

That said, Canada has a wide range of exportable resources aside from oil and gas. I would like my colleague to name a few of the resources that we can export that would be of major assistance to Ukraine. When I say resources, I am also referring to knowledge, not only material resources.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, thanks to this agreement with Ukraine, Canada can improve its ability to export not only agricultural products, but also agricultural equipment. This agreement with Ukraine can help us meet this challenge.

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments about the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. He mentioned that MCC is very active in Abbotsford in helping refugees from Ukraine settle in our beautiful community. I would invite him to expand on that.

Where have they settled? How are they integrating into our community?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, right by Bourquin Crescent in Abbotsford, there is a townhouse complex. I believe it is called Lakeside Terrace. MCC has coordinated for many of the refugees to live at Lakeside Terrace.

On Sunday afternoons, when I am taking my kids for a walk at Mill Lake Park, which is adjacent to Lakeside Terrace, I hear many children speaking Ukrainian. A great way to integrate new refugees is to put them close to our pre-eminent park in Abbotsford. It is allowing the kids to integrate more quickly, and it is building those friendships that are so important to making newcomers feel welcome in our wonderful community.

• (1220)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I begin the discussion today on Bill C-57, which is the updated Canada-Ukraine trade agreement.

We have had some conversation already this morning on the subject of the differences between trade agreements and investor pro-

tection agreements. I would like to approach that topic again and talk about the updated Canada-Ukraine trade agreement.

I would also like to put a frame around the fact that a number of Liberal MPs said that this agreement makes an effort to name climate change and to tackle climate change in trade agreements. I wish that were so. We have a long way to go if we are going to confront the ways in which the World Trade Organization and its creation have undermined the climate agreements, and multilateral environmental agreements in general.

With that frame, I will move very quickly through some of the larger issues here because it is unusual for us to have any opportunity in this place to address the trade and investor protection agreements and how they impact climate, and they do.

Let us start by looking at the last effective multilateral environmental agreement that the world has ever seen and that was the most effective. It was negotiated in 1987 in Montreal. It is, of course, the Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer.

I was honoured to participate in those negotiations as senior policy adviser to the federal minister of environment in the Mulroney government back in those days.

If we look at the success of the Montreal Protocol, it is astonishing. We have not only arrested the destruction of the ozone layer through various ozone-depleting substances but also expanded that agreement with the Kigali Amendment so that it has also been an effective treaty that has helped reduce greenhouse gases.

One of the key reasons the Montreal Protocol was so successful was that the agreement to protect the ozone layer had enforcement mechanisms. It had penalties for countries that chose to ignore their commitments to protect the ozone layer. In fact, those treaty sanctions were so effective, they never had to be used because countries abided by their commitments in the Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer.

The effective sanctions were trade sanctions. It is very hard to imagine any kind of international treaty that binds nation states and that has an effective punishment system that would be other than trade agreements. It is the most logical place in which we can inflict some degree of penalty on non-compliance.

The way the Montreal Protocol worked was that if any country ignored its commitments to reduce its use and to stop the production of chlorofluorocarbons and other ozone-depleting substances, then that country would be subject to trade sanctions from any other country that was a party to the Montreal Protocol.

Since every country on earth was a party to the Montreal Protocol, that was why it was a very effective mechanism. Ten years later, in 1997, in Kyoto, Japan, when we negotiated the Kyoto Protocol, tragically, Canada changed its position 180 degrees.

Government Orders

Instead of being a country that championed making those agreements effective by including trade sanctions, our minister of environment headed to Kyoto saying that if trade sanctions were included in the Kyoto Protocol for climate action, Canada would not sign.

What happened? In that 10-year window, there was the creation of the World Trade Organization. The end of the Uruguay Round negotiations resulted in a more established centre for trade work globally.

All of this emanated from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Article XX of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade had, since just after the Second World War, when it was negotiated, set aside and protected from trade sanctions those actions that were considered to be part of natural resource conservation and so on.

Article XX of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade set aside, essentially, environmental protections without using that language. It certainly did not reference climate. We had the window there to protect what we did as nations, not for trade-motivated reasons or protectionist animus but for the legitimate pursuit of environmental protections. We could not be sanctioned by trade deals.

● (1225)

That all changed with the creation of the World Trade Organization. It created a committee called the Committee on Trade and Environment and instead of asking the useful question of whether we have trade agreements that get in the way of environmental protection, it asked a different question: Do we have environmental agreements that get in the way of trade? It spotted the Montreal Protocol and did not like that. It did not like the Basel Convention, which allows trade sanctions, or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, CITES.

We already had a number of agreements that said we were allowed to take measures to protect the environment and in those agreements, we said trade could not get in the way. The trade Hydra raised its many ugly heads and said, no, it did not want us to do that.

There was never any decision, by the way. There was no ruling. It was just a matter of, in every national capital all around the world, the powerful trade ministers at every cabinet table turning to their less powerful environment ministers and saying they could not use those tools anymore. As a result, not a single climate agreement that Canada has ever signed has had any sanctions at all. The only sanction in the Paris Agreement is essentially the annual global stock-taking of language. That is coming up at COP28. The global stock-taking is essentially a sanction based on global shaming and embarrassment as there is no sanction there at all.

We really need to deal with this. Although the window here with the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement is pretty well closed because the negotiations are done, let us take this moment to say this is wrong. Certainly, President Zelenskyy of Ukraine has been one of the most outspoken champions. The war that Putin launched illegally against Ukraine must not get in the way of climate action. President Zelenskyy knows it and champions it. This is a good time to make sure all of the climate agreements are protected from trade limitations.

This is a good time to dust off some of the decisions that have been wrongly assumed to say that we cannot pursue climate agreements without violating trade deals. For instance, there are the tuna-dolphin case and the shrimp-turtle case. Both of those cases, at the WTO appellate level, left out very clear language. It does not say that we can never protect the environment under the WTO but that we cannot do it one-on-one. We cannot say the U.S. makes its own rules and then tells Mexico what to do.

However, it did say, in the context of a multilateral agreement that is negotiated, that trade has to back off and to respect those commitments. That is the case with the Paris Agreement. Every country on earth is bound by it. It is a perfect opportunity for our government to step up and to start saying that countries cannot use trade agreements to limit action to protect climate, as has been done. There are sanctions against India for moving to renewable energy, and so on. We recently had another investor protection agreement decision that hampers climate action.

To go back, trade deals are different from investor protection agreements, but in Bill C-57, in the existing Canada-Ukraine trade deal, there is an investor protection agreement. Those are very corrosive of democracy in that they say a foreign corporation has a right to sue a government if it does not like something that a government does that reduces its expectation of profits. Our government got rid of it in negotiating for the new CUSMA with the U.S., so what was chapter 11 of NAFTA is now gone.

We should be moving quickly to remove investor protection agreements that undermine our democracy, our environmental protections and our labour protections. Getting rid of investor protection agreements, or at least ensuring that they do not give foreign corporations more rights than domestic corporations, would be very welcome, indeed.

● (1230)

Bill C-57 as an improvement in modernization of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement is fine as far as it goes, but it would not do the things that many Liberal MPs have said it would. They have not been misleading the House, as they absolutely believe to be true that the Canada-Ukraine agreement as reflected in Bill C-57 would modernize and include more protections to the environment. It would not really, because unless we get at the basic conflict that trade agreements and the WTO have set themselves up to be superior to multilateral environmental agreements, like the Paris agreement, we are always at risk of trade deals and trade decisions from bodies like the World Trade Organization undermining and sabotaging global climate efforts.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, within Bill C-57, there are references to our environment. There are references to unions and labour standards, if I can put it that way. When I look at previous agreements, I do believe we are moving the ball forward.

The member makes reference to the World Trade Organization and so forth, and at the end of the day, this particular agreement would achieve a significant amount in the right direction with respect to the environment.

My question to the member is this: Can she provide her thoughts about the Green Party's position with respect to this specific deal? Does she anticipate voting in favour of it?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I would agree with the parliamentary secretary. There is language about climate. There is language about labour rights and language about indigenous rights. The difficulty here is that we can put in all the language and pretty words we like, but if the effect of the supremacy of trade deals and the World Trade Organization remains untouched, then anything we put in pretty words is undercut by the effective hard impacts. It is like having a set of really sharp scissors that cut through that paper. We do not really make the progress we think we are making by just saying we care about climate. However, if there is going to be an investor protection agreement that says, "I do not like the decision someone just made" to the government of international agreements that makes sure we start changing technologies and moving toward renewable and so on, the ability of a foreign corporation to sue over that undercuts the pretty words. That would be the point.

I will say to the hon. parliamentary secretary—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to allow for other questions.

The hon. member for Abbotsford.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member spent a lot of time talking about investor protections, and she suggested that foreign investment protection promotion agreements are corrosive to democracy and to how we represent Canada's sovereignty at home and abroad. However, I would ask her a question. There has been an investor protection agreement in place with Ukraine since 1994, for 30 years. Can she point out one or two cases under those provisions that have resulted in Canada's sovereignty's being impaired?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, in the generic category of investor protection agreements that damage Canada's sovereignty, I would point more to what used to be called NAFTA, where we had decisions taken by Parliament that were reversed because of complaints by U.S.-based corporations. Canada has lost out over and over again in those agreements. In the case of the one with FIPA and China, since all those decisions are secret, we do not know how often it has been used to challenge.

I think the hon. member for Abbotsford knows that the answer is that I cannot think of a time the Canada-Ukraine agreement has been used in ways that preferred Ukrainian corporations over the Government of Canada. However, the reality of investor protection agreements is that, in the context with a bigger power, the Canadian

companies have lost out in U.S. challenges under arbitration, as Canadian governments have lost out when U.S. corporations challenge us. It is a consistent thing through investor protection agreements that the larger economic power, whether it is the investor or the nation state, whichever is the larger—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. I do have to allow for one more question.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, along those same lines, I wonder whether the member also wants to talk about not just instances of particular investor protection agreements, but also the cumulative effect of constantly building these types of provisions in, whether they appear as independent agreements or as ISDS provisions in trade agreements, and the kind of chilling effect that has on government decision-making long before anything is brought to a trade tribunal.

• (1235)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, as ever, the member for Elmwood—Transcona is brilliant and absolutely right. There is a chilling effect. When the Government of Canada acts to ban a toxic substance, as it did to ban a gasoline additive called MMT, it is found to be very bad and naughty, and it has its hand slapped. By the way, this was because the Chrétien government decided to settle this before there was a decision on MMT. This had the effect that the people at Environment Canada, who thought this had better be banned because it is a neurotoxin already affecting the health of Canadians, got sanctioned. The money that was paid out to Ethyl Corporation, in that case, came out of the core A-base budget of Environment Canada.

There is a real chilling effect every single time Canada, the sovereign state, takes a measure for the environment or human health and gets told that it was bad to do it because a foreign corporation did not like it. It is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. Unfortunately, there is only so much time. I know it is a very passionate and important issue.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to contribute to the debate about changes to the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement.

I will start by stating again our full support for Ukraine in the war against Russia, which started with an illegal and unjustified invasion on Ukrainian territory in February of last year. Our support is not only in response to some of the atrocities committed by Russian forces in the region but also is a firm stance in favour of international law and a rules-based order that Ukrainians are very literally on the front line of today. It is important that when we choose our allies, we choose allies that are committed to those values and to the application of international law and that we hold them to high standards when it comes to their observance of international law in what they do.

There are many ways we can support allies. Of course, Canada has sent various kinds of aid, whether financial or military, to Ukraine, but being a helpful trading partner in times of strife is also something that is important. However, at the high level, while we are very committed as New Democrats to supporting Ukraine, details do matter, which is why there are established procedures for the House and departmental guidelines for ensuring that parliamentarians have time to do their job of proper scrutiny.

We know that sometimes, under the auspices of good causes, governments have been known to sneak a few things in, which is why the department's own policy on tabling treaties in the House of Commons requires 21 sitting days between the tabling of the text of the treaty and the tabling of enabling legislation. Given that the text of the treaty was tabled on October 17, just a few days ago, normally that would mean that we would not be seeing enabling legislation until November 22. Instead, it has come much more quickly. It has been about a week since the text of the treaty was tabled, and we find ourselves in the second day of debate. This is a contravention of the department's own guidelines on tabling treaties in Parliament, a document that, as New Democrats, we take very seriously because we take the work of this place seriously.

One of the practical consequences is that, even though we are on the second day of debate about changes to an international trade treaty, caucuses have not had the opportunity to meet since the bill was tabled, so it is a very tight turnaround. To ask parliamentarians to be speaking with authority on just a few days' turnaround to such a large document with some important implications and a lot of detail does not manifest in spirit, and in this case not even in the letter, the government's words about taking Parliament seriously as part of the trade process. I think this is an important thing for Canadians to know and understand.

Often in this place, there are debates that touch upon the role of Parliament and the seriousness with which government takes Parliament, and I think this is one of those examples. These are the times not because it is a big controversial thing but precisely because it is not. We know that the government had signed this treaty well before it was tabled in the House of Commons. There were opportunities to bring Parliament into the loop and follow the appropriate policy, but for whatever reason, the government chose to take a pass on that as it too often has in the past.

For those in government who mean it when they say that they take this place seriously, we would exhort them to talk to their colleagues in cabinet to make sure they are following, at the very least, the established procedures for conducting these kinds of debates and discussions in the House of Commons. When they get good at,

Government Orders

at least, following through on their own commitments and their own established policies, then we can talk about how to do it better. There certainly are ways to do it better, ways that involve the legislature much earlier on in the process, and build a tighter mandate for enabling legislation when it hits the floor of the House.

There has been a lot of talk already about some of the language in this agreement. I thank the previous speaker for pointing out that flowery language in preambles and elsewhere, if not accompanied by proper enforcement mechanisms that have teeth that would catch the attention either of our own government or the governments with which we are entering into treaties, does not really amount to much.

● (1240)

I am going to lay out what I think is a small but symbolic test of the government's commitment, not just on its process for trade treaties but also in the context of this particular one. In some of the flowery language, there is talk about an indigenous chapter and indigenous rights. I know the government also had flowery language on that file when it came to the Canada-U.S.-Mexico agreement.

However, I moved an amendment to the enabling legislation that would be a non-derogation clause for indigenous rights. It just said that nothing in that legislation, nothing in the agreement, would impinge on the already established rights of indigenous people in Canada. When I did this, I watched the Liberals vote with Conservatives to not have such a clause, just a reminder that indigenous people do have rights in this country and that nothing the Liberal government does in the context of an international trade treaty could undermine that or take away some of those existing rights.

I was disappointed at the reticence of the government members to endorse that as a basic principle and to put it in the legislation. Now we see flowery language about indigenous rights. Let us be sure that, at a minimum, we are including that non-derogation clause in this enabling legislation. That is an important point.

I want to talk a little about one of the issues that I know certain Conservative colleagues have raised in respect of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement and, since the war began more largely, the supply of Canadian oil and gas to Ukraine. I want to point out that, regardless of whether someone supports more natural gas and oil development in Canada for export to Ukraine, when Conservatives talk about this, they are implying that we should have a greater role for government in deciding who the customers of Canadian oil and gas companies are. I do not find that particularly offensive, in principle. I think that is a conversation we should be having.

Government Orders

We should talk about what a reasonable level of extraction for oil and gas is, in barrels per day or barrels per year, and we should have a conversation about the best way to use those finite resources. They are finite because they are not renewable resources and because, if we are doing it right, we should have some kind of cap on how much extraction could happen in a year. This should be devised with our climate commitments in mind.

Oil and gas becomes a very precious resource indeed, as Canadians already know, with the prices they are being forced to pay. Conservatives would have us believe this is because of carbon tax, but, in fact, if we look at the record profits that oil and gas companies have been experiencing over the last number of years, price gouging is actually a much bigger concern, or should be a bigger concern, for Canadians.

Whatever government is taking in the form of a carbon tax and delivering back to Canadians in the form of a rebate is a hell of a lot less than what oil and gas companies are taking out of their pocket and sending off to international tax havens. That is costing Canadians a heck of a lot more.

It is rich for the Conservatives to get up and pretend that, somehow, they are in support of talking about how a public regulatory framework could guide export relationships and contracts for the oil and gas industry. That is not something they support. They support getting more oil and gas out of the ground faster. They support those companies selling it wherever they can make the best buck. However, for the government to get involved and actually say that we should not be buying oil and gas from these countries, that we should be exporting oil and gas to those countries, invites a lot more public involvement in the oil and gas industry than I think they have the stomach for.

This is a debate that I welcome. The best, most efficient and most prosperous use of finite oil and gas resources is something that, from many perspectives, we should be talking about. However, I do not believe this is a conversation they are serious about having. In contexts such as this, the Conservatives use it to score cheap political points, and Canadians should pay attention and not take them at their word on it.

• (1245)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to address the member's opening comments.

We need to put in perspective that this agreement was actually signed off on just last month, between the Prime Minister and the President of Ukraine.

Now we have the legislation before us, which was done in a relatively quick fashion. We have to put it in the context of the fact that we have an illegal invasion by Russia into Ukraine. It is a time of war, when allied countries around the world are coming to support Ukraine. There is a huge sense of Ukrainian solidarity. Canada is the first country to actually enter into a trade agreement, even in a time of war. It is there not only for the economic benefits of both Canada and Ukraine but also to send the right type of messaging to the people of Ukraine and Russia.

What are the member's thoughts on that?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, it is true that it was signed off on just last month, when President Zelenskyy visited Ottawa, but our understanding is that, in fact, the terms and conditions of that agreement were finalized much sooner. It is important for members of the government not to confuse their own communications imperatives and their desire to have nice press conferences and fancy signing ceremonies with the imperatives of a war; that does a disservice.

It seems to me that, actually, the agreement was in a position to be signed off on sooner, and then the members of the government could have followed their own policy and had the legislation in Parliament sooner. We can honour the imperatives of the war without taking seriously the government's own communication strategy.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the member's speech. However, it did concern me that he was somewhat disparaging toward our oil and gas industry. The member accused some in this House of scoring cheap political points, but when one does that, one had better not be guilty of doing the very same thing; unfortunately, he is the guilty one here.

Natural gas is one of the solutions to the world's greenhouse gas emissions challenges. We can displace dirty coal elsewhere around the world by exporting much cleaner natural gas to those countries. There is some urgency in doing this for Ukraine. Does the member not believe that Canada should put in place every single strategy available to us in order to get our liquefied natural gas to a country like Ukraine, which is in such deep straits and turmoil because of Russia's invasion? Does he not agree that this is an urgent situation where we should be providing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will allow the member to respond.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to repeat myself. I actually said that this is a conversation I am open to.

However, the member just did the very thing that I have warned against. He says that Canada could be sending oil and gas to countries that are currently burning coal, which is fair enough. This is to talk about the government's selecting places in the world where we think we have a strategic best use for our own oil and gas reserves. That is fine; let us have that conversation. However, I do not think that is a conversation Conservatives really want to have, because they actually want a free market in oil and gas. They are not interested in having that kind of government intervention.

It is telling that the member found my comments disparaging; they were disparaging not of the oil and gas sector in this case, but of the Conservative Party. He conflated my critique of the Conservative Party with a critique of the industry. It is telling that the Conservatives feel those two things are so closely tied at the hip.

• (1250)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I just want to refer back to oil and gas. In this place, we continue to see the Conservatives try to focus on a diversion. They talk about the carbon tax. Last year, it went up two cents. The oil and gas profits went up 18¢ on every litre of gas; the Conservatives do not talk about that. We do not need oil and gas lobbyists here on Parliament Hill when we have the Conservative Party right here in the House of Commons.

I would like to ask about the true cost of oil and gas companies' not paying an excess profit tax right now. Big corporations are getting off the hook when it comes to not paying their fair share in countries such as Canada and Ukraine. What impact does that have on the economy, and how does apply it to trade agreements when we look at corporations getting off the hook?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Courtenay—Alberni for highlighting once again the incredible impact that outsized profits in the oil and gas sector have been having on Canadian household budgets. I would also say that, often, one of the ways that their lobbyists in the Conservative Party like to defend that is to say one cannot help a wage earner without helping the wage payer. However, these guys do not need help; they are making money hand over fist. Not only that, but after the last Alberta election, they turned around and laid off 1,500 employees. They did this even though they were making more money than ever before.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my honour and privilege today to speak on behalf of the good people of Peace River—Westlock to Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement implementation act, 2023.

I am a free trader. I believe in free market economies. I believe that Canada is a trading country, and I think that it is incumbent upon us to pursue free trade agreements around the world. Canada is blessed to have a huge amount of natural resources, a large land mass and resilient people, who are able to produce those natural resources. We are able to outproduce our own need by multiples of hundreds, whether that is the food production that happens in this country, our forestry or the oil and gas sector.

I want to just talk a little bit about the Supreme Court decision around Bill C-69. It is connected to this by the fact that, when Bill C-69 was brought into force, it ended the pursuit of 14 LNG projects in this country. Prior to the Liberal government coming into power, these projects were being pursued; after Bill C-69 was brought in, they were abandoned.

At the time when Bill C-69 was put on the Order Paper and we were discussing it here in this place, we said that the bill was unconstitutional and that it would have a marked effect on the pursuit of major projects in this country. We were right on both counts. We saw 14 projects just disappear. The proponents of those projects said that there was no longer the business case to do them. The business case was entirely impacted by government regulation. We also saw, after five years of that bill being in place, that the Supreme Court agreed with us, saying Bill C-69 was unconstitutional.

Government Orders

Why does that matter in the context of the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement? I would remind everybody that Ukraine is now in a war with Russia. Energy is the major export of Russia to the world. What is funding this war is the energy that people are buying, no matter where they are in the world.

We just heard the NDP talk about how we should pick and choose which countries we should do business with when it comes to oil and gas. I would argue that the world market for energy is the world market for energy. If we put good clean Canadian oil and gas on the world market and compete on that market, we could displace other oil and gas. When we just take our products off that market, somebody else will go in and fill that void. That might be Russia; in many cases, it is Russia.

Now we know that the Germans, for example, have come to Canada and specifically asked Canada to increase LNG production. They said that if they do not get more LNG coming to Europe, they will have to revert to coal mining. When our Prime Minister was asked about that, he said there was no business case. He failed to recognize, or perhaps purposefully did not say, that the business case that no longer was able to be made by LNG companies in this country was predicated entirely on the backs of the new bill, Bill C-69. Those projects were in the works until Bill C-69 came into place and then slowly, one by one, the businesses that were pursuing LNG projects said that there was no longer a business case for them. So we have seen that go away.

Another thing that I am excited about in terms of free trade and free trade agreements is just how our Canadian technology can then move around the world. Our leader has often said that we will fight climate change with technology and not taxes. Our ability to then export those technologies around the world comes from when we sign free trade agreements.

I am sitting in the House here next to the member for Abbotsford. I know that, when he was the trade minister, he pursued an aggressive free trade agenda under the previous Harper government. He signed over 40 free trade agreements, which allowed our Canadian technology to then be transferred around the world. That made Canadian companies wealthy. That gave Canadians jobs. It also did amazing things for other countries.

• (1255)

Canada is a leader in agricultural techniques and technology. We often lead the way when it comes to dryland farming and those kinds of things. We are able to export not only our equipment, but also our know-how around the world.

Government Orders

When it comes to energy production with our small nuclear reactors, it is a flagship Canadian technology. When I was in elementary school, our social studies bragged about the CANDU reactor and how we would power the world with this Canadian technology. Free trade agreements have had a great impact on allowing our technology to pursue other markets around the world.

Also, our ability to export our LNG products also allows our clean technology products to be transferred around the world.

We export other things such as coal, which is mined in the most ethically sourced manner. In most cases, it is extremely mechanized. There are very few people involved in the actual mining of coal, mostly equipment operators. The rates of injury compared to the tonnes of coal being produced are the lowest. We have some of the best labour practices in the world when it comes to coal production.

Therefore, when our coal ends up on the world market, although we do not necessarily know what the end result of that is, we can say with confidence that our coal, our oil, our lumber and our power are the most ethically sourced. We know that our labour and environmental standards are second to none around the world. When we are exporting these products, we know we are doing good in the world, because we are displacing products that may not have those same standards being enforced.

When it comes to free trade agreements, I want to talk about competitiveness. When we enter the free market, we do not necessarily know where our products are going to end up and we do not necessarily know with whom we are going to be competing. There are price signals that impact our ability to sell our products.

Over and again, representatives from many companies come to my office to talk to me about competitiveness. They say that they have the best technology and labour laws in the world, as well as great ideas, yet they are unable to attract investment in their products because of regulatory uncertainty, high labour costs, high interest rates, these kinds of things. Therefore, more companies are saying they need to be more competitive on the world stage. The Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement would not only allow our products to go to other places, but would also allow Ukrainian investment to come in our direction, and we are very excited about that.

I know more companies are saying that their competitiveness is being undermined specifically because of things like the carbon tax. I am not sure if Ukraine has a carbon tax in place, but it could be a major challenge. If Ukraine does not and we do, we could hamstring our own companies if we enter into a free trade agreement with Ukraine or other countries around the world. Our companies would be competing with other companies that do not have a carbon tax on their products.

Let us say we want to sell LNG. Maybe another reason why there is no market plan for these LNG projects is because of the carbon tax, which came in around the same time as Bill C-69. Companies may say that if they are being charged a carbon tax on the production work they do in Canada when an LNG project in Australia does not have that tax on it, it is an increased cost that their competitors do not have to bear. We have to be concerned about

this as we enter into these free trade agreements. We need to ensure that we not only have the ability to send our products out, but we are also able to compete with those companies in those countries.

• (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will ask more of a general question regarding trade. The member wants to talk a lot about the oil and gas industry. One option he may want to consider is to recommend to his House leadership team that the Conservatives have an opposition day to talk about that issue.

For me, trade equals good-quality middle-class jobs. No government in recent history has done more to advance the issue of trade than this government has. Over a million jobs were created pre-pandemic when we first came into office. It demonstrates clearly that it has an impact.

On this trade agreement, it is more than just the economic benefits for Canada and Ukraine. It also sends a very strong and powerful message with respect to the war going on in Ukraine. One of the ways we can send a strong message is to get behind this legislation and see if we can get it passed before Christmas.

What does he have to say about that?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, when I listen to the hon. member, he would have us think that Canadians have never had it so good. The reality is that after eight years of the Prime Minister, Canadians just cannot afford the cost. The carbon tax is killing the middle class. Housing prices are forcing middle-class Canadians out of their homes and into poverty. Everything in our country is broke. Crime, chaos and drugs are flooding our streets.

We need to return to normal. We need a government standing ready to bring it home for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am flabbergasted and discouraged. Earlier, I went to eat, but I had lost my appetite. From the outset, I have been telling myself that, since we are talking about a bill that is consensual, everyone will agree, that we will say that it is good to have free trade agreements, to show solidarity with Ukraine and to strengthen our mutual economies.

Government Orders

However, for some time now, the Conservatives have been talking only about oil, and I am going crazy. I think they could have told us about western beef, British Columbia's tall trees, western grains or Pacific salmon, but all they are talking about is oil and gas. It is as if this free trade agreement with Ukraine is all about selling oil and gas to Ukraine. Anyone who would like to see infrastructure built to transport it there had better be up good and early, and they will find the Bloc Québécois in their way.

I would like my Conservative colleague or one of his colleagues who spoke before him to tell me whether the Conservatives are capable of talking about anything other than oil or the carbon tax. Are there any other topics they are able to address here?

• (1305)

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, perhaps the member lives under a rock. There is a war going on in Ukraine right now. The opponent to Ukraine is Russia. The single largest competitor that Russia has is in the oil industry. We can displace dictator oil, Putin's oil. Russia's oil sales are funding the war in Ukraine. If we do not sell Canadian oil or LNG, we continue to fund that war.

Our other resources are forestry and farming. They are big parts of my riding and I am happy to support those as well.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will follow up on the question of my friend from the Bloc. We are talking about trade. What do the Conservatives want to talk about? The carbon tax.

The carbon tax, according to the Governor of the Bank of Canada, is contributing 0.15% of inflation, which was affirmed as well by the PBO last Thursday at the OGGO committee, which I am on. The Conservatives do not want to talk about corporate profits. The carbon tax was a two-cent increase last year. The 18¢ increase on every litre of gas was profits for oil and gas companies. Suncor makes massive record profits. What did it do? It laid off 1,500 employees.

When they go back to headquarters at Suncor, the Conservative headquarter, do they ever talk about something to protect jobs as part of the agreement they have with oil and gas?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for reminding me that the carbon tax is driving inflation. I did not even mention that in my speech. What I did mention is that the carbon tax is driving our competitiveness issues. Many of our competitor countries do not need to pay the carbon tax, so our companies are starting from behind.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we continue, I want to remind members to pay more attention to the signal I am give them. We are eating into the time of other speakers, so someone may end up not being able to speak.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad I am joining the debate. I was worried that perhaps I would be one of those unfortunate members of Parliament to be cut-off before being able to speak on behalf on my constituents.

I am glad to join the debate on Bill C-57, the modernization of our free trade agreement with Ukraine. Off the top, I should first begin by mentioning that I absolutely continue, as many members on this side of the House do, to support Ukraine in its very difficult battle against the Russian Federation.

Many members know this, but I was born in Poland. My father was a hard anti-communist, and remains a hard anti-communist. He will not watch this, because he does not watch CPAC, ever. However, I come from a long line of family members who have always feared Moscow's intentions, the Kremlin's intentions in eastern Europe.

For 60-plus years, many eastern European countries were occupied by the Soviet Union, and I specifically use that term. None of those countries were able to pick their governments. Their people were not allowed to pick who was responsible for making policy decisions or government decisions in those countries. I continue to support the people of Ukraine and the government of Ukraine. This is, in fact, a battle of survival.

Modernizing agreements will give them some hope. It hopefully will lead to better people-to-people connections between Ukrainians and Canadians. We have those. I count six waves of migration of Ukrainians coming to Canada. Now, under the CUAET visa, I think over 200,000 Ukrainians have fled the war and found refuge in Canada. Canada is a land of refuge. Not too far away from this building, a monument is being built that represents Canada as a place where people from all around the world have found refuge and a home. I know many of those CUAET visa holders some day will become permanent residents of Canada and I hope will become citizens of Canada.

When the original agreement was passed back in August of 2017, the goal then was the elimination of about 86% of tariffs off Canada's merchandise exports to Ukraine. It has been a good deal. We all understood that at the time the agreement was signed and ratified, it would be to the benefit of Ukraine in the short term. It was Canada's way of providing some material support to a country that is still trying to build out of that original Soviet occupation.

Ukraine did have it much worse than a lot of other eastern European country, which, nominally at least, had some level of autonomy. There were local communists in charge, who were obviously supported by the Kremlin, but Ukrainians did suffer much more deeply for longer under Soviet tutelage. Its heavy industry base is mostly based in the eastern part of Ukraine, but much of its industry, such as agriculture, was collectivized and privatized after the fall of communism in eastern Europe.

Government Orders

Ukraine is still building out of it. It is a long process and is not something that can be done over a couple of decades. It sometimes takes half a century to build out of a hole someone else has made. Therefore, supporting Ukraine is important. Agreements like this would tend to do that as well.

In 2022, Canada's total merchandise trade with Ukraine was about \$420 million, with \$150 million in exports and \$270 million in imports. When the ratification of the original CUFTA happened, non-coal exports to Ukraine grew 28.5% between 2016 and 2019.

I have been going through the details of the agreement, and I want to highlight a couple of points. I have not finished reading the whole agreement. I want to ensure I read all the different parts. This was signed in September. Now, in October, we are being asked to ratify it. This is a very detailed document, so it takes quite a bit of time for parliamentarians to go through it.

As I go through it, I note the sections that drew my attention and interest, such as sections on public consultations and transparency measures, which are a good thing. They are found under article 26.7. I was reading through exactly what the expectations were of both Canada and Ukraine when we are parties to this deal.

I want to raise a section on agriculture, "National Treatment and Market Access, which is in chapter 2, section D, article 2.13, subparagraph 4 (a) to (d). There are a lot of sections to the agreement. There is a subcommittee on agriculture that was created in 2017, and this agreement would continue that deal. We of course know a lot of exports from Ukraine will be agricultural goods.

• (1310)

Ukraine is often called one of the breadbaskets of the world. Much of its wheat exports, barley exports and other agricultural products are shipped through the Bosphorus Strait, across the Republic of Turkey, to places in northern African, the Middle East and all around the world. It is why the export of grain, wheat, barley and other products has been one of the focal points of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. It is trying to blockade those very important agricultural shipments to try to starve Ukraine of funds and starve it of the ability to continue building support internationally. Many countries rely on Ukraine's agricultural exports, and if we can provide some measure of support in giving them a different market or the opportunity to use our market as a shuttling point to another market, we should provide that. I note that the subcommittee on agriculture will be committed to that work. I would like to see a way for our farmers and agricultural producers, but also our upgraders, processors and wholesalers, to have an opportunity to purchase Ukrainian agricultural products and then resell them on the world market.

I think we Canadians have shown ourselves to be entrepreneurial. Entrepreneurship is a highly valued set of principles. We always try to get our kids to start a business. I encourage my kids to do just that if they want to do that when they graduate, so I think it is something we hold very dear as Canadians. If there is an opportunity to help Ukrainian businesses and Ukrainian people, we should take it. I note this because it is in there and is important for people, especially in western Canada and the Prairies.

There is an entire section of the agreement that speaks specifically about country-of-origin labelling. This has been a sore spot for us with our American cousins to the south and the different agreements we negotiate with them, because they keep trying to change the terms of the agreements, or at least in how they interpret them. I was looking to find in this agreement, but have not found it yet, specific sections on how goods and services from Luhansk, Donetsk, Crimea, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson would be dealt with.

These are all the provinces of Ukraine occupied by the Russian Federation. I had expected this to be dealt with in the agreement. I am still looking for the specific sections on how goods and services would be dealt with and how they would be treated, because they are not from the territory of the Russian Federation. The four referendums held in the oblasts were illegal, unjustified and not recognized by the international community, because they were essentially just rammed through. People do not get a free vote when it is done at the pointy end of a firearm or with armoured vehicles from the Russian Federation overseeing how they vote.

I would like to know how the products and goods and services these territories produce would be dealt with. Would we have a certain measure and way to distinguish them from Russian goods? When, not if, Ukraine is able to restore its control over those provinces, I am hoping we will be able to deal with those goods and services and set them aside, perhaps giving them special treatment within our tariff system and within our country-of-origin labelling system.

There is a Yiddish proverb that I often like to use. This is not a proverb that I think is recognized, but it should be if it is not because I think it applies to the House: The late *minyán* has the least number of people arriving on time. At any *shul*, basically nothing starts on time, but we need 10 persons present at a synagogue to begin service.

I hope for that during the debate on a free trade deal. I am a free trader, I believe in free trade and our party believes in free trade, but not every agreement is exactly the same. I have noted some of the things I am looking for. I have noted that I have not been provided a briefing on the contents of the agreement itself, so all I really have to go on is what is in Bill C-57, which makes a lot of references to the agreement and the previous agreement as well.

I hope more members will be allowed to participate, to be part of that *minyán* and be here to rise on behalf of their constituents to raise specific points that are of concern to them. I come from Calgary. It is a big oil and gas town but also a big agricultural town. We have a lot of major agricultural shippers, manufacturers, producers and processors that are very much interested in the eastern European market and especially the fate of Ukraine and making sure we support it.

Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are home to a huge Ukrainian diaspora, and many of them are watching this agreement and watching what the future of Ukraine will be like. An agreement like this gives them hope, but we need to look at more of the details before we pass judgment on it.

Government Orders

• (1315)

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague, as I try to do most of the time when he is speaking on the floor. I am quite surprised. Given what is going on in Ukraine and the desire of everyone to get this agreement through properly, faster and effectively, I am surprised. Maybe I misunderstood my hon. colleague, but I was hoping that we were going to complete these discussions on Bill C-57 fairly quickly and move it to committee, where we look forward to having a very detailed conversation with other members. Did I misunderstand the comments from the member?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: No, Madam Speaker, the member did not misunderstand. The committee is the right place for going into the details of the agreement. It is an opportunity for stakeholder groups to come before the committee, those that have gone into the weeds of it to see what it would mean for the customs code and what the implications are of expanding certain sections.

What I was referencing is that I would like to hear from more members on the floor of the House as to what their views are. I am sure our House leaders are talking right now, and we will see what they decide to do about when we see this bill at committee and how much time would be devoted to reviewing the specific contents of it. As I mentioned, I am looking at the sections on how goods and services will be treated in the territories occupied by the Russian Federation, which are rightfully Ukrainian territories.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I too am concerned about many of the panels, committees, subcommittees, working groups, expert groups and other bodies, because here in Canada we have a bureaucracy of highly technical issues that sometimes can be an irritant for another country, such as Ukraine. We also know that the government has been terrible in its record on the Canada-Europe free trade agreement, the CETA, for not getting working groups together. We find all sorts of regulatory trade barriers that stop the legitimate trade between Canada and the European Union.

Is the member concerned that, given the record of the government, there could be similar issues if the government continues on its current path on trade?

• (1320)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely right. I am concerned because with the Canada-Europe free trade deal that was signed, I do not think Canadian companies have been able to take full advantage of what is in the agreement.

When it comes to agricultural goods, we know that is a sore point with the United Kingdom. I remember that when I was in the United Kingdom travelling for a study by the parliamentary association, it was very difficult to find any Canadian meat products. Markets were very good at selling and showing off British products and products made in Wales or Scotland, but getting our agricultural goods into European continental and non-continental markets should be of great focus. The department should be facilitating this and encouraging our companies to provide goods and services there.

Part of that is about making sure that when we negotiate these agreements, all of the stakeholders in Canada are part of them. In

this particular situation, as I mentioned, we are still going through the agreement and trying to find how these different groups work.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, to pick up on my colleague's question, given the war taking place in Europe today, I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on the messaging that could be sent by the House of Commons in having the bill pass before Christmas, having gone through the system. Would he see that as a positive thing, not only economically but with all the other messaging that could be tied to it?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, that is a worthy goal to have on the government benches, obviously. The House leaders, I am sure, are negotiating some type of agreement. If they are amenable to it, I am sure the Conservative House leader will obviously listen, but at the end of the day, I think we can both agree that this chamber, this House, has been clear in our support for Ukraine, the people of Ukraine and the Government of Ukraine as it continues to fight its defensive war against the Russian Federation.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to speak to something that I think is very important to all of us here in the chamber, the legislation for the modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. It is my honour to rise in the House today in support of legislation to implement, as quickly as possible, the modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, or CUFTA, as it is often referred to.

Recently, the Canada-Ukraine bilateral relationship has been marked by Canada's steadfast support for Ukrainian independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of protracted Russian aggression. Canada has stood beside our Ukrainian allies to support them as they fight for their independence, democracy and freedom. I know they are waiting for this free trade agreement to be done, with much expectation that Canada will finalize it as soon as possible so that we can open the door for further trade with Ukraine to help it in the terrible war it is dealing with. Since the beginning of this illegal full-scale invasion by Russia in February 2022, Canada has committed close to \$9 billion in multi-faceted support for Ukrainians, because we know how desperately they need it, and they are eager to see this free trade agreement as well.

Today, we have yet another opportunity to demonstrate our continued support for Ukraine through other means. Bill C-57 would not only offer benefits in the near term but would extend well beyond the strengthening of the foundation on which Canadian and Ukrainian businesses can work together in the economic reconstruction of Ukraine, underpinning the long-term economic relationship between our two countries.

Government Orders

This is not a new deal. This is an expansion of the free trade agreement. We have been dealing with free trade with Ukraine for a very long time, so this is not new, something that has just popped up that we have not seen. We knew it was coming, and it has been worked on explicitly to make sure it is the very best that it can be.

I am referring to the modernized CUFTA, of course. The modernized CUFTA is a comprehensive high-standard agreement that, once implemented, will not only support Canadian and Ukrainian businesses but will also deepen commercial linkages, enhance cooperation, provide for increased transparency in regulatory matters, support inclusive trade and help reduce costs for businesses. That is very much what this free trade agreement is about, and it is very important that we understand it all.

One of the key outcomes of the original 2017 agreement was the market access that it gained for Canadian and Ukrainian produced and manufactured goods. If ever a Ukrainian needed help with a free trade agreement, it certainly is today.

As of January 2024, all tariff elimination schedules will be complete and over 99% of Canada's exports to Ukraine will be eligible to enter Ukraine duty-free. That is a very important aspect of this free trade agreement. This will make Canadian goods more competitive in the Ukrainian market, and vice versa, which we very much want. It will be especially valuable as we move toward reconstruction, economic renewal and longer-term prosperity for Ukraine.

Thanks to the CUFTA, Ukrainians will be able to enjoy more high-quality Canadian goods, such as frozen meats and fish, fruits and vegetables, other consumer goods, and essential services. Meanwhile, Canadians will be able to enjoy the Ukrainian goods and services that we all enjoy, to help with the cravings and needs of the many Ukrainians living in Canada.

There are a multitude of brands from Ukraine that have proved themselves to be good additions to the Canadian market over the last many years. The CUFTA helps us broaden our horizons and support the Ukrainian economy, especially in these challenging times. I know they are very excited and looking forward to this bill's passing.

• (1325)

Throughout negotiations, both sides demonstrated an eagerness to reach an ambitious and high-standard agreement with the aim of facilitating increased trade between our two nations, not just to meet the more immediate needs of reconstruction, which are great opportunities for Canadian companies to go to Ukraine and help in the rebuilding process, but long into the future. This eagerness is reflected in how comprehensive the modernized CUFTA is with respect not only to trade in goods but also to investment services and inclusive trade. The CUFTA helps make the reconstruction process transparent and sustainable. Also, this agreement is the first FTA addressing anti-corruption provisions.

Canada has always been there for Ukraine since its independence in 1991, and this new agreement is yet another opportunity for Canada to make itself visible in Ukraine and to lead by example. As a result, the modernized CUFTA would not only maintain the preferential market access gained in the original FTA for merchandise exports and imports, but would also support new opportunities

for expanded commercial ties between Canada and Ukraine in the context of reconstruction efforts and well beyond. These benefits have led to strong support for this agreement by key stakeholders, including the Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce, representatives of which were recently on the Hill and expressed their desire to see this FTA continue.

Sectors of strategic importance to Ukraine's recovery include infrastructure, renewable energy, financial services and oil and gas, which are all areas where Canada has strengths. Furthermore, Canadian companies have indicated an interest in pursuing opportunities in Ukraine in the areas of defence and security, energy, ICT and agriculture, and are positioned to engage when and where the circumstances permit.

According to the latest estimate by the Ukrainian side, since February 2022, more than 37% of the total damage in Ukraine falls on residential buildings, another 24% on infrastructure and 8% on assets of enterprises and industry. According to Ukrainian and international analysts, Ukraine will turn into the largest construction site in the world after this war ends. The modernized CUFTA would support Canadian businesses as they position themselves to respond to these interests, taking into account the scope of the market that Ukraine has. It is time to use that window of opportunities.

Prior to the negotiations, the government conducted public consultations with Canadian stakeholders on what they would like to see in a modernized FTA with Ukraine. The initiative received strong support from stakeholders, indicating that modernization of the CUFTA would enhance the competitiveness of Canadian firms in the Ukrainian market, among other benefits.

Stakeholders specifically identified pursuing stronger trade rules, increased transparency obligations, expansion of the agreement to cover services and investment, and inclusive trade as priorities. I am pleased to confirm that the modernized agreement before us reflects these aims and more.

If I may, I will now say a few words about the modernized agreement, highlighting some of the benefits and opportunities it presents for Canadians and Ukrainians with an overview of the new chapters that have been added.

First, the agreement includes a dedicated new chapter on cross-border trade in services. This includes provisions on the recognition of professional qualifications that will facilitate trade in professional services, which is strategically important for both parties in a knowledge-based and digital economy.

Government Orders

Ukraine is a land of world-class talents who are ready to contribute their knowledge and expertise to the common good. The new CUFTA would allow these professionals to focus on their work and what they can do best, not on the bureaucratic ping-pong that can drain the needed energy and enthusiasm from all parties involved.

The agreement also includes a new chapter on investment that would replace the Canada-Ukraine Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement. Featuring updated provisions on investment protection, the new chapter also ensures that investment obligations operate as required.

• (1330)

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am glad to see that some government members are defending Bill C-57. When one has negotiated something, it is important to stand behind it.

This brings me to my question. In Quebec yesterday, the Parti Québécois unveiled its year one budget, projecting that Quebec has the financial capacity to be an independent country. I wonder how my colleague, as a member of the governing party, would feel about negotiating a free trade agreement with Quebec once it becomes independent, so that our two nations can engage in mutually beneficial economic exchanges.

[English]

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, I believe we will continue to negotiate on behalf of Canada. My Canada includes Quebec, now and forever.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am a supporter of all trade agreements and of increasing Canada's trade.

However, one of the things that has happened with previous trade agreements is that we have not harmonized the specifications that Canada has. For example, with CETA, they can ship to us, but a lot of times we cannot ship to them. The same thing happened with the CPTPP.

Could the member comment on how we are going to make sure that the same thing does not happen with this particular agreement?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, we all want these agreements to be successful. We want to make sure that everything has been put in place.

There have been extensive discussions and negotiations for a long time on this agreement, as with other agreements. I am quite confident, given the importance of this agreement, that the right steps will be in the legislation and that it will move forward as quickly as it possibly can.

• (1335)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, any time we talk about Ukraine, I want to send my thoughts and love to the people of Ukraine.

I want to thank the Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society in my riding that is doing a lot of advocacy for Ukrainians who are here in Canada and helping those who are in war-torn Ukraine now.

All treaties limit a nation's freedom to legislate. This free trade agreement includes provisions to ensure Canadians can still pass laws to protect the environment, promote gender equality and protect labour and indigenous rights.

Could my colleague speak about how important these provisions are in all free trade agreements? We saw the Conservatives sign free trade agreements that did not allow those provisions and actually overrode indigenous rights and constitutionally protected rights here in Canada.

Could my colleague speak about how important those provisions are to ensure that Canadians are protected?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, every agreement that goes forward must have all of those requirements. I would like to see that entrenched as much as possible in every piece of legislation that we do. Any work that we do with other countries around the world should be concerned with what the human rights impacts are and how we protect the environment, as well as the indigenous communities.

We have an opportunity to put that in legislation, and I think it should be in all the documentation that we do.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I asked this question of a member who spoke earlier. I would like to ask this member specifically, given the Liberal government's track record on trade when it comes to setting up panels and committees for technical working groups. As we have seen on CETA, the Canada-European free trade agreement, many of those industry panels have not even met. That means Canadians have not been able to trade with reciprocity, the way we would with other countries.

Does the member agree that the Liberal government has a poor track record? Given the fact that we are dealing with a smaller country, can the member tell us whether or not that will actually take place?

I am concerned, because I want to see Ukraine have access to Canadian markets and be able to make the most of our trade relations.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, every time a free trade agreement is set up, there are always challenges to move things along.

Government Orders

Certainly with the war in Ukraine and the terrible things that have been going on there, it is crucially important that we get this right. A number of discussions have been ongoing in order to make sure that Bill C-57 is accurate. It will go to committee, where there will be further discussions.

I look forward to it being very successful for Canadians, as well as for Ukrainians.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to once again rise in this place to speak to the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement.

When we talk about the importance of the Canada-Ukraine relationship, we have to talk about the 1.3 million Canadians of Ukrainian origin who live here in Canada. Many of them were integral to the development of western Canada. They are an incredible and important part of the social fabric of Canada, and their contributions to Canada cannot go unnoticed. As a result of that, we have very strong people-to-people ties between Canada and Ukraine. Of course, we are strong supporters of Ukraine during the illegal invasion being prosecuted by Russia.

In addition, with respect to this agreement in particular, this modernization of the agreement would build on the 2017 agreement which updated or added 11 new chapters to the free trade agreement. The updated chapters include rules of origin and procedures, government procurement, competition policy, monopoly and state enterprises, electronic commerce, digital trade, labour, the environment, transparency, anti-corruption and responsible business conduct.

There is also a significant number of new chapters. There are 11 new chapters, to be frank. These are on investment; cross-border trade in services; temporary entry for business people; development and administration of measures; financial services; services and investment, non-conforming measures; telecommunications; trade and gender; trade and small and medium-sized enterprises; trade and indigenous peoples; and good regulatory practices. This is a substantial change from the original agreement which was signed in 2017.

In 2021 alone, Canada processed some \$220 million in exports and \$227 million in imports with Ukraine. Given Ukraine's GDP has dropped some 30% since Russia's invasion, trade with Canada is welcomed now more than ever. For some context, some of the larger exports from Canada to Ukraine include vehicles and parts, fish, and pharmaceuticals. When it comes to imports to Canada, it is largely cereals, iron and steel to name a few.

I want to spend the majority of my speech talking about the people and largely the people in Edmonton.

When the Ukrainian president was here in Ottawa, he reminded Canada and the world about Edmonton's close connection to his country. Soon after taking the podium right up there, he brought up my city in talking about our links to the destiny of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Canadian community. He mentioned a statue that has stood outside Edmonton City Hall since 1983. It was a proud moment for many Edmontonians, especially with his call for another monument there on victory day when Ukraine conquers and wins this Russian war against Ukraine. This was stated no more clearly

than by the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council, when she stated, "This is amazing. He's paying attention. He knows who we are."

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council has done incredible work during this war. It is a non-profit organization that provides leadership, advocacy, coordination and connections. It officially represents the needs of Ukrainian Canadians in Alberta before the people and the Government of Alberta. It aims to promote knowledge, respect for Ukraine's history and sovereignty, and acknowledgement of the great contributions of Ukrainians within Canada. Since the war began, over 12,000 Ukrainians have already come to Edmonton.

Some of the work that Ukrainian Canadian Congress Alberta Provincial Council is doing is phenomenal, to say the least. It is providing \$200,000 to support Ukrainian organizations with programming and membership for newcomers. It spent \$32,000 in grocery gift cards for newcomers. It put up a website with resources and tools for newcomers. Together with the Firefighter Aid Ukraine organization, it filled the first plane to Ukraine with medical and emergency supplies.

Other of its activities include assisting with crisis needs, including emergency housing, financing the purchase of medical equipment, organizing a furniture donation warehouse, distributing furniture to thousands of newcomers, organizing free English language classes, organizing job fairs, hosting information and welcome events for newcomers, weekly rallies protesting against Russian aggression, fundraisers to support settlement, government advocacy, distributing SIM cards, distributing pallets of clothing throughout Alberta, providing laptops and computers to Ukrainians in need, coordinating mental health support and resources and, of course, welcoming Ukrainian nationals at the airport. As someone who flies a lot, being able to see those Ukrainians come to the Edmonton airport and connect with someone as they get off the plane is nothing short of heartwarming.

● (1340)

I want to talk about a few of the people and initiatives, particularly three Edmonton firefighters. Three Edmonton firefighters went to Ukraine to teach first responders a modified version of the NATO standard tactical combat casualty care course. They were all volunteer firefighters through the Firefighter Aid Ukraine organization. They taught 70 firefighters and police officers, who then trained other firefighters and police officers across Ukraine.

The medical course they taught focused on life-saving interventions for injuries associated with military attacks on civilian populations. They focused on critical and acute injuries, and even mental health. The president of the association stated:

Individuals who have not performed in an emergency responder role previously, have now taken on that role in Ukraine. As such, they do not have this kind of training and it is imperative for them to have it, given the situations they are dealing with in their roles.

Government Orders

In addition to the training, the firefighter group also brought over supplies of PPE, and specialty equipment for treating patients and saving lives. This is not new to this organization. In May 2017, it filled a shipping container with medical supplies, tools and emergency response equipment, which was then sent to Ukraine. Just last September, a group of seven firefighters and one dispatcher also went overseas to Ukraine.

Another example is of Edmonton artists who are donating their works to Ukrainian aid. A number of local artists donated to a fund created by the owners of the West End Gallery in Edmonton. The campaign raised almost \$29,000. It did not have an auction. This was a call to answer by its customers. It is adamant that the full amount of the sales went directly to those who needed it the most.

The group contacted the former Alberta premier, a dear friend of mine, Ed Stelmach, whose grandparents came to the province as Ukrainian immigrants. Stelmach and his wife, Marie Stelmach, founded and have administered The Ed Stelmach Community Foundation since 2007. The foundation fosters a culture of charity and equality for all Albertans, and is overseen by a volunteer board.

The support did not stop there. Suddenly, we saw tens of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing their war-torn country, and an Edmonton mother and daughter decided to team up to help the new arrivals, who had arrived with very few belongings. The two projects they co-founded were a free store and a food kitchen. The duo launched the Free Store for Ukrainian Newcomers at a temporary site and then moved downtown to an Edmonton building provided rent-free by MacEwan University. The facility provides clothing, diapers, pillows, toys and household essentials at no charge to newcomers displaced by war.

The second project, the Ukraine Kitchen by Free Store, opened its doors in northeast Edmonton after operating temporarily out of the Cook County Saloon. Pre-ordered Ukrainian food is sold, providing wages for a team of about 14 kitchen workers, who proudly dole out plates of cabbage rolls, perogies, borscht and desserts.

Lastly, there is a furniture store. For nearly 10 months, Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Alberta Provincial Council, has been operating a furniture depot in a northwest Edmonton warehouse to supply newcomers with essentials to set up their homes. Approximately 35 families utilize the free warehouse weekly, and most need mattresses and other supplies. The whole operation is housed in the Boiler-makers Lodge 146 building near the High Park industrial area.

This is not new to Edmonton. The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village Society was founded in 1971, and I am sure my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan will not mind me mentioning it. It has a number of exhibit galleries that provide a closer understanding of Ukrainian settlement in east central Alberta, which has been critical to the education of so many Albertans and Canadians.

These are just some of the reasons Canadians are watching this debate so closely. The Conservative Party is one hundred per cent behind supporting Ukraine, trade and free trade. Free trade between free nations is something we support one hundred per cent. As a member of the international trade committee, I look forward to go-

ing through this agreement and hearing debate on this agreement in the House.

• (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have heard a great number of members talk about how important the trade agreement is from the perspective of what is taking place today in Europe, which is the war and the illegal occupation of Russia in Ukraine. We have seen a united front on that. On September 22, the President of Ukraine was here, and President Zelenskyy signed this trade agreement. Today we are debating the trade agreement.

My question to the member is something I posed to other members of his caucus. Given the very nature of this particular trade agreement, which has many economic benefits for both Canada and Ukraine, would he provide his thoughts on the powerful message this would send if it were to pass before Christmas? It would be the first trade agreement for Ukraine since the war has begun.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, the trade agreement that he speaks of is 700 pages long. It likely will come before the international trade committee soon. I look forward to going through it line by line.

If the member wants to talk about the future agenda of the House, he is in a position, as the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, to have those conversations. I encourage him to have those conversations with our House leader and other House leaders as we go on.

I do want to refer to when the president, was here, as the member mentioned. He chose one city alone to speak about here in Canada, and that city was my city of Edmonton. That is why I would like to highlight a lot of the work Edmontonians have done to support Ukrainian newcomers.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, contrary to what has been said over and over again in the House since this morning, we are not debating the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement or its content. We are debating Bill C-57, which simply implements that agreement.

Basically, it is a 1,000-page, 30-chapter agreement, which parliamentarians have not voted, and will not be voting, on. We will be voting on whether to implement it.

This opens the door to another problem. Is there any chance that future agreements could also be reviewed by a parliamentary committee? What does my colleague think about that?

Government Orders

• (1350)

[English]

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, my good friend from the Bloc Québécois highlighted a really important point about what we are going through right now. Again, the bill is 700 pages, in addition to what happened in 2017 when the initial agreement was signed. Depending on what happens here in the House, this will hopefully come before the international trade committee, which I sit on. I am looking forward to going through it line by line because, ultimately, this is important for Canadians and for the country of Ukraine.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are talking about trade agreements today. We have been talking about other trade agreements outside of this one as well. Right now, Canada is negotiating the UK-Canada free trade agreement and my colleague and I have been working together because we know that recipients of British pensions who live here in Canada have had their cost of living indexed and frozen, unlike Canadians who are living in the U.K., who are getting the cost of living increase.

Does my colleague agree that, when these negotiations are taking place, when it comes to trade, that these irritants are impacting Canadians, especially vulnerable seniors? We know that a third of single women in Canada are living in poverty. Does he agree that these need to be a part of the conversation when we are discussing trade with countries like the U.K.?

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni could not have brought up an issue closer to my heart as the unfortunate issue facing British pensioners. As the UK-Canada free trade agreement goes forward further, it is certainly something that we have been pushing for to make sure that the U.K. government understands the severe impact it is having on U.K. pensioners living right here in Canada.

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to be in the House when the minister introduced this legislation. I was very proud to sit beside her as she introduced it then, and I am very proud to stand here today to speak in support of this important legislation.

This is, to me, good legislation for Canada and good legislation for Ukraine. It is great for our economy. It is not only good for Canadian workers, Canadian investors and business people, but also for Ukrainian workers and Ukrainian business people. Tremendous economic benefits will come to citizens of both Canada and Ukraine if we pass this legislation.

This is also an important step in supporting Ukraine's victory and our collective victory. I heard a number of members here today speak to how supportive they are of Ukraine and how we want Ukraine to win. One of the ways we can do that is to make sure this legislation passes, and passes as quickly as possible.

I want to recall what it was like when President Zelenskyy was in the House just a few weeks ago. He gave a historic speech to our Parliament and then visited the Fort York Armoury in Toronto, where he met with Canadians. To my mind, one of the things that stood out to me in his speech was that he not only came to thank Canada for our global leadership and support of the Ukrainian peo-

ple as they fight for their freedom, but he also came to ask us to continue to support the Ukrainian people in that fight because it is the right thing to do and Ukrainians are fighting for us as well. It is in our collective interest that Ukraine wins this war.

I think back to the first time President Zelenskyy came to Canada, which was in 2019. I had the pleasure of being at a lunch where he gave an address. A number of my colleagues here in the House were also there. President Zelenskyy was not wearing his military attire, as we are accustomed to seeing him in. He was wearing a suit, and his speech was not about war, but about economy and trade. Most of his speech was dedicated to talking about how he was modernizing Ukraine's economy and making reforms, and he encouraged Canadians to invest and do business with Ukraine for our mutual benefit.

At that time, Canada had a free trade agreement in place with Ukraine, the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, but it covered only merchandise trade, the trade of goods. As a result of that free trade agreement, which came into force in 2017, the trade between our two countries grew, but the original free trade agreement did not cover services. Around the time of his visit in 2019, Prime Minister Trudeau and President Zelenskyy announced that they were going to begin again—

• (1355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is not allowed to mention the Prime Minister by his name. He can use his title, but he knows full well that he is not to mention members by their names.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Madam Speaker, thank you for that reminder. It was inadvertent on my part.

Around that time, the Prime Minister and President Zelenskyy announced plans to modernize CUFTA. Then came COVID-19, and those negotiations had to be delayed, understandably.

In early 2021 and the fall of 2021, Russia started to amass soldiers around Ukraine's borders. Understandably, the discussions in Ukraine, around the world and here in Parliament were about how we were going to support Ukraine: what we were going to do, what Russia was going to do and how we were going to respond.

I remember that in January 2022, so about a month before Russia's full-scale invasion, the minister approached me and said that she wanted to join me in a Zoom meeting because the government was going to relaunch the negotiations for the modernization of the free trade agreement. This showed, despite everything that was going on, how high a priority this was for Ukraine and for Canada. After the further invasion by Russia continued, those negotiations continued. Again, that showed what a high priority this was for Canada and for Ukraine. When President Zelenskyy was here a few weeks ago, yes he spoke in Parliament and yes he was at the Fort York Armoury to meet with Canadians, but he also signed the free trade agreement with our Prime Minister. This again shows how important this is to both Canada and Ukraine.

What is so great about the new modernized free trade agreement? It would maintain the preferential market access gained in the original free trade agreement with respect to all Canadian merchandise exports to Ukraine, which would be great for Canadian business people and workers. The agreement also includes dedicated new chapters on trade and services, investment, temporary entry, telecommunications, financial services and inclusive trade, and updated chapters on labour, environment, transparency and anti-corruption, among a number of other things.

It would facilitate and enhance co-operation, improve the ability to resolve trade disagreements, promote openness and inclusivity, increase transparency in regulatory matters and help reduce transaction costs for businesses, which is good for business and workers and increases trade. It would commit Canada and Ukraine to respecting and promoting internationally recognized labour rights and principles and the effective enforcement of labour and environmental laws. There would also be significant measures in place to help prevent and respond to corruption.

All in all, this is an agreement that is structured in such a way as to not only benefit Canadian businesses, Canadian employers and workers, but also make sure that the investments that Canadians are making in Ukraine, and vice versa, are protected. Therefore, it is a great economic opportunity for Canada and for Ukraine.

However, there is something else about the agreement that is really important. It is an important step in supporting Ukraine's victory and our collective victory. Let me tell members what I mean by that. As we speak, the Ukrainian people are fighting to defend themselves against Russia's genocidal war. Notwithstanding the courage and the resolve of the Ukrainian people, the situation is dire. Russia is committing genocide every day. Millions of people have become refugees inside and outside Ukraine. Hundreds of millions of people in the global south are facing food shortages and famine because of Russia's invasion and the blockades of Ukrainian food exports, and the war is a primary cause of food and energy inflation around the world. Most importantly, the war poses an existential threat to global security and Canada's security.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

WORLD POLIO DAY

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, only a few decades ago, polio was a common and much-feared infectious disease. Now we are tantalizingly close to eradicating polio through vaccination. One outstanding polio champion is Rotary International, a key partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, which to date has vaccinated 2.5 billion children worldwide. Ramesh Ferris is a Rotarian hero in my riding of the Yukon. A polio survivor, Ramesh hand-cycled across the country in 2008 in a fundraising and awareness-raising Cycle to Walk campaign. Today, Ramesh remains at the heart of Rotary's tireless eradication campaign.

While we celebrate 99.9% success in ridding the world of polio, the last 0.1% is by far the toughest. Polio remains endemic in two

Statements by Members

countries, while new outbreaks in different regions of the world continue to challenge us. Many of these areas are wracked with conflict and instability, reminding us that peace must pave the way to good health. As we mark World Polio Day, let us renew our commitment to make polio a disease of history.

* * *

CAPITAL EXPERIENCE

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, each year, two students from each of the seven high schools in my riding are selected to participate in a program called the "Capital Experience". During their three-day visit to Ottawa, they will learn about the various career opportunities that await them following their graduation from post-secondary education.

I would like to introduce this year's participants: Liam Rutledge and Lillian Keys-Brasier from I.E. Weldon; Erik Carpenter and Lauryn Lachance from Fenelon Falls; Cole Hamilton and Adela Hubbard from Haliburton Highlands; Reagan Lusted and Angela Staples from St. Thomas Aquinas; Emma Howard and Aaliyah Rowe from LCVI; Mackenize Slama, Taim Alsaadi and Oriana Ng from Brock; and, of course, Jacob Wind from Crestwood.

I would like to thank the sponsors, such as the many Lions clubs, Rotary clubs and Royal Canadian Legions that contributed, as well as the many individuals who took time out of their schedules to meet with the students. It is my hope that these students will be inspired as they continue future opportunities as we welcome them to Ottawa.

* * *

EYE CARE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have been working on the eye care bill, Bill C-284, I have learned that many people take their eyesight for granted.

Today I want to recognize Dr. Steve Arshinoff, the president of the Eye Foundation of Canada, a remarkable ophthalmologist from my very own riding who improves the lives of many Canadians. Dr. Arshinoff has been actively helping remote communities as well by spending up to three weeks a year with the travelling Eye Van project for over 30 years. This initiative, plus many others, has been a beacon of hope for those needing eye care outside of the most populated areas, especially indigenous communities. His dedication, expertise and compassion have transformed countless lives with his other projects as well throughout the world. Initiatives like these make Canada stronger, healthier and more vibrant. I want to thank Dr. Arshinoff for his unwavering commitment to Humber River—Black Creek and all Canadians.

Statements by Members

To enhance the good work of Canada's eye health community, I ask all members to support Bill C-284 tomorrow afternoon.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FÉDÉRATION DE L'ÂGE D'OR DU QUÉBEC

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the success of the different branches of the Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec, FADOQ, a seniors association in Berthier—Maskinongé, that is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

As an MP, it is great privilege for me to spend many an evening with them where they have shown legendary indulgence in trying to teach me to follow the beat in line dancing.

In particular I want to salute the group that is visiting Parliament today. Under the strong direction of Danielle Beauregard and Diane Charette, the Club Ste-Ursule gang is on fire.

It is also an association of which I am honoured to be a member ever since they surprised me at a dinner when they gave me my FADOQ card. I wanted to postpone that moment for as long as possible, but at the end of the day, I am really pleased to be part of the group.

These people are changing the lives of seniors and making their days brighter by breaking their isolation. We owe them our recognition and respect. Long live the FADOQ network.

* * *

[*English*]

LYNN PHILIP HODGSON

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to honour Whitby historian Lynn Philip Hodgson, who passed away peacefully on October 11.

Lynn will be remembered as a respected Canadian historian, author and foremost expert on Camp-X, a World War II communications centre and training school for spies that operated in Whitby—Oshawa and that is now commemorated at Intrepid Park. The Whitby Historical Society considered Mr. Hodgson to be a true friend and a Whitby history keeper. One can find Camp-X artifacts on display at Lynde House Museum. Friends remember Lynn as an “amazing gentleman” and “truly one of Whitby's greatest historians”. He and his wife, Marlene, worked tirelessly to ensure that the stories of Camp-X and the people who worked there would be preserved.

I am thinking of Lynn's wife, Marlene, and his family at this time. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his contributions to our community and to preserving our history for generations to come.

* * *

● (1405)

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight long years of the NDP-Liberal government, we have out-of-control spending, record-high inflation, doubled housing prices, skyrocket-

ing grocery prices and the highest levels of food bank use in Canadian history.

Thankfully, charities in Manitoba are stepping up. Niverville Helping Hands and South East Helping Hands food bank volunteers went door to door, and the response was overwhelming: 19,000 pounds of food. The Southland Church Annual Thanksgiving Food and Clothing Drive provided hampers for more than 1,000 families, with over 30,000 pounds of food and 20,000 pounds of clothing. In Steinbach, local businesses and individuals have contributed almost \$1.5 million to support The Bridge, a 24-unit low-income housing project. Where the NDP-Liberal government has failed Canadians, charities are bringing it home.

How does the Prime Minister respond? He punishes charities. Through the CRA, he has now imposed increased administrative burdens for charities that hold internal express trusts. The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have heard from many constituents about their concerns regarding the recent events in the Middle East. Canada is a nation of peace and must do everything it can to find a way to end the bombardment of Gaza and the current conflict and continue to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those devastated by the violence.

Innocent Palestinians living in Gaza have the right to the essentials of life and the right to live in dignity. We support Israel in its drive to free hostages held by Hamas and to protect itself from further terrorist attacks within the limits of international and humanitarian law. At home, we must not entrench ourselves in positions pitted against one another. Reports of hate crimes, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia hurt us all. This is not the way to find peace and promote security, not in Israel and Palestine and certainly not here in Canada.

Peace be with us all. *Shalom. Salaam.*

* * *

WORLD POLIO DAY

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I stand to recognize World Polio Day and the efforts of Rotary International. Over 700 Rotary clubs across Canada, including my own club in Langley, carry the vision of a polio-free world and continue to work tirelessly toward this goal.

Statements by Members

Since 2006, the federal government has contributed over \$200 million to support polio eradication efforts. Unfortunately, the pandemic has caused millions of children to miss their polio vaccinations, resulting in outbreaks threatening this tremendous program. Sustained action is critical to protecting global health. If we stop now, we risk the paralysis of 200,000 children worldwide each year.

I ask members to please join me today in marking World Polio Day by thanking all who contribute to eradicating polio in our local communities and internationally. Our work is not yet complete. We must remain steadfast in our support to end this terrible disease once and for all.

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[Translation]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this government, the cost of living is only going up. Inflation is at a record level. People just cannot get by.

This government's inflationary spending has impoverished Quebecers. Considering the fact that one in two Canadians lives paycheque to paycheque, it is clear that things are not going well. However, this government is clinging to power thanks to its agreement with the NDP and has just found a new ally, the Bloc Québécois. The Bloc wants to drastically increase Quebec's second carbon tax, which adds 17¢ per litre of gas. Contrary to what the Bloc members would have us believe, when the government taxes the prairie farmer who grows the food and taxes the trucker who transports it, it is also taxing everyone who buys it. The last time I checked, in Quebec we consume products from other Canadian provinces.

We can never say it enough: It will be costly to vote for the Bloc.

* * *

● (1410)

[English]

MEMBER FOR VANCOUVER CENTRE

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 30 years is how long the member of Parliament for Vancouver Centre has served in the chamber. She is the longest-serving female MP, but she is so much more. For all of us who grew up in Vancouver, she is an icon. Her energy, passion, wit and intellect, and, of course, her commitment to being truly fabulous, putting many of us to shame in the process, are second to none. Her dedication to public service and improving the lives of those around her is unwavering and something for which we should all strive. She has been a long-time inspiration for young women, people of colour and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Tomorrow, the City of Vancouver is proclaiming October 25 as Hedy Fry Day, an honour she richly deserves. I am honoured to serve with her and grateful to call her a friend. I know that every member of this place, particularly her colleagues—

The Speaker: I would like to remind all members that this is one of those grey area situations. That is the reason why I did not pick it up right away. We should refrain from using current members' names, even if it is a designated day, in the House. We refer to each other by our riding names.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

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HOUSING

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of failure, Canadians are paying the price for Liberal waste and corruption.

The socialist coalition is not taking Canada's housing crisis seriously. Under the NDP-Liberal government, seniors are being forced from their homes. They cannot afford the mortgage payments. Canadians cannot afford their mortgages because interest rates have soared.

The Prime Minister bragged that he did not even think about interest rates.

While the Liberals and their media allies were gaslighting Canadians with inflation denialism, our Conservative leader was clear-eyed. He warned Canadians that out-of-control NDP-Liberal spending would drive inflation. Higher inflation leads to higher interest rates.

This is not rocket science; it is arithmetic. The NDP plus the Liberals equals a government that is spending more than we can afford. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Only common sense Conservatives will bring the solutions that Canadians need by building homes they can actually afford.

* * *

TRAGEDY IN SAULT STE. MARIE

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I address the tragic news out of Sault Ste. Marie. Five people are dead, including three children, ages six, seven and 12, all shot and killed in an act of domestic violence. These innocent lives were ripped away by someone who was supposed to protect them. This is an unimaginable and devastating loss.

On behalf of the official opposition, I extend condolences to the victims' loved ones. Our hearts go out to them as they grieve this loss.

As a family lawyer who has helped women navigate difficult and violent relationships, I must point out that this is not an isolated incident. This government must do more to protect women and children from domestic violence.

Statements by Members

On average, a woman is killed every six days by their partner. The justice minister admits that this type of violence is an epidemic, but they failed to protect this family.

The Prime Minister cannot continue to sit on the sidelines while women and children lose their lives.

* * *

UNITED STATES CONSULATE IN HALIFAX

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 190th anniversary of the United States consulate in Halifax, which marked the birth of diplomatic relations between our nations as the first U.S. consulate in British North America.

Over the years, our diplomatic ties have grown stronger as we have weathered challenges together, from historic events to evolving geopolitical dynamics. From the Halifax explosion of 1917 to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, we have stood together in times of need.

Today, the U.S. consulate in Halifax continues to foster economic, cultural and educational co-operation in the Atlantic region.

I would like to recognize, in particular, the remarkable contributions of Lyra S. Carr, who assumed the role of consul general in July 2021, becoming only the second female consul general in the post's history.

As we celebrate this enduring partnership, let us remember the words of President Biden in this very chamber:

Canada and the United States can do big things and stand together, do them together, rise together. We are going to write the future together, I promise you.

* * *

● (1415)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise with a heavy heart as the most horrific violence continues in the Middle East. We need an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, investigation of war crimes by the ICC and ICJ, an arms embargo and the provision of humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza.

I am also alarmed by the rise in anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism. Not only are people worried about the safety of family members in Palestine and Israel, but they worry about their own safety as hate incidents multiply.

Let us be clear: Canadian Jews are not responsible for the actions of Netanyahu's government, and Palestinian, Arab and Muslim Canadians are not responsible for the actions of Hamas. Targeting people because of their faith or ethnic background is not activism; it is racism.

People are hurting and afraid. We must come together and recognize each other's common humanity. We must speak up loudly together against rising hate.

[Translation]

DECLINE OF FRENCH

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, once again, the Liberals refused to acknowledge the decline of French in Quebec and Canada. However, Canada's census provides the relevant figures.

From 2016 to 2021, the percentage of francophones in Canada, based on the first official language spoken, dropped from 22.2% to 21.4%. The percentage of Quebecers who speak mainly French at home dropped from 79% to 77.5%. In the workplace, it slipped from 81.9% in 2011 to 79.7%. Those are the facts. Any denial of the facts by the government or by its Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is a political denial.

Clearly, the only way to reverse the decline of French is for Quebec to have exclusive authority over its language policy. It is equally clear that the best way to achieve that is to make Quebec a country.

* * *

[English]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the NDP-Liberal government will stop at nothing to cover up its corruption. Yesterday, in a brazen effort to shield the Prime Minister, Liberal and NDP MPs voted to shut down committee to block the RCMP commissioner from answering questions about the Prime Minister's obstruction of an RCMP criminal investigation into his conduct during the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

This is the same Prime Minister who obstructed justice to protect SNC-Lavalin and when his former attorney general stood up to him, he fired her. This is the same Prime Minister who has been found guilty of multiple ethical violations. Now we learn that this is the same Prime Minister who thwarted a criminal investigation into his own wrongdoing.

The record of the Prime Minister is one of corruption and cover-up. After eight years he is not worth the cost.

* * *

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day in Canada, 30 individuals are diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Parkinson Canada has identified key priorities for the Parkinson's community to consider to better improve overall health and quality of life for those living with this degenerative brain disease.

By identifying gaps and improving training and knowledge transfer with qualified health care professionals, we can allow for earlier diagnosis and treatment. Examining the systemic issues and barriers in our health care system will determine the steps we can take to increase the number of health care practitioners available to support the people who are living with this disease. By advancing equitable access to care and improved treatments, we will ensure better quality of life for all Canadians living with Parkinson's.

Today, I am joining our member from Milton and Senator Stephen Greene to host Parkinson Canada on the Hill to hear from the voices of those working to help those diagnosed with Parkinson's and improve outcomes, in Wellington room 310, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has doubled the national debt, doubled the cost of housing, fuelled inflation faster than anyone in the past 40 years and raised interest rates faster than anyone in monetary history. This impacts not only Canadians' wallets, but also national unity.

The Parti Québécois has just released the first budget of an independent Quebec, justifying it by saying that this Prime Minister is putting the country and Quebec into debt.

Does the Prime Minister recognize that his policies are not worth the cost or worth dividing our country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will respond to my hon. colleague in a moment.

First, though, I want to express my deep sorrow at the deaths of five Canadians, including three children, in Sault Ste. Marie this morning.

[*English*]

It is a senseless tragedy that occurred after intimate partner violence escalated into a shooting rampage at two homes. I want to extend my deepest condolences to the grieving families, friends and loved ones of the victims, and for them to know that they are not alone.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we too extend our condolences to all those affected by this tragedy.

The Parti Québécois has once again stated it wants independence for economic reasons. That party would never have said such a thing during the Conservative years because taxes were low, debts were low, income taxes were low, inflation was low and growth was high. The Prime Minister turned all that around, and now some people in Quebec want to separate as a result.

Oral Questions

Does he acknowledge that his policies are not worth the cost, nor are they worth dividing our country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the opposition parties rekindle old sovereignty disputes, we will remain focused on helping Canadians by investing in housing, supporting child care and early learning centres, and investing in our seniors and workers.

We will continue to be there to help people put food on the table by tackling grocery prices and increasing competition. We will remain focused on creating benefits and opportunities for Canadians while other people talk politics and pick fights.

* * *

[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in part because of the excellent low inflation, low tax, low debt record of the Conservatives, the separatists were a dead cause not so long ago, but his inflationary policies have brought them back.

The Prime Minister said it was just inflation when food prices went up, but then there was shrinkflation, smaller sized servings for higher prices. Now we have skimplation, where food processors, in order to pay the carbon tax, actually strip out the nutritional value of the food.

How much health and nutrition will Canadians have to lose before the Prime Minister reverses his plan to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite likes to play word games. I suggest he is conflating all the issues together to try to scare Canadians.

The reality is that while he is reaching for new boogeymen to try to make Canadians fearful and angry, we are delivering supports for Canadians, with historic announcements on housing across the country, with municipalities stepping up, to respond to the needs of Canadians; moving forward with greater competition to bring down or stabilize grocery prices; to continue to be there for seniors and young people.

We know the cuts the Conservative leader is proposing are not the answer. We are going to continue to be there for people.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are living with Liberal cuts every day. They have to cut how many meals they eat. They have to cut the portions they eat. Now they are cutting the nutrition out of that food, because, after eight years, the Prime Minister's carbon tax and his inflationary policies are clearly not worth the cost or the corruption.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister's toadies in the NDP and Liberal committee blocked the RCMP commissioner from testifying about the Prime Minister blocking a criminal investigation into his SNC scandal. Now the ArriveCAN app is under criminal investigation, after wasting \$50 million.

Will the Prime Minister agree to personally co-operate with this criminal investigation into his arrive scam app?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the opposition is bringing up matters that were settled four years ago, we see the point at which they are trying anything they can to distract from the fact that they have no plan and no approach. They are proposing just cuts and more cuts for Canadians, while we step up with such things as dental care for kids, supporting child care spaces across the country, and investing in supports for families and better homes, as we accelerate the rental home initiative.

These are things that the Conservative Party campaigned against. It continues to propose cuts and fights while we deliver for Canadians.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the Prime Minister amplified disinformation on the subject last week, he went into hiding, refused to answer questions and then sent out his public safety minister to offer a midnight answer.

The Prime Minister needs to speak about himself. Does he believe that the State of Israel fired a rocket or missile at the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to issues that have such a serious impact on Canadians and on people around the world, we need to make sure we are grounded in facts. That is why I asked our defence experts and military specialists to analyze open-source and classified data to come to a conclusion. The conclusion is that, according to the best evidence they have, Israel did not fire a rocket at that hospital.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my friend Paul in Quebec City will be happy to know that the year one budget has brought the debate on Quebec independence to the Parliament of Canada, and that even the Leader of the Opposition is talking about it.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister has put himself at odds with the United States, U.S. intelligence and the U.S. President on the issue of the hospital in Gaza. According to the information available

to us, he has not spoken with the U.S. President in 17 days. What does he plan to do to convince the U.S. to rally to the consensus reached by the UN, the European Union and France for a humanitarian truce in Gaza?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, I spoke with President Biden this weekend, and we continue to do everything necessary as allies to ensure that humanitarian goods and aid are delivered through access corridors into Gaza. We will continue to push for that and for humanitarian truces that will allow aid to reach innocent civilians.

The hostages must be released, and we need to protect the lives of innocent civilians. Canada is fully involved, including with shipments of humanitarian aid that are much bigger than average.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, did the President of the United States talk to the Prime Minister about the need for at least a consensus within his own party so that Canada and Quebec can speak with a coherent voice internationally?

Speaking of consensus, the Prime Minister told me last week that he agreed to organize meetings between him and the leaders of the opposition parties to build up a bit of information flow and consensus on the voice of this Parliament. I have not heard anything since. Should I bring my agenda tomorrow?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are extremely busy with all the work that people expect us to do. Yes, we will create a time so that we can sit down with party leaders to talk about this extremely difficult situation and how we can bring Canadians together. I understand that a lot of people are grieving, a lot of people are angry and a lot of people have very legitimate and understandable emotions. However, our role as politicians and as leaders is to bring people together and find consensus, and that is what we are going to work on.

* * *

• (1430)

[*English*]

HOUSING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Bank of Canada's interest rates are hurting Canadians such as John Cufflin, a 76-year-old man who had to sell his home because his mortgage payment went from \$1,000 a month to \$2,600 a month. Now he is not sure he can find a place that he can afford to rent that is in his budget. Tax incentives to private developers alone will not solve this crisis.

When will the Prime Minister get serious about building homes that people can actually afford?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to be in the member opposite's hometown of Brampton just the other day to deliver great news for Bramptonians, in line with the great news we have been announcing across the country: 24,000 homes over the coming years in Brampton because of the housing accelerator fund that we put on the table. That is \$4 billion that councils across the country are talking about and passing motions and debating on because of the federal initiative that is putting more homes on lots and creating construction opportunities across the country. We look forward to continuing to step up with municipal partners right across the country.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we already know that tent cities spring up faster than houses. Take a look on the other side of the river, in Gatineau. What is the Prime Minister doing tonight? He is holding a \$1,500-a-head fundraiser in Gatineau. Could he be any more out of touch?

Is the Prime Minister's plan to go chat up wealthy developers again and ask them nicely if they will build affordable housing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased to have been able to sign a new housing agreement with the Province of Quebec. The Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities will have more to say about that unprecedented agreement. We will continue to work in collaboration with the Quebec government to put forward a plan that works for Quebeckers and that will enable the construction of more housing, more quickly.

That remains our priority. That is why we are working not just in Quebec, but across the country with the housing accelerator. We are delivering for Canadians, and we are going to continue to do so by working together, not by bickering as others would have us do.

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[English]

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when NDP MPs are not busy covering up for the Prime Minister's scandal, they are busy defending anti-Semites. Just yesterday, the NDP member for Hamilton Centre wrote a letter in support of an anti-Semitic MPP whom even the Ontario NDP had to expel. Does the leader of the NDP support his member's letter, and does he support the position of this Ontario MPP?

The Speaker: I remind colleagues that a member of an opposition party cannot answer in question period. Unless a member of the government wants to reply, we are going to move on.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of Liberal-NDP incompetence, the national debt has doubled, resulting in the most rapid mortgage interest rate hikes in Canadian history and putting Canadians most at risk in the G7 for a mortgage default crisis. Around 70,000 mort-

gages are renewing every month with, at a minimum, a doubling in interest rate. Expensive photo ops, such as a \$4-billion housing photo op that built a whopping zero homes, do not help either. The member for Vancouver Granville probably flipped more homes than that.

The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Will he stop his inflationary deficits and balance a budget so Canadians do not lose their homes?

● (1435)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been fascinating to watch the Conservatives make misguided criticisms about the housing accelerator fund. They fear that it is actually going to create more homes for Canadians. They are rooting against homebuilding in this country for their political interests, rather than supporting policies that will put a roof over their neighbours' heads.

Where the Conservatives promise to cut funding for housing, we will continue to make the investments necessary. It is the right thing to do. It is the only way to approach the housing crisis, and Canadians will find relief from the measures that we are putting forward on this side.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the housing accelerator fund closed on August 18, with no money left and no bright ideas coming from the Liberal government. However, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, seniors in my riding are losing their homes and joining the ranks of the homeless. Everything is being driven up in cost by the Liberals' inflationary spending.

Bloomberg reports that over half of Canadians are saying they are worse off this past year. With winter coming and the carbon tax piling up, people know that this Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. Will the government stop its inflationary spending so Canadians can have a roof over their heads?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to know where to start with the various pieces of misinformation baked into my colleague's question. With respect, she suggested that seniors need to have more homes, but her housing plan literally includes zero mention of seniors. She suggested that the housing accelerator fund has no money left in it. I would invite her to tune into an announcement that we will be making in Kelowna tomorrow.

Oral Questions

We are going to continue to make the investments necessary by reducing the cost of building and investing in the ability of communities to build homes. Where we will make investments, the Conservatives will make cuts. They are simply not worth the risk.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, announcements do not build homes. The government has built fewer homes than were built in 1972. However, in my riding, I have people who are both working, yet are not able to have any heat in their house for the last two months, because of the price that the government continues to drive up with its inflationary spending. The Liberals are so out of touch, they are pouring money on the inflationary fire and causing misery.

Will the Prime Minister rein in his inflationary spending, or is the truth that the government and the Prime Minister are just not worth the cost?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just last week the member for Sarnia—Lambton repeated some myths about EVs here in this House. She said that they routinely catch on fire and do not work in the winter.

I think it is important that we actually stay grounded in the facts of what the government is doing and will continue to do. That includes lifting 2.7 million Canadians out of poverty, with 650,000 children among them. It means putting a price on pollution and making sure that we are there for Canadians as the climate crisis persists.

We are there and we have their backs.

* * *

[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to an Angus Reid report, half of Canadians are worse off financially than last year, and it is expected to be even worse this year. That is the reality after eight years under this government. It gets even worse. The Bloc Québécois, the Liberals' ally, is pushing for a drastic increase in the carbon tax, driving up the cost of gas and food. It is costly to vote Bloc Québécois.

Will the Liberals show some compassion and promise not to increase the carbon tax that the Bloc Québécois is calling for?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no federal carbon tax in Quebec. It is false to claim otherwise. Canadians are concerned about the cost of living, climate change and the impact of natural disasters on our health and our economy. That is why we have put in place a pollution pricing system that addresses those kinds of concerns.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we know is that, after eight years under this Prime Minister, people are worried about ending up on the street. Not once, but twice, the Bloc Québécois voted against a motion to cancel the two carbon taxes, namely the federal carbon tax

and the clean fuel regulations, which drove the price per litre up by 17¢ for Quebecers. Twice the Bloc Québécois said no.

The Liberal member for Avalon, Nova Scotia, asked the Prime Minister to cancel the carbon tax, which is driving costs up for all Canadians and Quebecers. Will he do it?

• (1440)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really have to reiterate that there is no federal carbon tax in Quebec. The Conservatives' campaign platform included a clean fuel standard that was almost identical to the one our government put forward. Now they are against it. On top of being hypocritical, that attitude shows they cannot be trusted to keep their word on climate action.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there must be a limit to the federal government's intransigence. We are talking about 250,000 businesses that could go bankrupt as early as 2024 if the government does not postpone repayment of the CEBA loans. That is 250,000 bankruptcies and countless job losses. No government in the world would stand for that. That is why, on Friday, the premiers of Quebec and the provinces demanded that the repayment of the CEBA loan be deferred for one year.

Will the government finally offer our businesses some flexibility?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are offering additional flexibility to small businesses in repaying their Canada emergency business account loans. This includes a full one-year extension of the term loan repayment deadline, more refinancing flexibility and more time to access the loan forgiveness, which is both a balanced and fiscally responsible approach.

The Bloc Québécois did not vote to lower credit card fees. We are always prepared to work with the Bloc Québécois, because our main objective is to help small businesses across the country.

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, no one is satisfied with that answer. The premiers of Quebec and the provinces and territories are all calling for a one-year extension. All parties in the Quebec National Assembly are calling for an extension. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business is calling for an extension. The Bloc Québécois wrote to the Minister of Finance today calling for an extension. It is unanimous. Everyone understands that we cannot afford a wave of bankruptcies and job losses in this economy. It is so obvious.

Oral Questions

When will the government finally understand?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. As she is well aware, 99% of Quebec's economy is made up of small and medium-sized businesses. We know that the global inflationary environment is difficult. That is why we are offering additional flexibilities for small businesses to repay their CEBA loans.

We have been there, we are there, and we will be there. On Friday, I was in Bromont to give funding to Stùv America, a company that will create new jobs and promote growth. Canada Economic Development is helping many businesses in Quebec. We are talking about 1,300 projects since last year.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, our farms are among the 250,000 SMEs at risk of shutting down. High interest rates, the price of fuel, the damage that climate change is doing to crops, and I could go on, have left them teetering on the brink.

If the federal government tops it all off with the Canada emergency business account, it will force them into bankruptcy. The government must postpone repayment of emergency business account loans for a year. Our farmers need this flexibility.

Will the government finally do what everyone is asking it to do?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that our government was there to help people and businesses during COVID-19. Nine out of every 10 aid program dollars came from the federal government.

We have already granted one extension and provided clarification to ensure that businesses subsequently made sound decisions. Together with Economic Development Canada and the other regional development agencies, we are there to support them.

* * *

• (1445)

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of an incompetent government managing Canada's real estate market, more and more Quebeckers who are struggling to make ends meet are being forced to live in their cars because they cannot afford their rent. These are the repercussions of a Liberal government that is mismanaging our finances.

The Bloc Québécois's endorsement of the Liberals' plan to radically increase the carbon tax will make Canadians' financial difficulties even worse. Voting for the Bloc is costly.

Why is the Liberal government always taxing Canadians more and more?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that inflation has come down yet again in Canada.

If he wants to talk about taxes, I will remind him that it was our federal government that lowered taxes not just once, but twice, for the middle class. Once again, both times, the Conservatives voted against a tax cut. That makes no sense. The Conservatives are not worth the risk.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Quebec was the province most affected by inflation for the fourth month in a row, yet the Bloc Québécois continues to support a radical increase in the Liberal government's second carbon tax. It is costly to vote for the Bloc when we are at a point where people are sleeping in their cars.

After eight long years of disastrous Liberal mismanagement, backed by the NDP and now the Bloc, Quebeckers want the chance to choose a new Prime Minister.

When will we get to bring back common sense?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that the Conservative Party is a world expert in the art of speaking out of both sides of its mouth.

In 2012, the current leader of the Conservative Party led the charge in the House of Commons to eviscerate the Canadian Navigable Waters Act, while claiming that it would not hurt the environment. We know what he thinks about the problems with greenhouse gas emissions and the environment in Canada.

We have no lessons to learn from a party that speaks out of both sides of its mouth.

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[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal government, Canadians have lost hope in owning a home and having enough money to raise their families and pay their bills. Hope has given way to worry and despair. A new Angus Reid survey reveals that almost 80% of Canadians are worried about rising mortgage interest rates.

The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. When will the NDP-Liberal government end its inflationary spending so that Canadians can fix the housing market?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems the Conservatives understand the cost of everything, but the value of nothing.

We continue to make the investments necessary to build homes for Canadians, which the Conservatives decry as inflationary spending. They oppose spending on affordable housing. They oppose investments that are going to change the way that cities build homes. When we cut taxes to make it cheaper to build homes for Canadians, they propose to put them back on.

Oral Questions

Canadians have two very clear choices: to make the investments necessary to address the housing crisis or to cut, cut, cut. I know where I stand. The Conservatives are not worth the risk. We will make the investments necessary.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, small businesses are struggling to survive. Increased payroll taxes, a punishing carbon tax, red tape, and labour shortages are crushing them. It is no wonder that Restaurants Canada reports that one-third of restaurants are operating at a loss.

Will the government stop its attack on restaurants, rein in inflationary spending and end the punishing tax hikes so restaurants can keep their doors open?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of entrepreneurs, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for joining me in attending events for programs our government has funded, which Conservative colleagues have voted against. He was able to see the real, live, tangible examples of success stories.

Our government believes in empowering young entrepreneurs and has committed nearly \$60 million to future entrepreneurs who provide loans, mentorship and education to Canadian entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 39.

Now that my hon. colleague has witnessed the benefits of our investments, perhaps he and the Conservatives can stop voting against support for young entrepreneurs, which will take Canada backward.

* * *

• (1450)

HOUSING

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Winnipeg Salvation Army announced 60 urgent shelter beds to meet the needs of refugee claimants. Winnipeg Centre is where most refugees and refugee claimants first settle in Manitoba, and there is a severe shortage of rent-geared-to-income homes to house refugees and their families.

While the Liberals fail to act, newcomers in my community are sleeping in shelters or on the streets. Will the Liberals make major investments in deeply affordable housing so that everyone has a roof over their head?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we have debates in this chamber around housing policy, it is really important. I thank the hon. member for her focus on continuing to support some of society's most vulnerable.

We work with different populations who are struggling, including vulnerable newcomers, including women fleeing domestic violence, including other people who simply cannot find a place to stay. We have doubled the funding for homelessness support

through the Reaching Home program and will continue to make the investments necessary to protect some of the country's most vulnerable people as we approach the winter months.

It is important that we take care of our most vulnerable, and I appreciate the NDP's support in this regard.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, in Nunavut, one bottle of orange juice is \$24 and one can of chicken soup is \$10. Nutrition north is subsidizing corporate greed. It is not lowering grocery prices.

Last weekend, the NDP leader and I heard from Nunavummiut. They said they can barely make ends meet. Meanwhile, the North West Company continues to report sky-high profits.

When will the Liberals introduce an excess profits tax and reform nutrition north so it can help people, not CEOs?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for that very important question. Nutrition north is an important program. That is why we announced \$163 million of new money for nutrition north in the last year. Of that, a significant amount of money will go to the harvester support grant, which encourages people in the north and indigenous nations to do traditional harvesting, hunting and food sharing. This year alone, the grant supported 15,000 harvesters, 410 hunts and harvests, and over 717 food-sharing initiatives.

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INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is already well on its way to becoming a global leader in the production of electric vehicles and EV battery manufacturing. Unfortunately, the Conservative Party has its eyes closed to this. Just last week, the Conservative member for Sarnia—Lambton repeated the absurd myth in this House that EVs routinely catch on fire and do not work in the winter. Meanwhile, in eastern Ontario, we recently saw one of North America's largest investments in EV battery manufacturing.

Can the minister tell us why the government sees these investments as being so important for Canada?

Oral Questions

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for a great question and for his leadership. He is actually right. I am very pleased to report to this House that Umicore from Belgium chose Canada to have its plant in North America.

The plant is going to create 600 jobs in Loyalist Township near Kingston, but it is also going to produce enough battery materials for 800,000 electric vehicles. There will be a piece of Kingston and Loyalist in every car in North America.

We are building the car of the future, something that the do-nothing opposition would never be able to do.

* * *

• (1455)

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister, when there are now cover-ups about his cover-ups, it is clear he is not worth the cost.

Yesterday, the NDP-Liberal government sent its members to shut down the testimony from the RCMP commissioner about the investigation into the Prime Minister's SNC-Lavalin scandal. This is the same investigation where he blocked the release of documents when they were investigating whether or not he obstructed justice.

My question is for the chair of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

On what date will the commissioner of the RCMP appear at the committee?

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot begin to tell everyone my profound disappointment in the fact that the NDP-Liberal coalition chose to shut down and adjourn the meeting before it happened.

I can assure members that proper notice was given. In fact, I emailed the vice-chairs of the committee, as well as other committee members, 72 hours before the meeting occurred. I took advantage, in my position as chair, to invite the RCMP given the latest information that had been released.

The public safety minister suggested that if we had any questions for the RCMP, we pose questions to its members. I took that opportunity. I cannot tell the member when the next opportunity will be, but I hope it is soon.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope they were paying attention. That is the first time we have had a question answered in this House in eight years.

The Prime Minister and the public safety minister both said that the RCMP commissioner was the one to answer questions. He was sitting at the table yesterday, and they adjourned the meeting as part of their ongoing cover-up. They blocked him just like the Prime Minister is blocking the release of documents in the criminal investigation concerning him. After eight years of the Prime Minister and his detrimental effect on our democratic institutions, it is clear that he is not worth the cost.

To the leader of the NDP, is protecting the Prime Minister from criminal investigations part of the coalition deal?

The Speaker: As I mentioned before after a previous question, opposition leaders are not invited to answer. Only members of the government, parliamentary secretaries or chairs of committees can.

To answer this question, I recognize the hon. House leader.

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, committees are in charge of their own business and they make those decisions themselves.

If he wants to talk about democratic institutions and criminal investigations, I will remind him that it was a member of the governing Conservatives who was arrested for violating election laws and actually went to jail. The member should be careful as he is casting stones in glass houses.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, damning new information revealed today shows that ArriveCAN contractors submitted receipts to the government for a company that does not even exist. This investigation already includes allegations of identity theft, forged resumés, contractual theft, fraudulent billing, price-fixing and collusion in the creation of the \$54-million ArriveCAN app. How much worse can this boondoggle get?

I have a simple question: Which Liberal insiders got rich?

• (1500)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as colleagues know very well, we expect public servants, at all times, to follow the appropriate Treasury Board contracting practices.

My colleague would know that, in this case, the Canada Border Services Agency, as part of its internal audit, uncovered information that it subsequently referred to the appropriate police authorities. That is exactly what has to happen in these cases. We should let the RCMP do whatever work it thinks is appropriate in this concerning circumstance.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP and the Liberals are desperate to protect their Prime Minister.

Yesterday, they prevented the commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or RCMP, from testifying on the SNC-Lavalin affair. I was flabbergasted to see that the Bloc Québécois also voted for the cover up to protect the Prime Minister. The RCMP was investigating the Prime Minister's obstruction of justice and SNC-Lavalin's fraud.

When nothing is done to clean up corruption, it is costly. When the Bloc helps hide the truth, it is costly. Voting for the Bloc is costly.

Why is the Prime Minister so afraid of the RCMP? Why does he need the Bloc vote to cover up his involvement in the SNC-Lavalin affair?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague is well aware, committees are masters of their own domain. They make their own decisions. Clearly, this has always been the case. I hope my colleague will respond responsibly.

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AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers are proud of their aerospace sector, and especially proud of Bombardier.

Bombardier has developed outstanding expertise over the years, and has turned Joseph-Armand's company into a key international player in aircraft construction. However, when the time comes for Ottawa to modernize its Aurora maritime patrol aircraft, it turns to Boeing, no tender process needed. With no call for tenders, the government is investing in the United States while dismissing Quebec's expertise out of hand.

Why is Ottawa not issuing a call for tenders to modernize its fleet?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for allowing me to speak about the importance of aeronautics in Quebec. It is a point of pride for us.

In recent years, we have made significant investments not only in businesses, but also, and just as importantly, in middle-class employees, to ensure that they can continue to pay their families' bills and contribute to technological and economic development in Quebec and across the country.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, give me a break. Aeronautics industry leaders are on Parliament Hill today. The director of the International Aeronautics and Civil Aviation Observatory, people representing machinists and UNIFOR, and even the former commander of the RCAF are here. They have all the answers to any question the government might ask. They have all the information that

proves that, when it comes to aeronautics, they have the know-how. They are competitive. They believe in themselves, with good reason. All they want is a fair process.

Will Ottawa backtrack and issue a call for tenders?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again I thank my colleague for giving me an opportunity to further clarify the importance of investing in aeronautics, not only in Quebec but across the country.

We know Bombardier is an outstanding partner, key to other players in the country's aeronautics space, such as General Dynamics here in Ottawa, that are making huge contributions to the technological capacity to support National Defence's significant needs.

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[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, silence and shut down are what the NDP-Liberal cover-up coalition did yesterday when the RCMP commissioner was shamefully denied any opportunity to give evidence in relation to the Prime Minister's criminal investigation. Nowhere in the coalition agreement does it say that the NDP needs to be complicit in the Prime Minister's political scandals. After eight years of the government, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

I have a simple question: What is the coalition covering up?

● (1505)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP has been clear in this matter. There is no criminal investigation. It has closed the case. That is the independent decision taken by Canada's national police force, and the commissioner, in his public comments yesterday, said he was very comfortable with that decision.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, farm families know that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. A financial health report confirmed that higher Liberal inflation, taxes and interest rates are taking a serious toll on Canadian producers. Their net farm incomes are down 8%, but expenses are up 21%, the highest jump in 50 years, since the last tax-and-spend Trudeau government.

All parties in this House supported a Conservative bill to remove the carbon tax from on-farm fuels, but the Liberals are trying to kill that bill in the Senate. Will the Prime Minister respect the will of this House and axe his farm-killing carbon tax?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's concern, but the fact is that if we do not deal with the environment, we cannot do anything about any of the prices in agriculture. Quite simply, we have an opposition party that does not feel that climate change is an issue. We in the government feel climate change is an issue, and we will continue to fight climate change, because the disasters that are happening right across the country add to the cost of food from one end of the country to the other.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the number one concerns for Canadian farm families are Liberal regulations and carbon taxes. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business surveyed its members and asked for their top three priorities. Number one was to reduce the regulatory and red tape burden. Number two was to reduce the overall tax burden. For number three, 66% said their number one priority was to pass a Conservative bill to remove the carbon tax from on-farm fuels.

After eight years of the Prime Minister disrespecting this House and ignoring farmers, he is not worth the cost. Why is the Prime Minister working so hard to bankrupt farmers and disrespect this House? Why will he not axe his carbon tax?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I live in a rural riding as well. I meet with farmers, and some farmers even as recently as this morning.

The hypocrisy from the Conservative side is getting a bit difficult to stomach. It is ironic and in fact disappointing to see this from members like the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis and the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, who used to be Liberal provincial ministers and parliamentary secretaries in charge of carbon pricing. They all ran on a carbon price. They all said they were going to fight climate change, but none of them are willing to stand up and say “climate change” in this House. It is probably because the Conservative leader has decided climate change does not exist. He is too risky, he is reckless and he is not worth the cost.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the drive to net zero is creating economic prosperity for Canadians right now in every region of the country, from critical mineral mines to renewable energy projects to hydrogen production facilities. If we provide the right supports and bring workers to the table now, these opportunities will only increase.

Yesterday, to the dismay of workers across the country, the Conservative Party voted against the Canadian sustainable jobs act. Can the minister tell us more about why this bill is important?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and Alberta colleague, the MP for Calgary Skyview, for his strong advocacy.

Workers are at the heart of Canada's prosperity, and the Canadian sustainable jobs act would ensure that together we can grow the economy and create good, middle-class sustainable jobs in Alberta

Oral Questions

and across the country. While we engage workers through this legislation, the Conservatives are doing everything they can to stop workers from being at the table. Their votes against this important bill for workers are simply more proof that the Conservative leader and his party are simply not worth the risk.

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● (1510)

CARBON PRICING

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Liberals continue to choose ideology over economic reality. The carbon tax continues to punish Canadians, who need to eat. Food banks across the country are seeing record visits, including from the middle class and those with full-time jobs. A quarter of our population is going hungry or cannot afford basic necessities. The Liberal-NDPs just do not understand basic math. If it costs more to grow food, it will cost more to buy food.

The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost, so when will the government stop punishing farmers and axe the carbon tax?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to press pause on the rhetoric here and focus on what is important, and that is Canadian families. On this side of the House, we worry about Canadian families and are here for Canadian families, helping them balance their budgets, particularly in tough economic times. How do we do this? We have reached 3.5 million Canadian families and over six million children with the Canada child benefit, let alone building a national day care program. We are here for Canadian families.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Nova Scotians are having to choose between heating and eating. A senior on a fixed income in my community told me that last year at the beginning of winter, it cost \$850 to fill his home heating tank. This year, with the new Nova Scotia carbon tax put on by the government, it cost him an astounding \$1,800.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. It is time to keep the heat on and take the taxes off. When will the Liberals axe the carbon tax so Nova Scotians can afford to heat their homes?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows very well that the program he is referring to puts a price on pollution and puts more money in the pockets of Canadian families. He is now proposing to take it away so he can make pollution free again.

On the issue of affordability for seniors, I agree that seniors need help. That is why we raised old age security for people over 75. That is why we restored the age of eligibility from 67 to 65. That is why we increased the guaranteed income supplement for low-income single seniors by \$947. One of the things those measures have in common is that Conservatives opposed every one of them.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for seniors such as Oswald Hodder of Stoneville, after eight years, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Oswald recently filled his oil tank for the first time since this Liberal-NDP coalition imposed a carbon tax on Atlantic Canadian heating fuel. He was shocked to see \$119 in carbon tax on enough fuel to heat his home for just one month.

Will this Prime Minister leave Atlantic Canadians alone, let them be warm, stop persecuting and bring them out of the cold?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to once again refer to the Consumers Distributing catalogue of green products that the other side of the House would have brought up, if they had been allowed the opportunity, in their support for a carbon tax in their last platform. Who knows what Conservative staples they would have put in this catalogue: unicycles, porterhouse steaks, chateaubriand or gift certificates for the Savoy Hotel.

We do not know, but we do know that now, today, we make sure Canadians get cold, hard cash in their pockets. Eight out of 10 families do better.

* * *

● (1515)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the relationship between Canada and Ukraine is a sacred one. Canada was the first western nation to recognize Ukraine's independence in 1991. Since Russia's further invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Canada has been a global leader in supporting Ukraine, and today we are continuing to build that relationship here in the House as we debate the modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement.

Could the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development share with Canadians the importance of this agreement to Canada and Ukraine?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Etobicoke Centre for his steadfast and unwavering support for a free and democratic Ukraine.

The modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement would mark a new era in the Canada-Ukraine economic relationship. It is fundamental for Canadian businesses and exporters to participate in Ukraine's economic reconstruction when it wins the war and recovers from Russia's illegal and unjustified invasion.

Canada has stood with Ukraine from its first days as a nation, and we will continue to be there with whatever it takes for as long as it takes.

* * *

[Translation]

LABOUR

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 360 workers at the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation are on strike. With the rising cost of living, they are demanding fairer and more equitable wages. As we have seen in the past, the Liberals and the Conservatives alike will trample on workers' rights by imposing special legislation. We in the NDP firmly believe that these workers have the right to fight for better working conditions.

Can the Prime Minister assure us here and now that he will not trample on their rights by imposing special legislation?

[English]

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure members that this side of the House believes strongly in collective bargaining. We believe that the best deals are reached at the collective bargaining table.

We are working with both sides right now to bring an end to this as quickly as possible. We believe that the hard work must be done by the employer and by the union. Deals made at the table are the most resilient and the longest lasting.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over 165,000 Canadians suffer from traumatic brain injuries every year. Brain injury patients are often shoved into expensive private care or left to fend for themselves. Decades of Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to support the more than 1.5 million Canadians currently suffering the consequences. Canadians deserve to be supported when they go through a health crisis.

Will the minister back my plan to create a comprehensive national strategy on brain injuries to promote awareness, prevention and treatment?

Government Orders

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, any time somebody sustains a brain injury, it has a devastating impact upon their life and the lives of those in their families.

The member is absolutely right. We have to do everything we can. That is why we are making critical investments across the health system, with \$200 billion of additional money being put in. Those dollars are to ensure that we not only can see better health outcomes, but also can have better prevention and better care.

We saw a fantastic announcement in British Columbia. There is more to come in the rest of the country. Health transformation is happening.

• (1520)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During question period, the government House leader and the member for Kingston and the Islands stated that I had provided misinformation about fires and batteries.

I would like to inform the House that the Bureau of Transportation's statistics says that 3.5% of hybrid and electric vehicles—

The Speaker: I hate to interrupt the member for Sarnia—Lambton, but in the Chair's eyes, it seems that is moving toward debate.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA-UKRAINE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-57, Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before question period, Ukrainians are not only fighting for their freedom but also fighting for all of us, and we need to be fighting for them. Canada has been fighting for them under the government. We have been a global leader in supporting Ukraine. Canada has committed over \$9 billion in assistance in financial, military and humanitarian development, along with other assistance. This includes \$5 billion in financial aid, which is the largest amount of financial aid, per capita, of any country in the world, along with almost \$2 billion in military support, about \$350 million in humanitarian support and so much more.

These steps are significant. They are important, and they are having an impact, but it will not be enough until Ukraine wins this war. If we want to stop genocide in Ukraine, global food shortages and inflation around the world, and if we want to protect our own sovereignty and security, we must ensure that Ukraine achieves a decisive victory. That means ensuring not only that Ukraine wins the war by regaining all of its territory including Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk, but also that Ukraine wins the peace, which means that it is secure as a member of NATO, that we secure reparations from Russia, that there is justice for Russian war crimes and that we help Ukraine rebuild.

This modernized Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement, which we are debating today here in the House, is an important component in helping Ukraine do just that, in helping Ukraine rebuild. It would help strengthen Ukraine's economy. It would facilitate investment and send a message to countries around the world that Canada has confidence in Ukraine, that Canadian business people have confidence in Ukraine, that they want to invest in Ukraine. Those other countries and people around the world who are looking for strong, reliable places to invest can do that too.

This is an excellent piece of legislation. This is an excellent free trade agreement, as I said at the outset of my remarks. This is good for Canada and Ukraine, economically good for Canadian workers and businesses, and good for Ukrainian workers and businesses. It is also an important step in supporting Ukraine's victory, in supporting our collective victory.

I was talking earlier about President Zelenskyy's visits to Canada in 2019 and his most recent visit a few weeks ago. I hope that President Zelenskyy returns to Canada soon after Ukraine wins this war. I hope that he is not focused on speaking about the war anymore, but on rebuilding Ukraine after that victory. I hope that he is once again focused on what he was focused on in 2019, which was how we can continue to expand the relationship between Canada and the Ukraine, not only in building a more secure world but also in expanding trade and our respective economies, something for which this Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement would be the foundation. When that day comes, as I know it will, then we will truly be able to say that it is a great day for Canada and a great day for Ukraine.

[Translation]

It is a great day for Canada and a great day for Ukraine.

Slava Kanadi. Slava Ukraini.

• (1525)

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that we want to help Ukraine in every way possible and that modernizing the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement is one way we can do that. I think this is a good step forward.

Government Orders

What concerns me about the bill we are debating today is that the whole process of bringing the new agreement to the House was flawed in every way in terms of the standard policy around bringing new trade agreements to this place. First of all, we were supposed to have a period of debate before beginning the negotiations so members could have some input into that. Second, there is policy around enough time after the treaty has been tabled, to see that, and then time to debate here. None of that was done for this bill. It has been done in the past, so it is not impossible. It is important that people here have a chance to properly debate our free trade agreements. I just wonder whether the member could comment on that.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, I will say a couple of things. One is that I cannot speak in depth about the process. I can speak about the contents of the bill. As I said during my remarks, I really do think this is a great bill for Canadian workers and businesses and a great bill for Ukraine economically as well.

I would also say this when we think about the process around this bill: As I mentioned during my remarks, it was in 2019 that our Prime Minister and President Zelenskyy announced that they were going to negotiate a modernized CUFTA. COVID hit, and then came the war on Ukraine. Despite the war, Ukraine and Canada wanted to negotiate, so a lot has been done to try to finalize negotiations and bring this free trade agreement here to the House as quickly as possible under very difficult circumstances. I just hope that is something we take into consideration as we think about the process that got us here.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate and thank my colleague from Etobicoke Centre for his speech and his commitment. We have the pleasure of serving together on the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group. I know how deeply committed he is to Ukraine in general and also to the current situation, which affects him personally, as we all know.

The Bloc Québécois is certainly in favour of Bill C-57. We are also in favour of establishing trade relations with Ukraine. This will enable Ukraine to make a quick recovery once the conflict is resolved, once Ukraine's victory is confirmed. This will allow Ukraine's economy to recover quickly.

I have a question about this bill in particular, with respect to the trade agreements Canada enters into with foreign countries.

Why is the government still insisting on leaving clauses like the investor-state dispute settlement, which can hurt democracy in some cases? I would like to know if my colleague is familiar with this concept and what he thinks about it.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question and for his work. As he said, we work very well together on many issues and as members of the parliamentary friendship group. We all support Ukraine together. I appreciate his support.

Perhaps we should have a conversation outside the House regarding the details. From what I have seen and from all the advice from trade experts, I am confident that this agreement between Canada and Ukraine will benefit both countries.

I would be pleased to speak to him when I am finished here.

[*English*]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what has been really clearly demonstrated is that Canada and Ukraine, the people of the two countries, definitely share really strong ties. Canada is here and remains here for Ukraine.

Canada is naturally a trading nation, so to be able to increase the number of countries we trade with is always a benefit, but how would this perhaps benefit the people of Ukraine? I would like to hear the member's comments on that.

• (1530)

Mr. Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her advocacy for and support of Ukraine during this important time.

There are two points here on how this would help Ukraine. The first is that it would be of tremendous economic benefit, just like it would be to Canada. I think that is something we need to remember. This is a critical time for Ukraine, in terms of its economy, given the damage that Russia has done and continues to do to Ukraine's exports and its economy.

The second thing is that when Ukraine wins this war, it will need to rebuild and it will need investment. This free trade agreement would provide an opportunity and a format that allows for a much greater investment in Ukraine in a sustainable and safe way that would ensure that Ukraine would receive the funds and the private sector investment it needs in order to rebuild.

I think that is good for Ukraine and good for all of us.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to bring the voices of Chatham-Kent—Leamington to the chamber. I do hope that my own voice will last for the 10 minutes I have been allotted.

It is an honour today, especially, because we are talking about Canada and our relationship with Ukraine, specifically about Bill C-57, which addresses a possible trade agreement enhancement. I not only bring the voices of Chatham-Kent—Leamington, but I also feel an affiliation with Canadians with an ethnic heritage from Ukraine. I put myself in that latter category. All four of my grandparents were born in Ukraine, of Mennonite background, and I have personally visited Ukraine three times. I will come back to that later in my speech. Today I literally wear my heart on my sleeve, as well as on my lapel, and the colours of my suit and tie are meant to signify my solidarity with Ukraine.

Government Orders

Conservatives were the first to successfully negotiate the current CUFTA agreement, brokered by then international trade minister, my colleague, the member for Abbotsford. With the opportunities facilitated by the 2017 CUFTA for Canadian and Ukrainian businesses, Canada-Ukraine bilateral trade reached its highest level ever in 2021, with Canada's merchandise exports to Ukraine totalling \$219 million and merchandise imports from Ukraine amounting to well over \$200 million.

We want to ensure that Bill C-57 is beneficial for both Ukraine and Canada, especially for Canada. At a time when our world is becoming increasingly unstable, an agreement that is favourable to both of our countries would go a long way toward bringing about much-needed stability to both countries and, of course, to our allies. We are committed to looking at this bill, with its 600 pages of text, and consulting with stakeholders from across Canada to ensure that we do get it right for the benefit of Canadians, including Ukrainian Canadians, and for Ukraine.

Ukraine has always been considered one of the breadbaskets of the world. At a time when so many nations are facing food shortages and food insecurity, there is nothing we would like to see more than Ukraine's reclaiming this title once again. Ukraine has 25% of the world's topsoil. My grandparents farmed there. They came to Canada and they farmed here. I am the third generation to live on the home farm. In my home office, I have a small sample of the topsoil from both my paternal grandparents' home farms.

My first visit to Ukraine was in November 2005, a year after the Orange Revolution. I distinctly remember the drive south from Kyiv with an Australian tomato grower, a friend of mine, Louis Chirnside. It is about a 700-kilometre drive to Nova Kakhovka, the city that has been in the news recently. It is built up the road from Kakhovka, "Nova" meaning new. It was built in the 1950s when the dam was built there, the dam that was recently destroyed on June 6 of this year.

A few hours into the drive, we noticed a trench being dug alongside the highway to facilitate the burying of a cable of some sort. Both Louis and I, coming from farm backgrounds on opposite sides of the world, asked our driver to stop. We got out and looked into the trench, down about four feet. We were looking for the horizon line, the line between topsoil and subsoil. We could not see it. It was pure topsoil. As a youth, I remember the stories of my grandfather Epp who grew up on the banks of the Molochna River. He used to say that if a horse passed away, it could be buried standing in their backyard with six feet of topsoil over its head. He was also prone to exaggeration, a quality that was not passed down genetically. Ukraine does have the natural resources in place, if the conditions are right, to return to being the breadbasket of Europe.

In July 2022, there was a glimpse of hope on the horizon when Russia signed on to the Black Sea grain initiative. The first ships left Ukrainian ports on August 1, 2022, making over 1,000 voyages from Ukraine's Black Sea ports and exporting over 32 million metric tons of Ukrainian-produced corn, wheat, sunflower oil, barley, rapeseed, soybeans and other products. It was successful for almost a year, until its termination on July 23, a year later almost to the day. Russia announced its intention to exit this agreement. Upon withdrawing from the deal, the Russian foreign ministry provided a lengthy justification for its decision that included criticisms of the

implementation of the agreement and its impacts on global food security.

• (1535)

The free world saw this for what it was: an attempt by Russia to exert its control and dominance over the rest of the global community by creating food insecurity and further dependence upon Russia. According to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, or CSIS, ironically, Russia is also accused of having stolen nearly 6 million metric tons of Ukrainian wheat and selling it as Russian product. Interestingly, the contribution of agriculture to Russia's GDP increased by 22% from 2021 to 2022. That is according to World Bank data. I wonder how that happened.

The impacts of the BSGI were global and helped to ease the world's food crisis. In addition, this initiative allowed the easing of global grain prices, which hit an all-time high in March 2022, in response to the invasion. Under the deal, the UN World Food Programme, the WFP, was able to export 80% of its wheat purchases from Ukraine, shipping over 725,000 metric tons of wheat to alleviate food insecurity in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

Earlier I referenced my three personal visits to Ukraine. My first, in 2005, was actually at the invitation of a company that had established a mayonnaise and ketchup factory in Nova Kakhovka. It is called Chumak. I was invited, along with my Australian friend, Louis, and a Scotsman processing tomatoes in Turkey, as part of a benchmarking exercise to compare the growing Ukrainian tomato-processing industry to the rest of the world, to compare its competitiveness.

Our host company was founded in the early 1990s, after the Berlin Wall fell and Ukraine became independent. Within a decade, many fledgling industries, once opened to capitalism, were growing rapidly, including processed tomato production. Ukrainians were reaching out to the world, to their allies for tech transfer. Canada and Ukraine in particular have two broad sectors where we should be natural partners: agriculture and agri-food and our natural resources.

Let me be clear. In order for Conservatives to agree to this legislation, it would have to be reciprocally beneficial for both Canada and Ukraine. The deal would have to allow both countries to be profitable, and the advantages would have to be for both countries as well. Conservatives would like to see the exports of our abundant natural resources, such as LNG, to Europe, including Ukraine, to break the European dependence on Russian energy and the subsequent consequences for world peace.

Government Orders

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister and the Liberal government do not seem to agree with that sentiment. If Canada truly wanted to make an impact on global greenhouse gas emissions, exporting our LNG, to replace coal and Russian-sourced energy, would top the list.

When the Prime Minister took office, there were 15 proposals for natural gas export terminals on his desk. Not one has been completed. This is just one more example of the government's failure to get major projects built, when the world needs LNG. Again, I restate that Canada should continue looking for ways to use our economic strengths to support the Ukrainian people, including by exporting our LNG to break European dependence.

The world needs the energy security Canada can supply. Now, more than ever in our history, the world needs Canadian LNG. Only Canada's Conservatives are focused on securing energy security for our allies and restoring the faith in our nation as a trusted partner on the world stage. As we did in 2017, Conservatives will always work to ensure that trade agreements are in the interest of Canada and of all Canadians. By working closely with our stakeholders across the country, we will get feedback on this legislation. We believe in supporting our Ukrainian allies in all ways, including trade. Again, we will ensure that this deal is jointly beneficial. I cannot say that enough times.

• (1540)

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my friend and colleague talked about the rich natural resources and topsoil, which are so important to agriculture, that exist in Ukraine. He talked about what Canada can do with our incredible natural resource of liquefied natural gas and its potential, as well as how the current government is stymying that from happening and the threat this poses to energy security and, therefore, global security. Could he expand on that?

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, we also have the natural resources. We are not necessarily competitors of Ukraine, but we have the expertise. That is particularly where I hope this deal will go. When we look at the 600 pages, the opportunities are there for tech transfer, both in our energy fields, with our expertise there, and, in particular, in our agricultural fields. Seed banks will be traded back and forth. There is agronomics. We have world-class educational institutions in the fields of agriculture. I have personally participated in that. Processing tomatoes is a very narrow field, but we share so much grain production. We have that expertise in our industry leaders, as well as in our educational institutions. That applies equally to our fossil fuel sector.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoyed my colleague's speech. Like him, I am a Mennonite with family that immigrated from Ukraine. There are many within our Conservative caucus who have Ukrainian roots and take great interest not only in the terrible situation Ukraine finds itself in right now, with the war and invasion by Russia, but also in the many Ukrainians who have been displaced, found their way to Canada and are here as refugees.

Could the member comment a bit on the Ukrainians who are settling in his area of Canada? How are they being received, and how are they doing right now?

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, yes, I am aware of many refugees from Ukraine who have settled in our region. In fact, I am working with several sponsors who are looking to facilitate the next steps in the process for these hard-working folks who have come here. Some want to return, but the majority of those I have run into want to make Canada their home. As I understand it, there are some pathways that are now beginning to open up for them to extend their stay beyond their three-year visa and become citizens of Canada.

Canada needs to do a better job of turning immigrants into taxpayers. The Ukrainians whom I have run into, and those whom many of my colleagues have had association with, will make phenomenal citizens and taxpayers of Canada.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague who spoke a lot about energy and large multinational oil companies.

Unfortunately, this type of agreement often puts multinationals, the big oil companies of the world, on the same footing as states. It is rather shameful and I would like my colleague to comment on that. With this agreement, we missed the opportunity to give more power back to states so that they take precedence over multinationals. There is a danger in letting these companies lead the world and take the place of states.

• (1545)

[English]

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Speaker, I am going to turn to a response on this very issue by Mario Lévesque, who is the chief executive of the Quebec-based Utica Resources. He said that the rationale for exporting natural gas from Quebec is “crystal clear” and would generate “tens of billions in royalties and taxes” for Ottawa. He went on to say, “Quebec has enormous quantities of natural gas (about 20% of Canada's total recoverable gas), enough to replace all Russian imports into Germany for 20 to 40 years.”

I did not have time in my speech to get into all the opportunities that Canada has lost, which would have benefited Canada and our allies.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the people of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook and to speak to Bill C-57, with respect to the very important Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement.

I want to start off by saying, of course, that trade agreements are very important for countries, especially Canada. We have probably among the best and most innovative workforce in the world. Therefore, we are bringing a lot to any trade deal from which we would benefit, and we have seen some large benefits for Atlantic Canadians. In many trade deals, we have seen benefits, including this one, which we signed in 2017, with respect to seafood. Atlantic Canadians are well known for supplying to the world, and Canada is number one with respect to that.

[*Translation*]

I will take a moment to talk about the first major free trade agreement, which was signed in 1987-88. At the time, the Macdonald commission, named after its chair, Donald S. Macdonald, a former Liberal politician, produced a report that concluded upon analysis that Canada was well placed to enter into a free trade agreement with the United States, that it should take the risk and seize this ideal opportunity.

I must congratulate and thank Mr. Mulroney, who accepted that report and began the work to prepare Canada to fulfill its commitments. Hon. members will recall that in 1984, during his election campaign, Mr. Mulroney was against free trade. In 1988, he changed his mind and decided to campaign in favour of free trade. Thanks to that, the first major free trade agreement was signed, and I am very pleased about that. At the time, I was not so sure.

Since forming government in 2015, we have delivered three major agreements.

[*English*]

The CETA agreement was a major one that we brought forward in 2018. Following that, we had the TPP, the trans-Pacific partnership agreement, and then there was the CUSMA, the agreement with Canada, Mexico and the U.S. I will talk about that one in a special way, because there are extremely important points I want to make.

The CETA agreement is with the European Union, the second-largest market in the world for Canada, and 98% of the tariffs were removed. That was from 25%. It opened up the market and dropped the prices for Canadians and European countries at the time. We had to make a bilateral agreement with the United Kingdom afterward, because it left the European Union. The deal with the United Kingdom was \$29 billion a year back and forth in 2019. The U.K. is the fifth-largest trading partner with Canada after the U.S., China, Mexico and Japan.

With the trans-Pacific partnership in 2018 that we were successful in signing on to, Canada gained trading potential with Asia, which has half a billion people and is a very fast-growing market. It eliminated up to 98% of trade tariffs, but 100% on seafood; this benefited Atlantic Canadians, which I am sure my colleague from Nova Scotia is proud of.

I want to talk about CUSMA, the Canada-U.S.-Mexico agreement. I cannot thank the Minister of Finance enough, because she was very patient and effective. We know that, at the time, we were dealing with Trump, who was on the warpath. We know what he said. Prior to the negotiations, he said that there would be no deal if

Government Orders

supply management was included. Did we get supply management? Absolutely, we did.

● (1550)

Then Trump said that there would be no deal unless we changed the courts and the judges. He wanted only American courts and American judges. Did he get that? Absolutely not. He would send tweets out early in the morning. He said that there would be no agreement unless there was a five-year sunset clause. Did he get that? Absolutely not. Why not? We cannot expect the business community to invest billions of dollars if there is a five-year limit. The business community needs to know it is ongoing and will be successful.

Our government was very successful in delivering that agreement. It is very important to note that it represents \$2 billion per day. We saw what effect there can be on our economy when the truckers shut down the bridges at the border.

I want to note the Conservatives were saying to sign it at all costs because we could not afford to lose the deal. We stood our ground and we delivered for Canadians. We delivered for Canadian workers. We delivered for Canadian businesses. I am extremely proud of that.

I want to talk about this important Canada-Ukraine agreement. The agreement was signed back in 2017. In 2017, that agreement was very important. In 2019, trade was worth \$447 million, with \$220 million in imports and \$227 million in exports, which is pretty well even. The top priority export to Canada was seafood in 2021. In 2022, it changed because of the war of course, and the main trade was in armoured vehicles and parts, medicine and again seafood.

What we import to Canada from Ukraine are fats, oils, iron, steel and electronics. These are very important for Canadians. It is important to support Ukraine. We have been there from the beginning. However, it is important we do it now so when the war is over, when Ukraine wins that war, Canada's business community and workers are ready to deliver. That is what is important in this deal. That is why there will be more good-paying jobs as we move forward.

The benefits are preferential market access, but the new chapters are where we need to focus. There are new chapters on trade in services, on investments, on temporary entry, telecommunications, financial services and inclusive trade. There are updated chapters on labour, the environment, transparency and anti-corruption. There is a new chapter that has been put in place for the first time between both countries on trade and indigenous peoples, in addition to chapters on trade and gender and small businesses. This would allow marginalized Canadians and Ukrainians to access this free trade agreement and prosper.

Government Orders

Some key areas in the chapters include the development and administrative measures. We will see a reduction in red tape and a lower trade costs. In the investment chapter, we see the modernized dispute settlement, which is not like the one the Americans wanted but is one that strengthens the alternatives to avoid arbitration. In trade deals there should not be winners and losers. We should all be winners and work together to achieve the same goals.

The temporary entry chapter is extremely important. It would allow Canadians to work and contribute in Ukraine without having to get a work permit. It would allow spouses to do the same. These are great opportunities for Canadians to support but also invest in and help build Ukraine after it wins the war.

I want to close by talking about one key area Canada wants to ensure, which is the cultural piece. We have made sure there would be an exception for the cultural aspect in both countries.

This is a great deal. It is a great opportunity for Canada to continue to work and support Ukraine. Do not forget we welcomed many Ukrainians in the last two years because of the war. There is a large population of Ukrainians in Canada. The trading between both countries will be great and prosperous as we move forward.

• (1555)

The Deputy Speaker: It is great to see the hon. member's voice is back. Last week he was having a really hard time with that voice of his.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we still do not understand why, following a health crisis and after having removed investor-state dispute settlement from NAFTA, Canada insists on including it in new agreements. It poses a constant threat to democracy and the right to legislate. In the case of Ukraine, for example, we would not be able to seize assets, as Ukraine has done with some of its citizens for collaborating with Russia, because we could end up in court.

Why does Canada continue to insist on including clauses that promote the power of multinationals over democracy?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question, but I would remind him, as I said in my speech, that there is a process in place at the tribunal where both parties will be able to work closely together. There will be fewer wins and losses, with a focus on collaboration instead to ensure that both parties can continue to move forward and find success in the future.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask more or less the same question that the Bloc member just asked about the investor-state dispute mechanisms. He said it was not like the investor-state dispute mechanism that the Americans wanted. I wonder if the member can explain more about that. How does it differ from the investor-state dispute mechanism in the Canada-Europe treaty and the CPTPP? Those are things the NDP is not in favour of. Is this some sort of

ISDS light? What is it that we can and cannot do, and can face as governments being sued by multinational corporations?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I remind my colleague, as I did with my colleague from the Bloc, that each country has a right to regulate on key areas themselves so they can control certain aspects of it. The other part is a modernized dispute-settlement mechanism with strengthened alternatives to avoid arbitration. This, hopefully, would ensure that both countries are winners in the process.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to go into the revisionist history that my colleague recited here in this House. He should know that as the minister who was responsible for negotiating the original Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, I would be supportive of any reasonable steps we can take to improve our economic relationship with Ukraine and help it up on its feet.

My question for the member has to do with liquefied natural gas. As he knows, Ukraine has an energy security problem because it can no longer get natural gas from Russia. The obvious place for Ukraine to turn to is Canada, and yet our Prime Minister has said that there is no business case to be made for exporting LNG. Does my colleague actually support the moral case for Canada exporting its LNG to Ukraine to help Ukraine with its energy security challenge?

• (1600)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that article 19.2 commits both countries to review this agreement within two years and to expand it where it needs expansion. This is a great opportunity to have conversations around different strategies to support Ukraine as we move forward.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is in terms of the benefit to Ukraine for Canada to be able to export to it, as well as for it to have open access to our market, and how that really helps Ukraine in its recovery methods.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, the timing could not be more crucial. We know that Ukraine is in a very difficult situation in a fight for its life. We know that Canada is behind Ukrainians supporting them in any way we can. For Canada to be ready to move forward right after Ukraine wins this important fight will build Ukraine much faster. Both countries will benefit from that success.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I can see that you have been enjoying listening to the debate on the proposed free trade agreement with Ukraine, so we will continue with that.

Government Orders

This is important. This is a free trade agreement. We have already announced our position, so no one will be surprised to hear that the Bloc Québécois will support the implementation of this agreement. Today, we are not discussing the content of the agreement, but rather its implementation.

We know that Quebeckers are in favour of free trade. We have historically been in favour of free trade. Since the time of the free trade agreement with the United States, then NAFTA with Mexico, Quebeckers have always been leaders in trade with our friends and partners. Back in the day, Ontario was against NAFTA, and the auto industry was against it. We Quebeckers were for it because we believe that countries with smaller economies benefit from free trade. The day Quebec becomes independent, international trade will be part of the solution to our economic equation, just as it is for Canada, which is a very small economy.

We support this proposed agreement. Obviously, the timing is important; there is a war in Ukraine, and it is important to show our solidarity, so we support it.

Today, the government would have us believe that we are discussing the content of this free trade agreement among parliamentarians. However, it is very important to understand how a free trade agreement is negotiated. When two countries meet to negotiate a free trade agreement like this one, the first step is very easy. The countries sit down together and establish a certain number of key principles. For example, they may choose to be in favour of trade, freedom or what have you. Once they have agreed on the key principles, which is easy and takes about two hours, and that is hardly an exaggeration, they establish the exceptions. From that point on, the free trade agreement negotiations are focused on exceptions. We could be talking about cultural exceptions, since Quebec is the only francophone nation in North America, or agricultural exceptions that seek to protect supply management. We could be talking about all kinds of exceptions for our industries.

It is at these critical moments that Quebec usually gets sacrificed. Take, for example, supply management. We know that when the agreements were negotiated with the European Union, the United States and, right now, the United Kingdom, the government said that it would sacrifice Quebec aluminum and Quebec dairy farmers and that it would protect the auto industry. The devil is in the details.

Obviously, the problem is that we have no control over what the negotiators negotiate. We have absolutely no say in the matter. What we are currently discussing is the implementation of the agreement.

Earlier today, the parliamentary secretary and member for Winnipeg North, who is chatting with his colleagues across the way, told us that we Quebeckers are lucky because this time, supply management, our farmers and our dairy farmers were not sacrificed in any way. However, the truth is that the country in this particular case, Ukraine, did not have any surplus milk to export. When it comes to Wisconsin, which does have surplus milk to export, we are suddenly part of the exceptions that are set aside and supply management is sacrificed. When it comes to French cheese in the context of our negotiations with the European Union, supply management is sacrificed, just as it is in the case of British cheese.

In this case, apparently these irritants do not exist, because the major exceptions that Quebec typically calls for were not central to the negotiations.

The fact remains that we are sitting here like a bunch of puppets, discussing the implementation of something that was negotiated over our heads. In the U.S., Congress and elected officials give the mandate to negotiate treaties, whereas here in Canada, mandates come from the executive and ministers. Parliament has absolutely no say. That is the root of the issue, and that is why, in many cases, we disagree with certain provisions in these free trade agreements.

It is similar in Europe, where treaties are ratified with the European Union, and member states, even the smaller ones, have a strong voice. We saw this with Belgium's grievances in relation to the free trade agreement with the European Union, for example. In these cases, the smaller states are very involved in making decisions. In the present case, however, Quebec was not consulted.

● (1605)

The job of implementing free trade agreements is left to provincial legislatures like the Quebec National Assembly. They are told that they are going to have to change their laws to implement a free trade agreement about which Parliament was never consulted. The same thing is happening today. We are being forced to vote on the mechanics of a car without having chosen its make, colour or options. Still, it is up to us to legislate on the spark plug about to be replaced inside the car. That is essentially what is happening and it is obviously problematic.

Not everything in this treaty is perfect. My colleague with the fantastic tie, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, talked about the fact that our Liberal colleague was unable to answer the question about relations between states and multinationals. There is the matter of multinationals suing states for what could amount to expropriation, depending on how it is defined in the free trade agreements. This has always been a problem. We saw it with NAFTA. At the time, the multilateral agreement on investment was derailed because of that.

These are the kinds of provisions that say, for instance, that if Canada decides to apply environmental policies that are not strict, but modern, a Ukrainian investor who invests here and feels affected by these policies could sue the Canadian government, the Canadian taxpayer and the Quebec taxpayer because they felt aggrieved by these environmental policies. This is a major problem.

Earlier, the Liberal member was unable to answer the question on this subject. He did not even understand the question, because he confused the state-to-state dispute settlement mechanism, which exists in an agreement like this and is an arbitration mechanism that works relatively well in most cases, with the dispute settlement mechanism between a multinational corporation and a state, which involves the courts. This denies Canada its sovereignty. It denies our state its sovereignty. It is highly problematic and should no longer be included in free trade agreements.

Government Orders

I will also come back to how it is negotiated. Parliament does not grant negotiating mandates. It is the government and the ministers who, following discussions behind closed doors, decide to grant a negotiating mandate. Cabinet solidarity keeps them mum. Then this all comes before us and we have nothing to say about it. Parliament needs to get in the habit of restricting the power of the executive branch in advance, before it negotiates these agreements.

That is precisely the objective of Bill C-282, which was introduced by the Bloc Québécois. Since we were never asked our opinion, we decided to introduce a bill that requires the government to respect our supply management system and preserve it in its entirety when negotiating free trade agreements. Why do we have to take this unique approach, which involves locking the government into something ahead of time? The reason is that Parliament is never asked to have its say, and that is a big problem.

I would like to add that there are obviously good things about the bill to implement the 2023 free trade agreement. There is a chapter about corruption, transparency and responsible business conduct. The provisions on responsible conduct propose voluntary, non-binding codes of conduct.

I would like to remind the government that, this week, we will be debating Bill C-290, which deals with the protection of whistleblowers. It is a bill that the government itself should have introduced a long time ago. All of the wonderful principles of transparency and respect for institutions that are set out in this bill are found in Bill C-290. The government will have to put its money where its mouth is. If it is good for the Canada-Ukraine agreement, then the government must support the Bloc Québécois's Bill C-290 at third reading.

In closing, this is an important free trade agreement that builds diplomatic ties. It is symbolic and an expression of goodwill toward Ukraine. Of course, Ukraine is a small trading partner.

• (1610)

The effect this agreement will have on our economy will therefore be minor, but it is important to express our solidarity with Ukraine at this time.

I am ready to answer questions from my colleagues.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that Bloc members are supportive of the legislation.

Economic trade agreements are very positive overall for the nation in that they create all forms of middle-class jobs, opportunities for entrepreneurs and so forth. We have seen that first-hand. However, this is a unique trade agreement in the sense that it is with Ukraine, and Ukraine is at war. I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts on how the House passing this legislation in a timely fashion could have a very positive impact in Europe, given the war taking place today.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by reiterating to my colleague that free trade is, indeed, important.

Free trade agreements can help create jobs, but the gains from free trade must be properly distributed among the citizens of the countries involved. There are always winners and losers.

Of course, the parliamentary secretary is aware that Ukraine is a minor trading partner for Canada. It is a very small trading partner in terms of volume. As I said, it is a country at war, and we must express our solidarity. If the parliamentary secretary is trying to get me to say—as the Conservatives and his own government are saying—that we need to hurry up and produce dirty hydrogen and extract more gas to export to Ukraine, I think I will leave it to the Conservatives and Liberals to share that message. They are very good at it.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned off the top that the Bloc was supporting the bill, and it seems to be a *fait accompli*, that everything was done behind closed doors and we are just implementing it. However, there is a section in the bill he was concerned about on investor-state dispute mechanisms, which is the foreign investment protection agreement of 1995 rolled into this new version. I am wondering if the Bloc will support this and then ask for amendments in committee. What are they going to do about this?

These are things that both the NDP and Bloc seem to be concerned about, where we would have foreign corporations that could sue Canadian governments at all levels for legislation that we want to bring in to protect our environment and protect our citizens. I am wondering what the Bloc's attitude toward that is.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, it is sad that the issue of multinationals suing states still features in free trade agreements. They are more likely to be found in bilateral free trade agreements such as these. We could say that this is a Canadian mistake because the government had the opportunity to have this removed from the agreement.

To answer my colleague's very good question, when this bill is studied in committee, we certainly will not be supporting this part of the agreement implementation bill. We will not be in favour of these clauses. This reminds us that we must think more broadly about the impact of these clauses. In the 1990s, there was the whole issue of environmental policies. However, as my colleague, the international trade critic, said, the reality is that today a Russian oligarch with one foot in Ukraine could make an investment in Canada. By imposing a sanctions regime, we could be liable to be sued by a Russian oligarch because we have allowed these multinationals to sue the state.

I think this is one of those types of clauses that go well beyond what was originally intended. We will have to think about removing them sooner or later.

Government Orders

• (1615)

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's trenchant condemnation of the lack of transparency in most of these negotiations. What a shame the Liberals did not listen during his speech. Had they listened, they might understand when we ask them questions about investor-state dispute settlement. Maybe they would not get that mixed up with state-to-state dispute settlement, and then maybe they could avoid giving us an answer that has nothing to do with the question. I think it would have done them good to pay a little attention.

As a member of the Standing Committee on International Trade and as a member of the same party as my colleague, I would ask him whether he agrees with my voting against this specific provision despite supporting the cause.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, there are still people here, including my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, who believe in the work of parliamentarians, who believe in the work of MPs and who believe in the legislative process. That is why it bothers my colleague when members of the party in power joke around and talk and play on their computers and do not listen to opposition members.

When they read the blues, because they were not listening in the House, they will see that I agree with my colleague 100%. In committee, we will have absolutely no qualms about voting against these provisions, which deserve much more in-depth consideration because Canada is party to a lot of bilateral agreements.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to such an important piece of legislation, not just for Canada and for the people of Canada but, indeed, for Ukraine.

In my comments and remarks on this today, I will indicate why I think it is so incredibly important for us to do this, particularly right now, while Ukraine is still engaged in this conflict, which was entirely provoked by Vladimir Putin and has affected their livelihoods to such a high degree.

What we know, for starters, is that Bill C-57 is a modernization of an existing agreement that is already in place with Ukraine for free trade. This is an opportunity for us to modernize what is in place, to bring in new, very important language to the agreement, which reflects the changes in trade we are seeing throughout the world right now, in Canada and everywhere else.

I think it is also extremely important to talk about the fact that Ukraine's economy decreased by roughly 50% just within the last year. Members can imagine the impact of that if it were to happen to Canada. We can visualize how devastating that would be.

As it is a key ally of ours, I think it is extremely important that we prepare for what is next for Ukraine. When they ultimately do win this conflict, this war with Russia, we will have made sure that all of the tools are in place so that Ukraine can come bouncing back as quickly and effectively as possible to, most importantly, rebuild their country and their economy, as it relates to the outputs they had.

This is where Canada has an advantage. I should note that Canada is the first country to modernize its free trade agreement with Ukraine since the war broke out a year and a half ago. Why I see this as being so important is that, to make sure that Ukraine can hit the ground running when the time comes, we need to make sure that these agreements are in place.

I am sure that many members of the House are aware that the Canadian company Aecon has already lined up contracts to help Ukraine rebuild. This is going to be some of the economic advantages for Canada. On the other side of things, we are going to see advantages for Ukraine, as they have access to parts of the Canadian market.

My understanding is that the existing trade agreement already provides the elimination of 99.9% of import duties from Ukraine. This means that the goods and services that Ukraine will be trying to sell outside of their borders, after and during the time it is rebuilding, would have an open market to Canada. This is incredibly important because, when a country is going through that process of rebuilding, as Ukraine ultimately will be, they are going to be looking for open doors in the world.

For Canada to be at the forefront of that and to say that we are here to support Ukraine through trade, commerce and opportunities, new opportunities, in a mutual way that benefits both countries is extremely important.

We know that trade, generally speaking, increases the quality of life in both the respective countries that are trading. Indeed, that is why we see trade happening throughout the world, and that is why the Liberal Party and the Liberal government is so supportive of free trade. It is one of the reasons why we have introduced and signed more free trade agreements than any other government in Canadian history. It is because we strongly believe and see the value in trade as it exists with other countries.

There is a net benefit, at the end of the day, for both countries, if those trade relationships are set up in a way that is designed to be prosperous for both, so that both can prosper and neither is at a particular disadvantage. I, like others, really hope we can see this bill get over the finish line before the end of this year, by Christmas. That would really put Ukraine in the position that it needs to be in.

• (1620)

When I say that I hope the bill gets past the finish line, I mean I hope this bill finishes the process in this chamber, gets to the Senate, finishes its process in the Senate, and then it can be signed by the Governor General as an act of Parliament by that point.

I genuinely hope we can put aside partisanship. I certainly am not one to shy away from being partisan at the right opportunities. I certainly am, but on this particular issue, I think it is much greater than just Canada. It is much greater than just one political party or another political party. This is an issue, quite frankly, about supporting Ukraine with everything we have been doing. I think it is absolutely critical that this be one of those things.

Government Orders

For all we have done in terms of support, such as training troops, being there for Ukraine and providing whatever we can while it fights the war, this is probably one of the most important things we could do to set Ukraine up for success when it wins the war. Really, what this ultimately comes down to is making sure that it is successful.

When I think of Canada being the first to modernize this agreement, I am reminded of when I was on the national defence committee from 2015 to 2019. I had the opportunity to travel while we were studying Operation Unifier, and another operation, the name of which escapes me right now. We travelled to Ukraine, and of course, this is when the conflict in Crimea was ongoing, and we would hear from the various leaders in Ukraine.

I can vividly recall one conversation our representatives from the defence committee had while sitting at a table with the chair of the Ukraine defence committee. He made a point of telling us that the importance of Canada's role in being there was so much greater than anything it could provide them militarily.

The importance of Canada being there means that other countries are following suit. We could even see that in the brigade Canada was leading. There were a number of countries lining up behind it that wanted to be part of what Canada was committed to. It really struck me when I heard those words what we can signal to the rest of the world when we are involved in something. Canada has a reputation throughout the world of being a country that can really lead the way and that can show good judgment.

When I think of that, and when I think of this agreement, it is another way we can show the world that, yes, Ukraine is going through a conflict right now. We will be there to support it, but we also want to make sure we are there to help it rebuild when this is over and when it ultimately wins the war.

What we are seeing with this agreement is, in my opinion, another opportunity for Canada to show the way, to show leadership, so we can encourage other countries throughout the world to do the same thing. We can encourage others to sit down with Ukraine and talk about how they can also participate in open and free access to Ukraine's economy, and have it reciprocated.

I see this not as just another free trade agreement. I see it as Canada's opportunity to, once again, show leadership in this world. That is why being the first country to modernize its agreement with Ukraine, I think, is so incredibly important.

As the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader said previously, I really hope we can get this past the finish line here, in the Senate, and with the Governor General by Christmas, so we can show that leadership not only to Ukraine but also throughout the world.

• (1625)

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly, I appreciate the impassioned speech. We know that Canada has given significant support to Ukraine. Thus far, it is almost \$10 billion, I think, by the addition.

One of the concerns I have is the way that Canada appears, in my mind, in spite of the incredible “woke” legislation that is woven into this free trade agreement.

Another concern is this. Why would we negotiate a free trade agreement now when we have given Ukraine significant amounts of money? Why do we need a free trade agreement with a country that is at war? To me, that puts it in a significant and difficult bargaining position.

I believe that Canada is taking advantage of Ukraine with a free trade agreement at this time. I really wonder if the Liberal government has given any thought to that.

The Deputy Speaker: I would make the comment that we were non-partisan a second ago.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: We certainly were, Mr. Speaker. I have to admit that I did not see that question coming.

At the very outset of the question, by referring to “woke” words in this agreement, the member is wanting to politicize this. Let us remember, and I hope the member who made those comments reflects on this, that this is wording that was agreed to by both Canada and Ukraine. To be critical of this legislation and the words in it, you are also being critical of Ukraine and its position on this.

I know other members are kind of heckling, but I hope it is only that individual member's perspective on it, and it is not that of the member for Abbotsford's, whom I hear talking back there. I really hope this is a one-off in the Conservative Party. If this is the way Conservatives are going in terms of how they are going to ultimately vote on this, I am absolutely floored.

The Deputy Speaker: I am just the chair occupant. Members are using the word “you” in the debate we are having today.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate the comments of my colleague opposite.

Given the situation that Ukraine will be in if this war ends, and we do want it to end, I would like to know whether my colleague would support simply consolidating the agreements signed since 2017 to facilitate Ukraine's reconstruction.

Should we not simplify these free trade agreements so that Ukraine can get back on its feet quickly and go back to what it was before, a prosperous country with which we enjoyed an extremely pleasant and harmonious trade relationship?

• (1630)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, this is one thing I found to be so remarkable about the question that came from my Conservative colleague just moments ago. He basically said that we have already given Ukraine all this money, and then he asked why we need to have a free trade agreement with it and if we think it really cares about free trade right now. I think I am being generous in my paraphrasing of that, but the reality is that I am convinced Ukraine wants this in place. Ukraine wants to make sure that when it does win the war, it has the resources to hit the ground running. That is why we put these agreements in place now. To the member's question whether we should consolidate and do other things to make that even more effective and happen faster, absolutely, we should.

I am still in awe of the question the member for Cumberland—Colchester asked me. I am perplexed by where Conservatives are going with this, and it is not what I was expecting. Yes, we need to be there for Ukraine. We need to make it as easy as possible for our trade agreements with it to work as effectively and efficiently as possible so that when it does win the war, it can rebuild that country very quickly.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about how important this agreement is, and there is a lot in it that I will be speaking about later this evening, but this trade agreement, I understood, was negotiated and completed in April. Therefore, if this is such important legislation, and I believe it is, why did it take the government so long to bring it forward and then to bring it forward to the House, which has not even allowed us an opportunity to speak to our caucuses about this particular legislation?

If it wants the support and wants everybody to be on board, why did it take so long to bring this forward in such an irresponsible manner?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that, yes, the agreement was negotiated in April, but it was not signed until September. It was just signed, and here we are in October with the legislation.

Should we always look for opportunities to be faster at things? Absolutely, but I would not, by any means, say this has been a slow process.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-57, which seeks to ratify the free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine. I would like to share some thoughts on this agreement and why it deserves our attention and our careful review.

First, it is important to remind the House that Canada has traditionally been a defender of democratic values, human rights and the rule of law internationally. Since its independence in 1991, Ukraine has made significant progress in these areas. Canada has always maintained an amicable relationship with Ukraine. Canada was the first western country to recognize its sovereignty. In reviewing this agreement, we can see that we have an opportunity to strengthen our commitment to these fundamental values and provide meaning-

Government Orders

ful support to Ukraine. That being said, we reaffirm our solidarity with Ukraine in its quest for stability, prosperity and liberty.

Under the circumstances, the best way for Canada to help Ukraine in its battle against the Russian invasion is to enable it to end its dependence on Russian energy. One way to do that is to maintain and improve trade with Ukraine, and energy should be a big part of that. We are in favour of reducing obstacles to free trade, especially in the context of trade relations with a country that shares our values.

The Conservatives initiated free trade negotiations with Ukraine. The Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement finally came into effect in 2017. That agreement was a win-win for both Canada and Ukraine. When two democracies help each other, the whole world wins. Exporting our natural resources is a golden opportunity for Canada to raise its profile internationally. Now more than ever, producing and exporting our liquefied natural gas, or LNG, would enable Canadians to create wealth while also greatly assisting Ukraine's efforts to liberate itself from Russia's influence.

Canada is privileged to possess resources that are prized around the world. One of those resources is LNG. This energy source is a transition fuel that offers excellent energy efficiency and has less environmental impact than the other energy sources the world is trying to distance itself from. Common sense dictates that we should use this resource to our advantage and allow our allies, such as Ukraine, to benefit from its abundance.

Unfortunately, for ideological reasons, the government refuses to take advantage of this strategic resource that would help our citizens, our allies, and the health of our planet. In my own riding, a major LNG project never saw the light of day because of the Liberal government's anti-energy attitude. The absence of strong signals in favour of LNG development in Quebec and Canada is preventing Canadians from accessing much-needed funds and is forcing our allies to rely on dictatorships for their energy supply.

The most effective way for Canada to support our Ukrainian allies in their fight against the Russian invasion is by offering them a way out of their dependence on Russian gas and oil. Ratifying Bill C-57 is paramount to continuing our support for democracy, freedom and the rule of law internationally.

Not only is this trade relationship important for preserving our values in the world, but this relationship also benefits our Canadian businesses. For example, our auto sector can expand its market by exporting its products to another country without facing too many obstacles.

Government Orders

• (1635)

Our trade relationship is important for ensuring that we have access to agricultural products. Our imports of agricultural products allow for a safe supply of quality products. What is more, to help our local farmers, eliminating obstacles for farm machinery and equipment helps our farmers get access to more efficient tools at a lower cost.

This agreement is part of our long and enduring commitment to the Ukrainian people. The Ukrainian communities in Canada play a very important role in our society. We have the second-largest Ukrainian diaspora in the world. Some 1.3 million Canadians of Ukrainian origin live here and enrich our culture and our economy.

This agreement is part of the Canadian strategy of advocating free trade. We adopted this strategy to promote the economic development of our businesses and to make them more competitive. Unfortunately, when the government and its Bloc allies decide to become anti-energy and stand in the way of our Canadian producers, it makes it impossible for our country to unlock the full potential of our abundant natural resources. We have to be realistic. It is true that our diverse exports and imports with Ukraine are important. However, the thing that would set us apart and truly help Ukraine in its war effort is our liquefied natural gas.

Anti-energy measures hurt our economy and prevent us from being the energy allies we should be, but the carbon tax is also a barrier for businesses here at home. The additional burden of a tax that directly and indirectly affects all goods circulating in Canada gives imported goods a considerable advantage over our local products, which are overtaxed compared to goods entering our country.

We need to be aware of the important role Canada has to play on the international stage. Although the Liberal-Bloc-NDP coalition may not see it, what sets us apart is our natural resources. This free trade agreement is an excellent opportunity for Canada to set itself apart on the world stage. We should be proud of our environmental standards in energy production. My colleagues need to understand that we have an excellent opportunity to take action for Canada, Ukraine and the environment.

We are proud to support Ukraine in its efforts to repel the Russian invasion. It is our duty to stand up against any forces that threaten democracy, freedom and the rule of law. We are pleased to welcome Ukrainian refugees who have had to flee their homeland because of the war in their country. By taking a favourable approach to Ukraine and supporting their economy, while promoting our own, we continue to support an ally that is important to us and to the free world, especially since by improving our relations with the Ukrainian state, we are demonstrating our commitment to Ukrainian communities here in Canada.

As parliamentarians, it is our duty to examine this bill and ensure that it is drafted in the best possible way to maximize the benefits of such an agreement. When a democracy is under threat, we must all rally behind it to defend the values and principles that unite us. Supporting the Ukrainian economy is part of our collective war effort to promote democracy around the world. This free trade agreement with Ukraine is part of Canada's multi-faceted support for Ukraine.

In principle, Bill C-57 appears to be in line with Canadian values and principles. We will have to work hard as parliamentarians to ensure that a free trade agreement between Ukraine and Canada has the greatest possible positive impact on both our countries. Conservatives will always work to improve the interests of Canadians.

• (1640)

We are also committed to helping our Ukrainian allies, especially given the difficult situation they are facing in their conflict with Russia. This assistance takes many forms, and if, after study, this free trade agreement is beneficial to both Canada and Ukraine, we should support it.

[English]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard a lot more in the hon. member's speech about what Canada could sell to Ukraine than about what it means to Ukraine to have access to the Canadian market and have the benefit of more customers to help it develop its economy through the sale of goods, like steel and tools. It has done great work on rolling stock for railways.

Can the hon. member talk about the opportunity we are giving Ukraine to sell into our market to help it develop its market?

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel: Mr. Speaker, I think this is going to require some meaningful discussion, because we need to come up with one of the best agreements, one that benefits both Canada and Ukraine.

I noticed something. I know that our liquefied natural gas would fill a need for Europeans and Ukrainians. However, the government is preventing it from being exported. Seeing the unfortunate situation the Ukrainians are in, I think Canada is well placed to help them on that front.

• (1645)

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are in favour of the principle of this agreement. The Bloc Québécois is also an ally on the Ukraine issue. We agree on that. However, I would like to hear my colleague's views on a missed opportunity in this agreement, namely, bringing multinational corporations back under government authority rather than putting them on the same footing as governments.

My colleague talked about oil companies and large energy corporations. There is a risk of lawsuits with these large multinationals. In short, putting them on the same footing and not restoring this inequality means that a state could become their puppet. The risk of a lawsuit is not trivial. I would like to know what my colleague thinks.

Government Orders

Mr. Richard Martel: Mr. Speaker, I think that the missed opportunity was not to have supported liquefied natural gas projects, which would now be better for the environment. We are in a transition and I think that, on the other side of the Atlantic, in Europe, countries like Ukraine are still wondering why Canada will not allow natural gas exports.

We can do it. We are a nation of natural resources, and we are the best at harnessing and developing them. The technology is improving day by day.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech and to the question from the Bloc Québécois.

The Bloc Québécois supports the free trade agreement with Ukraine, but opposes the export of liquefied natural gas to Europe. Does my colleague think that the Bloc Québécois is trying to have it both ways?

Mr. Richard Martel: Mr. Speaker, I think that the Bloc Québécois should be a little more realistic and realize what is going on in Canada and Quebec, especially with the carbon tax. I think that people in my riding are pretty unhappy about inflation, and the carbon tax is part of it.

I think that party has some serious soul-searching to do. I am not sure it is the party of the regions anymore.

[*English*]

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are here to talk about a really important piece of legislation, but if you will permit me, I just want to take 30 seconds to mention a constituent I made a promise to. She is actually one of your constituents, but we may have some crossover in the days ahead with redistribution.

Mary Fraser is a resident of south Berwick, and I had the privilege of going to her 100th birthday at the Waterville fire hall. I promised not only that I would wish her a happy birthday, and I know you have done the same, Mr. Speaker, but that I would make sure it gets into Hansard so it will forever be on the record here. A big round of applause for her. We love Mary, and I hope she is able to watch this at home when her family takes a clip of it.

[*Translation*]

We are here to debate Bill C-57, an act to implement the 2023 free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine. Behind me are my colleagues from Etobicoke Centre and Outremont, who are champions for Ukraine. I want to take a few moments to recognize their work here in Parliament on behalf of all Canadians, especially those of Ukrainian descent. I thank my colleagues for their outstanding work.

Bill C-57 is very simple. Its objective is to implement the free trade measures established between Canada and Ukraine. The first free trade agreement with Ukraine was signed in 2017 and included goods but not services. Now, services are also included as part of Bill C-57 along with the measures established between the two countries.

We have talked a lot in the House about the challenges that Ukraine is facing as a result of Russia's illegal invasion and about

the need to support Ukraine and its people in defending their country.

• (1650)

[*English*]

We have talked a lot about the war and Canada's contribution. I was a bit disappointed by the comments from the member for Cumberland—Colchester, who referenced this legislation as being “woke”. That was disappointing to hear. This piece of legislation is simply establishing a trade agreement and furthering the ties we have between our two countries. Is he suggesting that the Government of Ukraine is woke? I do not think so. That government has been on the front lines of defending democracy. The member needs to clarify his comment at some point in this House. Hopefully he will have the opportunity.

This bill would extend measures that matter in the economic ties between Canada and Ukraine. It is what our two governments have been working on to advance. I know that members of this House who have large Ukrainian diasporas in their ridings are certainly proud to stand here and support this legislation. In fact, it would be great if all members of this House could agree on a way to fast-track this legislation. This should not be very controversial.

I hear some members of the NDP are calling for that. They believe in that principle. It is not within my purview, but perhaps the House leaders will have a conversation and we will not have to spend a lot of days on this bill and can advance it to committee for further study. Ultimately, when it comes from committee, we can get it to the Senate as soon as possible. Even better, and I have seen it before, is if the House leaders agree to send it right to the Senate. That would be even better, especially if we believe in this piece of legislation.

[*Translation*]

I am proud to be the chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food here in Parliament and, as such, I think I need to take a moment to emphasize the importance of Canada's agricultural ties with Ukraine.

[*English*]

The former hon. member for Malpeque, Wayne Easter, called me a couple of weeks ago from Ukraine. He is there on a mission, working with potato farmers. This is being funded by a number of initiatives in Canada and the United States. He is there with other members. Of course, Wayne has a great history in agriculture. That is but one of the many examples where we share really deep ties between our two countries.

This agreement covers services, but we should also use it as an opportunity to highlight the deep agricultural ties between our two countries. The agriculture committee had the opportunity back in the spring, either this spring or in 2022, to have the Ukrainian minister of agriculture join us to talk about the challenges of the Russian infantry, which was laying land mines in the farmers' fields in Ukraine. I am proud to say on the record that Wayne and others are over there helping to build those ties.

Government Orders

[Translation]

There have been many other opportunities to build ties between Canada and Ukraine, particularly in terms of research on various methods related to seeds and different types of agricultural products. This is a good opportunity for Canada and Ukraine to continue their hard work.

[English]

Something I would encourage the government and all members of Parliament to reflect on is how they can contribute in that conversation as well.

We have talked a lot about the war effort and the support Canada can provide on the front lines with military assistance, but the Ukrainian economy needs the money and the opportunity so Ukraine itself can continue to fund its war effort. Of course, I stand here as a member of Parliament, and I know my colleagues before us do. We want to continue to see the government be a very willing partner and to draw international support to continue Ukraine's fight for its sovereignty, its place and its homeland. At the same time, this agreement is yet another opportunity that would be in the vested interests of both of our countries.

Ukraine would have opportunities to send products here. We would have the opportunity to send expertise and support to Ukraine. It would strengthen both of our economies at a time when Ukraine's economy is in challenging times, given the circumstances that are happening. I will note that Canada is the first country to sign, or in this case, to modernize and continue to advance our integrated economic ties. We are the only country so far that has been able to do that. I think that speaks to the importance of how President Zelenskyy and his government view Canada as a stable partner, a friend and an ally with which to move forward.

I will use my remaining time to say that this is a very straightforward piece of legislation that would build upon the existing economic ties we have. It is supported by both governments, here and in Ukraine. It is supported by the diaspora and by Canadians of Ukrainian heritage across the country, who will be calling on all members of Parliament to support really straightforward legislation to advance this as soon as possible to drive economic opportunities for themselves here in Canada and for their homeland, where they have family and friends.

We have had certain pieces of legislation before the House over the last couple of weeks that I really thought would be “slam dunks”. I thought there would be an opportunity for real partisan consensus in the ability to move legislation forward. I have been proven wrong on that, and things I thought would be able to be advanced quickly were not. I call on all members of the House. I know that on this side of the House, we will have that consensus, and it sounds as though the NDP will have that consensus. I presume the Bloc will. I do not know about the Conservatives, based on the conversations I have heard in the chamber over the last couple of hours. I am happy to take questions, but I hope the Conservatives can clarify that they are in support of this very straightforward bill that matters for Ukraine and for our economic security as well, because it is just straightforward common sense.

• (1655)

The Deputy Speaker: I wish happy birthday to Mary as well. It is tough to be in two places at the same time, so it is good to know that the hon. member did make it to the birthday in Waterville that day.

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 Courtenay—Alberni, Taxation; the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, Foreign Affairs.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we have heard from the Conservatives, on the important piece of legislation, a free trade agreement with Ukraine, a very troubling pattern of information. They are a very well-scripted group. They often speak directly from what they have been told to say, but every once in a while they speak their mind, and what we heard earlier today was truly troubling, when the member for Cumberland—Colchester said that this agreement is too “woke” if it includes indigenous people and our declaration of support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It also speaks about our support for women. If these two principles are too woke for the Conservatives, then what exactly is it going to take for them to support this piece of legislation and to support all Canadians?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I am at a loss for words because that is a tremendous question. I cannot answer for the Conservatives, my hon. colleague knows that, but I am glad that he put it on the record. I sat in the House today listening to the speech from the member for Kingston and the Islands, and when I heard the question that was asked by the member for Cumberland—Colchester as to whether or not he would support this woke legislation, I turned to the member for Etobicoke Centre and asked whether he had actually used the word “woke”. We did not believe it was true, but the record does show that is the case.

This is legislation that is referencing the ability to advance economic ties. As the member for Edmonton Griesbach mentioned, if there is some mention about UNDRIP, which is a Canadian law passed here; if there is some mention about the importance of indigenous Canadians, which is a constitutional responsibility we all have as Canadians; and if there is some mention about women's participation in the economy, all of that sounds fine and dandy to me, and we want to be able to move forward with this piece of legislation.

It is important that the Conservatives clarify whether or not the member for Cumberland—Colchester and his remarks stand for their party.

• (1700)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we know that Parliament and elected representatives have a very limited ability to modify the agreement. All we can do is vote for the bill or propose amendments, but we cannot change the agreement itself. In most industrialized countries, however, elected representatives can participate in and directly influence free trade agreements and treaties. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. We could assess our process here in the House of Commons and review the method used to study bills related to free trade agreements, like the one with the European Union or other countries. That might be a good idea.

However, the process does not yet exist, so for now this remains the prerogative of the executive, of the government. However, I thank the member for his suggestion.

[English]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member chairs, and participates heavily on, the agriculture committee. We have had a lot of conversations within the chamber, especially when it comes to equity-seeking communities and so forth. I think what we are seeing with the questions coming from the official opposition is that it is important that we recognize the economic abilities of all sectors and all people within society. Sometimes what Canadians do not pay attention to are those nuances and the importance of different communities' having their voices heard, whether that is through the lens of our farmers who work so hard to feed us, of the women who bring life into this world and contribute so heavily in so many different ways or of the first peoples of our country, to whom we owe an important nation-to-nation relationship. I would like to hear the member's comments on the importance of this legislation and how he sees us moving forward in a more meaningful and better way.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I want to address some of the comments again, because the member referenced the Conservatives in her question.

There were a couple of things that were said by the member for Cumberland—Colchester. It was not only that the legislation was woke, but also that somehow Canada was taking advantage of Ukraine. I think it is very condescending to suggest that the sovereign Government of Ukraine does not know what is in its own best interest; that is how that is perceived from where I sit. We are trying to deepen economic partnerships. The member for Etobicoke Centre has been on record talking about how President Zelenskyy really valued the opportunity to be here in Canada to focus on the economic relationship.

To pivot away from my concern and disdain for the comment that was made, it was notable that no Conservative colleague stepped up to ask a question on my remarks here today. Perhaps the Conservatives are a bit embarrassed by what was just said.

To address the hon. member's question, I think there is a tremendous opportunity, as was mentioned, in the agriculture sector. Services and digital, which are being included as part of this legisla-

Government Orders

tion, are also huge opportunities between our two countries, so we should be trying to explore all opportunities. Canada is a trading nation. We benefit from having these relationships around the world.

I look forward to this legislation's being advanced.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am of course very proud to be the member of Parliament for Edmonton Strathcona.

Today, we are talking about the free trade agreement with Ukraine. As every member of the House knows, we are an immense ally of Ukraine. Canada was the first western country to recognize Ukraine's independence in 1991, and, of course, Canada is home to the third-largest population of Ukrainians in the world, third only to Ukraine and Russia. As members would know, many people of the Ukrainian diaspora reside in my riding, in my province and certainly across the Prairies. Therefore, I am glad to see that we are debating this bill after the agreement was delayed by Putin's illegal war, the illegal invasion that Putin and the Russian Federation have made against the Ukrainian people.

Trade agreements are very important. They are an important part of our relationship with Ukraine. They are an important part of our relationship with our allies. It is vital that we have strong trade relationships with Ukraine, now more than ever as Ukraine fights for its freedom and builds more, better and stronger relationships with the west.

Russia's illegal invasion and genocidal war against Ukraine has had a profound impact on Canada. It has had a profound impact on the Ukraine-Canada trade relationship. We have seen exports to Ukraine fall by nearly a third since the war started, and it is important to have a trade agreement that would restore those exports once Ukraine is victorious in the war against Russia.

However, trade negotiations must be transparent, and Canadians and parliamentarians have the right to know both the costs and the benefits of proposed trade agreements before they are signed. The current Liberal government has failed in this regard. We were given this legislation very late last week. We are debating it in the House on Monday and Tuesday. We have had no time to discuss this with our colleagues at caucus, despite the fact that this agreement was negotiated in April and signed in September. There was ample opportunity for the government to give us more time to discuss this trade agreement with our colleagues and our caucuses. I hope the Liberal government reflects on that. Certainly from my perspective, that could and should be done better and would have shown more respect for parliamentarians and for the Ukraine-Canada trade agreement.

Government Orders

The importance of transparency in trade deals is very apparent as well. We have seen this. In 2014, under Stephen Harper, we learned about a secret trade deal that the Conservatives had negotiated with China, which had been signed two years earlier in Russia. That trade agreement with China was ratified without the participation of Parliament, and the consequences and the lack of transparency will be with us for decades. Chinese interests now control significant parts of our natural resources industries. Cheap Chinese steel produced from coal from Alberta is undermining our coal sector. Canadian grocery stores are full of Chinese food products with few or no environmental or human rights standards associated with them.

We have spoken in the House a bit today about some of the comments we have heard from the Conservative Party about this legislation's being woke, which is absolutely absurd. There should never be a trade relationship that Canada has that does not involve our looking at human rights, at environmental protections and at Canadian jobs and the impacts on Canadian workers. The success of the trade deals that we negotiate as a country can never be measured purely by trade and purely by corporate profit. They have to be measured by a number of different things.

I sit beside the good member for Edmonton Griesbach, who is an absolute champion for indigenous people in this country, for Métis people in this country and for Inuit people in this country. For him to have to sit here and listen to folks say that adhering to UNDRIP, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, is woke is absolutely shameful.

We sat in the international human rights subcommittee meeting today. We met with a Honduran, Elvin Hernandez, who is a human rights investigator. He spoke about the Canada free trade agreement with Honduras and about how it did not help the people of Honduras.

• (1705)

He said that no one looked at human rights when they negotiated it. There was no conversation at that time to look at human rights. He talked about the impact it has had on women, children, indigenous people, folks in the community who have stood up for environmental rights and people in the community who have stood up for human rights. Because of the free trade agreement we negotiated, those rights were not protected. It is something to keep in mind.

We also heard from Robert McCorquodale, who is the vice-chair of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. He said that if we do not look at human rights when we do this important work, we put people at risk. It is something we really need to do and something that, from my perspective, is the furthest thing from being superfluous, or whatever the Conservatives are trying to say with their insensitive woke comments.

We need a trade deal that is good for Ukraine and that is good for Canada. This renegotiated deal with Ukraine includes chapters that would ensure both Canada and Ukraine maintain their right to regulate in key areas such as environment, health, safety, indigenous rights, gender equality and cultural diversity. This is very important.

I welcome the provisions for temporary entry for those conducting business in either country. I like the idea of removing barriers

from entry for business people, professionals and their spouses. That will lead to stronger economic and social ties with Ukraine and stronger economic benefits for Canadians. I also welcome the labour standards provisions in this agreement. It is vital we protect labour rights.

When we look at trade agreements, we always have to consider labour rights and the workers who depend on those rights. This agreement does this with a few different things we are pleased to see, such as the sections that respect labour laws, the import prohibition on goods made in whole or in part with forced labour, a commitment to the content of all core international labour organization conventions and a stand-alone article on violence against workers. These are important things to have as part of our agreement.

I am disappointed in how the government brought this agreement forward. I am disappointed I have not had the opportunity to sit with my colleagues and discuss this agreement, as would be the norm and as would be expected. While I am disappointed in the lack of transparency we have seen in the development of this agreement, I do support a trade agreement with Ukraine. I do think it needs to happen.

I am going to need to take some time to look at this one and see whether I can provide support for it, because this is important work, and I do not take this work lightly. I am also looking very forward to seeing more Ukrainian products on the shelves in the stores in Edmonton. We have a large Ukrainian population, and my name is not very Ukrainian, but I can eat Ukrainian food with the best of them. I know my way around a cabbage roll, as everyone in Edmonton does.

I am extraordinarily excited to see Ukrainian products in food stores like K&K Foodliner, a local food specialty store right in my own riding of Edmonton Strathcona. I hope this agreement will mean greater economic ties between our countries and more made-in-Ukraine products in our local stores.

Let us support Ukraine. Let us help Ukrainians rebuild their country. Let us work together as friends for the benefit of both countries.

• (1710)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's feedback. We can always endeavour to make processes better and to ensure there are more voices heard, because what we do not want to do is make it so members do not have the opportunity to be part of those conversations. I hear that feedback wholeheartedly, and I will do whatever I can to encourage government to always do these things better.

I also appreciated her comments in regard to her community and the opportunities there. I think about so many communities across our country that continue to endeavour to grow, to be able to prosper and to be included. Something that was heard today in a question by the official opposition was very disturbing. When some people in this place talk about Canadians, it appears there are many of us not being included.

I think about what is happening in the world today. I think about what Ukraine is taking on to fight for democracy when it comes to international law. I also think about how it will have to rebuild and what this agreement could do to help it rebuild faster and to ensure those factions of its society who sometimes would be left behind could actually be included.

I would like to hear the member's thoughts as to how she believes an agreement like this could better help more members of not only the Ukrainian society but also Canadians, and how we actually do better to see more Canadians and more Ukrainians are able to grow and prosper.

• (1715)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, in March of this year, I actually travelled to Ukraine. I wanted to meet with government officials. I wanted to see what was happening on the ground in Kyiv and Irpin. When I met with government representatives and when I met with parliamentarians from Ukraine, one of the things they wanted was support from Canada to help rebuild their country. They wanted us to be working with them to rebuild.

I spent some time talking to folks working in different areas and different sectors, and I can tell members that, ultimately, the people who suffer the most in any war are women, are children, are marginalized people. The war in Ukraine is no different.

We need to help Ukraine rebuild. We need to be there for our ally. We also need to recognize that after this war is won, the people who are most vulnerable and the people who will need the most support are women, girls and indigenous people.

That needs to be the priority of our trade agreements as well.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's speech.

She was critical of the FIPA, the investment treaty, that Canada signed with China, but the 1994 FIPA, or investment treaty, with Ukraine and this new modernized free trade agreement with Ukraine both contain similar provisions.

I am wondering if she is going to be encouraging her colleagues in the NDP to strip the Ukraine trade agreement of these provisions or if she is supportive of including those kinds of investment protections in this new free trade agreement with Ukraine.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, 1994 was significantly before my time, so I will focus a little bit more on the more recent 2014 free trade agreement that Harper and the Conservatives signed with China.

I do not think many Canadians know that it was signed and that we gave up so much of our rights and that we, in fact, made it so much harder for workers in our country because of that. There are still clauses within that fair trade agreement that are making it very difficult for us to even have legislation put in place for forced labour. It already handicaps what we can do to protect workers in Canada and to protect workers in China.

I do not know about 1994. I am not going to answer that one because, like I said, I think I was in elementary school at the time.

Government Orders

Certainly, the one in 2014 that I have looked at quite a lot is one that I am disappointed in, and I certainly hope that the Conservatives do not get another opportunity to negotiate another free trade agreement with China.

The Deputy Speaker: In 1994, I was engaged to be married.

The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on two points.

First, as with other free trade agreements, it is the executive branch that acts alone. Elected representatives and opposition members do not have direct access to the chapters or any direct influence on the content of the agreement. What does my colleague think? Would she agree with the idea of coming up with another mechanism?

Second, the chapter on investments still allows for an investor, a multinational, to sue a state directly. Since these are international agreements, they are supposed to be agreements between nations. However, it is as though multinationals are being put on the same footing as nations. Does my colleague not think that this should be changed?

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, this is a little more broad than perhaps what he was looking for with his question, but I would say that, in fact, Canada's foreign policy has tilted very heavily toward trade, to the detriment of diplomacy, peacekeeping, security, development, all of these other pieces. I think the problem is that our foreign policy has to be built as a table. We need all of those legs for it to be effective and for it to work. When we prioritize trade over human rights, over security, over peace building, I think that is a real problem.

I do see some flaws with this legislation. Like I said earlier, I have not had time to really go through it, but I certainly see some flaws with this legislation. Our caucus will have to take a look and see if we will be supporting it or not.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate on legislation concerning the free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine, for a variety of reasons. I love my country, I love Ukraine and I am a strong supporter of free trade. This agreement was created under a Conservative government. Later we will have the opportunity to come back to that. As a good Conservative, I support entering into free trade agreements with as many countries as possible, provided they are good countries, of course.

Government Orders

When we talk about Ukraine, we cannot disregard the fact that this country has proven to humanity as a whole that resilience is the defining trait of these people and this nation, or that their strength of character only grew clearer when the Russian ogre outrageously invited itself into that country. Putin's illegal attack on Ukraine made people realize that, unfortunately, in the 21st century, we can still experience the same atrocities as in the First and Second World Wars, what we would call traditional wars. Nevertheless, the strong, proud people of Ukraine have been able to withstand the crass and heinous attacks from Putin's Russia, and they are heading for victory. We are all hoping for that outcome, and above all, we are hoping for an end to the hostilities, because there are no winners in war. There are only losers who lose friends, loved ones, family, and people who suffer under the illegal bombing. When we think of Ukraine, our thoughts are with the people who are currently experiencing the horrors of the war.

As a resident of Quebec City, I was very touched by the young pee-wee hockey players who came to Quebec City despite the war, to play in the cadet league hockey tournament. In front of a very emotional and united crowd of Quebec City residents, they demonstrated that kids can still be kids and still have fun, even if their country is at war. That also reminds me that I invited two young players from the pee-wee tournament, two Ukrainians, to be here in the House when President Zelenskyy addressed Canadians. They also had the privilege of shaking hands with their president, and I was very proud of that moment, which was tremendously emotional for these young people.

Ukraine and Canada have a lot in common. We obviously have the same climate. We also have a very strong agricultural tradition. It is not for nothing that the Ukrainian flag represents the sky and the land, using the same colours we find in Saskatchewan. It is no fluke. There is wheat, of course, but beyond that, there are historical connections that unite us through immigration. Several speakers today reiterated that Canada has the third-largest Ukrainian population after Ukraine and Russia, with 1.3 million Ukrainian Canadians. Some are descendants of the huge community that came to settle here in Canada at the turn of the 20th century and in the 1920s and 1930s. They have enriched Canada with their presence, their culture and especially their extraordinary work effort. It has to be said that we also share a passion for hockey. We are not Nordic countries for nothing. We are not countries that love the snow for nothing. We have this fine tradition, as I was saying earlier, that was beautifully highlighted at the International Pee-Wee Hockey Tournament.

I cannot help but think that Canada could be doing even more for Ukraine. If we had made the necessary decisions seven or eight years ago, we could have helped Ukraine tremendously with the economic aspect of its war against Russia, and we could have helped our allies, especially European countries, support Ukraine instead of helping Russia by buying its natural resources. In that regard, I have to point out how painful it is to recall that, eight years ago, there were nearly 15 liquefied natural gas projects and ports to export it. Unfortunately, for eight years, for dogmatic and ideological reasons, the current government has done everything in its power to ensure that these 15 projects would not succeed. Imagine if, instead, we had been led for eight years by a government with a vision for the future, one that wanted the whole world to benefit from

the bounty we have here when it comes to natural resources. We know how to develop them in an intelligent and environmentally friendly way, with the ethics that have always characterized Canadians. No, instead of having access to our natural resources, countries now have to knock on Russia's door to get liquefied natural gas.

● (1725)

That is crazy. We could be a source of pride on the international stage, but this government did nothing to properly develop Canada's liquefied natural gas potential for eight years because of ideological reasons. We may be speaking with emotion about Ukraine today, but we cannot turn a blind eye to that reality. The great country of Germany is caught between a rock and a hard place and has no choice but to ask Russia for energy, when we have energy but prefer to keep it under the ground. That is unfortunate. It is not just Canada and Canadians who are losing out, but also the people of Ukraine and Germany, who would have been happy to have access to our natural resources.

Since we are talking about free trade, I would remind the House that free trade is a defining feature of the party that I represent, the Conservative Party. Let us remember that the key steps toward free trade began with the free trade agreement with the United States. In 1988 and 1989, we had a prime minister who had vision and who put everything in place for an agreement with the United States. The free trade agreement was approved by the public in the 1988 election. We are grateful to the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney for his vision. He was likely the greatest prime minister of the 20th century.

Later on, there were the colossal efforts made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to sign free trade agreements with other countries. I want to commend the outstanding contribution of the member for Abbotsford. During the final five years of the Conservative Party's time in government, he was the architect of our country's exceptional development in the area of free trade. He was the one who succeeded in negotiating agreements with Europe, America and the Pacific.

Under the direction of the former minister of international trade, the current member for Abbotsford, we made our mark on nearly five continents. The sun almost never set on this empire of positive economic free trade and wealth creation. We believe in free trade because our country is a large, wonderful place, brimming with natural resources. Above all, we are proud of how smart and hard-working Canada's 40 million citizens are.

Let us keep one thing in mind, though. When a local market has 40 million people in it and a nearby neighbour has almost 350 million, maybe it takes a bit more. That is why our country is, in a sense, condemned to always having free trade agreements so we can open up our market and export Canada's know-how, our natural resources, our energy and our products, which are produced so efficiently thanks to Canadian workers and Canadian ingenuity. That means we need free trade agreements.

Our party, the Conservative Party, was the architect of free trade in the 20th and early 21st centuries. It is the party of free trade. As everyone knows, we are always open to the idea of win-win agreements. That is key to a good free trade agreement. As one of my old bosses used to tell me all the time, a good agreement is an honest agreement. The idea is not to make sneaky attempts to put one over on the other party. The whole point is for it to be win-win. That is how outstanding free trade agreements, like the ones the member for Abbotsford negotiated when he was international trade minister, are made.

I see that time has run out. How very sad that I have to stop there.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[English]

PREVENTION OF GOVERNMENT-IMPOSED VACCINATION MANDATES ACT

The House resumed from June 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-278, Prevention of Government-imposed Vaccination Mandates Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the other day I talked about how reckless the opposition party is. It can be a great risk to talk about many of the things it talks about. I would like to suggest that, when it comes to the reckless behaviour of a political party, all one really needs to do to get an appreciation of that is to listen to how the Conservative Party has been talking about COVID-19.

We have a very active ongoing interest in COVID. Contrary to what some Conservatives might believe about COVID-19, people are still testing positive for it today. It is very important, not only for the federal government but also other levels of government of all political stripes, to recognize the health hazard that was caused as a direct result of COVID-19. It varied depending on population and density in different regions of our country. That is one of the reasons we took a team Canada approach to dealing with COVID-19. It was a worldwide issue, a pandemic that did not spare any country.

Here in Canada, we had strong leadership coming from the Prime Minister's office, all the way down, working with the different provinces, municipalities, indigenous leaders, not to mention numerous stakeholders and some opposition parties. It was taken very seriously. We saw some provinces even put in a curfew. Most provinces had mandatory masking put into place.

A couple of the Conservatives are a little sensitive about this because they opposed all that in many different ways. They certainly did act as if they were very proud of that fact, which is good for them.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, there are many Conservatives who opposed mandatory masking, no mat-

Private Members' Business

ter whether it was coming from progressive Conservative provincial governments or from the Government of Canada in certain situations. The difference is that those who were in power, the provincial governments, municipalities and the federal government relied on health care professionals, individuals who had the expertise as opposed to—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The way I look at it is that, the more we interrupt the hon. member, the longer we have to listen to the speeches, and the longer it will take to get through PMB.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your trying to tame the Conservatives on this particular issue.

What transpired, virtually from day one of the pandemic, was an educational curve for all of us. We saw things, such as the importance of masking, become a reality. Initially, that was not necessarily being advocated for. We learned the importance of washing ones hands and of ventilation for collections of people in groups. We also saw different provinces in particular coming to the table with their health experts, recognizing something that the Conservatives did not recognize, which was that it was a public health issue.

Contrary to what the Conservative Party tries to espouse, vaccinations worked. Vaccinations made a difference. That is why we saw the different provinces and stakeholders get behind it in a very significant way. There were some protests. We saw that first-hand. We saw a number of Conservative members of Parliament who went out to protesters, gave them a pat on the back and applauded them for what they were doing. Public health, what the City of Ottawa was going through and what was happening at border crossings, with billions of dollars put at risk, did not matter. The reckless direction coming from the Conservative Party was truly amazing.

• (1735)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. A number of Conservatives have come in to listen to the member for Winnipeg North, but I cannot even hear him because they are heckling so loudly. Perhaps you could ask them to tone it down a little so I can hear the member.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands. I did not think the tone had reached that level yet, but I will ask members to please be respectful of the member for Winnipeg North, who has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that members have come in to listen to me getting wound up over an important issue.

Private Members' Business

We got a lot of resistance when we started talking about the behaviour of some of the Conservatives. I truly believe that there some who recognize the importance of public health and see the value of vaccinations, but a good portion do not, and this is from the leader down. The person who really gave birth to this legislation was the leader of the Conservative Party.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, not all of them are clapping, we will notice, because they recognize the irresponsible behaviour and the reckless attitude the Conservative leader has taken on this legislation.

He has passed it on to another member, but the fact still remains that, as a health issue, we have seen other jurisdictions of different political parties recognize that vaccinations do in fact work. They care about the environment that people work in and want safe working environments. When people board an aircraft or a tube in the sky, air ventilation is important. These are the types of things about which we should all be concerned.

The only ones who seem not to care are in the official opposition, the Conservatives. I do not know if they have mustered any other support, but I do not think they have. I do not think there is another political entity in the House of Commons that is against vaccines, let alone within provincial governments, especially since provincial governments put in things such as curfews, mandatory masking and wanting to get vaccines to the public. Many of them took the initiative of providing proof of vaccination. They should take a flip-flop on this issue.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, I am running for prime minister to put Canadians back in control of their lives by making Canada the freest nation on earth. That freedom includes bodily autonomy, the freedom to decide what people put in their own bodies. That is why I was proud to introduce a private member's bill in the House of Commons that would put an end to COVID mandates in all of the federal sector. I want to thank the hon. member for Niagara West for having adopted my private member's bill so we can move it forward even faster.

Before the Prime Minister proceeds once gain to maliciously divide and attack, let me remind him that the position put forward in the bill is now not only the position of the common-sense Conservatives, but also the position of the majority of provincial governments, of the Liberal member for Louis-Hébert and of the military review complaints commission, the tribunal responsible for hearing grievances from members of the armed forces.

I will also remind the Prime Minister that the position reflected in the bill is now his position. Members may question why I would say that. The reason is that the Prime Minister had the temerity to go on television about three months ago and claim he never forced anyone to get vaccinated. He claimed it should be a matter of personal choice. He wanted us all to forget the way he divided, insulted and name-called millions of people right across this country who are patriotic, law-abiding, decent people. If he really believes he never forced mandates on anyone, surely he will be happy to vote for this bill to ensure those mandates do not apply anymore and will never be imposed again.

Let me be clear about what this bill would do. This bill targets the unreasonable overreaches of the federal policy and unjustified abuses of federal government power. The bill targets these overreaches and abuses of power based on two different but important types of evidence. First, it follows the scientific evidence about COVID-19 vaccines, how they work and what they do. Second, it responds to the evidence from the experience of the government's decision to exploit a public health situation for partisan political gain.

This was most clear in the Prime Minister's deliberate decision to go beyond guiding and protecting Canadians, to punishing people who chose not to take the COVID-19 vaccine. Let us remember that the Prime Minister originally said vaccines would be a matter of personal choice. Then he did a poll showing that it would be popular to target a small minority of people who chose not to be vaccinated. He flip-flopped and said he would make it mandatory, and three days later, he called an election and attempted to exploit that political moment in order to regain power.

This is funny: When he announced that the vaccine mandates would be imposed on the federal sector, he did it with such political haste, based on the advice of not public health experts but polling experts, that even his own human resources team at the Treasury Board put out guidelines suggesting that it would be a matter of personal choice, not mandatory imposition. While he was advocating for a mandate, his own bureaucracy published rules against a mandate. That is because they were following the medical science and he was following political science.

This bill would put into law a prohibition on the government imposing COVID mandates again in the future. Members may wonder why the government would need such a prohibition given that it has reluctantly agreed to remove mandates for most federally employed workers. The answer is that the government has kept open the possibility of reimposing mandates, both on federal workers and on federally regulated travel.

● (1740)

Furthermore, there continue to be military service members who face vaccine mandates today. It is ironic that these same military service members could legally go into a bar and French kiss with a perfect stranger, but they could not do their jobs in the armed forces. How is that scientifically sound? They could not, for example, go out into a field and practise with their fellow members in infantry, but they could do things that involve far greater and more intimate personal interaction in public places, according to the law. How could that possibly be based on science?

Private Members' Business

We know that it is not and never was, because we now know that the military grievance tribunal has ruled that the government's imposition of mandates on service members violated the section 7 charter rights of those members and that the violation was not justified under section 1 of the charter, which gives the government the ability to override rights in order to uphold reasonable public interest requirements. The government's own grievance tribunal has found that the mandates violated the charter when it comes to members of the armed forces, yet still the mandates remain in place in open violation of the Charter of Rights. That is not according to the Leader of the Opposition and not according to the countless civil libertarians who have been advocating for an end to these mandates, but according to the government's own grievance tribunal and according, moving out of the military to the rest of the federal sector, to the PIPSC, the CAPE and the PSAC, three public sector unions representing 300,000 federal public servants, who have brought legal challenges against this government saying that its blanket policy was "punitive", "unreasonable" and an "abuse of management authority".

To quote the unions, "There was no proper consultation, nor a comprehensive process of correctly identifying all the possible circumstances faced by our members. Appropriate solutions were not developed by the employer to deal with many individual situations." However, the Prime Minister did not listen to them. He continued to go forward with firing federal employees who were not vaccinated, and he kept this policy in place even after his public health officer said, "we do need to get back to some normalcy."

I will go back to the Military Grievances External Review Committee on this point, which said:

...I conclude that the limitation of the grievors' right to liberty and security of the person by the [Canadian Armed Forces] vaccination policy is not in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice because the policy, in some aspects, is arbitrary, overly broad and disproportionate. Therefore, I conclude that the grievors' rights protected under section 7 were infringed.

However, that policy goes on.

The review committee continued:

...I find that termination of service for some members was a disproportionate response to their non-compliance with the vaccination policy.... I conclude that it was overly broad and not using the least restrictive option in its implementation.... I find that the disputed provisions of the CAF vaccination policy are unconstitutional and, therefore, invalid.

This is the government's own grievance tribunal saying this, yet our heroes, soldiers who loyally serve, follow the law and put their lives on the line for this country, are out of jobs, out of income and out of justice. My bill, the bill now adopted by the member for Niagara West, would restore that justice by putting an end to COVID vaccine mandates and ensuring that no such new mandates are reimposed in the future on our brave soldiers, sailors and airmen, on our public servants and on Canadians seeking to travel in federally regulated sectors.

• (1745)

The Prime Minister has withdrawn and apologized for some of the extremely incendiary and divisive comments he made about Canadians who made different medical decisions than he would have made. Adopting this bill would be a recognition that this ugly chapter in our history of turning Canadian against Canadian and us-

ing a public health matter to pull apart our country and grab more power is permanently behind us.

Let us recognize that Canadians have freedom of choice over what they put into their bodies. Let us adopt this legislation. Let us restore personal freedom. Let us give Canadians back control of their lives in the freest nation on earth.

• (1750)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-278, the prevention of government-imposed vaccination mandates act. To begin, I believe it is important to note that the discussion surrounding this legislation has been highly politicized and riddled with misinformation from the day it was first introduced by the member for Carleton during the Conservative leadership race.

At that time, the bill was promoted by the member as a means to "scrap all vaccine mandates and ban any and all future vaccine mandates". This is, of course, simply not accurate. The text of the legislation before the House now only references a single disease, which is COVID-19.

Indeed, Bill C-278 would legislatively restrict the federal government's future ability to set COVID-19 vaccine requirements, regardless of the future trajectory of the virus or the development of new vaccines. If a future variant turned out to be extraordinarily deadly and a vaccine was developed that could stop its transmission, this legislation would legally prohibit the government from imposing any kind of requirement to have that vaccine, even if the health of millions of Canadians was put at risk.

The member for Carleton has also incorrectly described to the House the current status of the mandates. The COVID-19 vaccination requirement for federal public servants was lifted on June 20, 2022. Employees who were placed on administrative leave without pay for non-compliance with that policy in force were contacted by their managers to arrange their return to regular work duties.

As of June 20, 2022, the vaccine requirement to board a plane or train in Canada was also suspended. In addition, federally regulated transport sector employers were no longer required to have mandatory vaccination policies in place for their employees. Finally, effective October 1, 2022, the federal government removed proof of COVID-19 vaccination requirements for anyone entering Canada.

Private Members' Business

With the record a bit corrected, I would like to proceed with what New Democrats believe. We support an approach to vaccination policy that appropriately balances the rights of people who have not been vaccinated and who choose not to be vaccinated with our individual and collective rights to health and safety. We believe that decisions with respect to imposing or suspending vaccination requirements should always be based on the best available evidence, current science and the advice of experts, not politicians speaking from the House of Commons with little or no background in any of those things.

The Conservatives cannot argue that it was wrong for the Liberal government to politicize Canada's COVID-19 response, which I think they did, while simultaneously asking politicians to legislate our country's vaccination policy indefinitely into the future without any evidence.

If the Conservatives sincerely wanted to take an evidence-based approach to COVID-19 policy, then they would have supported an independent inquiry into Canada's pandemic response when they had the opportunity to do so. However, shockingly, when the NDP moved an amendment at the Standing Committee on Health yesterday to legally mandate that a COVID-19 inquiry, under the Inquiries Act, be struck within 90 days, the Conservatives sat on their hands and abstained, allowing the Liberals to kill that inquiry.

I can see why the Liberals might be reluctant to call an inquiry into their own COVID-19 response, but this reversal from the cover-up Conservatives is truly shocking to see. Under the leadership of their previous leader, Erin O'Toole, the Conservative Party repeatedly called for an independent, expert-led inquiry into Canada's COVID-19 response. The Conservative Party pledged to call such an inquiry during the last election. We will need to leave it to the current Leader of the Opposition to explain this departure from his predecessor's position and the party's public pronouncements.

I believe it is unacceptable that the Liberals and Conservatives joined and worked together yesterday to block an independent review of Canada's response to the most severe pandemic in a century, because serious issues remain unexamined. Some of them include the following. We started the pandemic with not enough personal protective equipment: not enough gloves, masks, gowns and respirators. We had no proper national inventory of the personal protective equipment.

• (1755)

Canadians may remember that we had to throw out millions of pieces of PPE because they were expired. We saw no vaccine production in Canada, a shocking omission that has stretched over Liberal and Conservative governments for decades, who watched as Canada's ability and capacity in this regard was left to wither and die.

There was little to no public guidance on infection-acquired immunity. There was a curious dismantling of Canada's early pandemic warning systems. Canadians had no access to whole vaccines, only mRNA vaccines. There was confusing and contradictory information on the impact of vaccination on transmission. The impact and effectiveness of mandates remains a question.

Border controls were inconsistently enforced. Effectively, border controls in Quebec and Alberta were virtually absent. There were ravages through seniors' homes, overwhelmed emergency rooms and ICUs, and uncertainty about the efficacy of vaccines on mutating variants.

Now, instead of papering over previous mistakes or relying on pseudo-science to set public health policy, we must leave no stone unturned to learn from the past and prepare for future threats. Many prominent public health and security experts have called for the federal government to launch an expert-led independent inquiry into Canada's COVID-19 response.

The NDP has proposed an inquiry under the Inquiries Act, because such an inquiry would be independent. It would be led by an impartial person, notably a judge. It would be properly resourced with counsel. It would have the power to subpoena documents and compel the attendance of witnesses. It would be conducted in public. At the end of the day, it should do a searching root-to-branch comprehensive analysis of every issue that Canadians have raised during the pandemic response by the federal government.

Again, the Conservatives had a chance to make that happen, because the NDP and the Bloc were voting in favour of this motion, but they said no. They abstained. Instead, the Conservatives want to legislate science from the floor of the House of Commons. That is irresponsible.

Prominent Canadians, such as David Naylor, co-chair of the federal COVID-19 immunity task force, and the former chair of the federal review of the 2003 SARS epidemic, thinks there should be an independent public inquiry. So does Richard Fadden, former national security adviser to Stephen Harper. Recently, the *British Medical Journal*, one of the world's oldest general medical journals, published a series that examined Canada's COVID-19 response and called for an independent national inquiry.

Why do the Conservatives not want one? Again, they would rather play politics. The New Democrats do not and will not allow the Conservative Party or the Liberals to play politics with Canadians' health.

The British Medical Journal documented a number of deeply troubling pandemic failures in Canada, including that Canada's emergency response was impaired by long-standing weaknesses in the public health and health care systems. These included fragmented health leadership across federal, provincial and territorial governments. They noted that pandemic performance varied widely across Canada's provinces and territories, hampered by inconsistency in decision-making, inadequate data, infrastructure and misalignment of priorities.

They noted that lacking an independent federal inquiry allows others to step into the frame. We have seen the so-called National Citizens Inquiry, led by Preston Manning, for example, which appears to be fuelled by vaccine safety misinformation and ideological concerns with government public health measures. This is far from the full, national and public inquiry led by independent experts that Canada's pandemic performance deserves.

An inquiry would help deliver on Canada's ambition to be a global leader, and most importantly, it would deliver answers to Canadians, whose confidence has been shaken. At the end of the day, a public inquiry is needed to restore the Canadian population's confidence, to ensure accountability for decisions that have been made and, most importantly, to find out what went well and what did not. Thus, we could better prepare for the next pandemic, as experts tell us that it is not a question of if, but when.

While the Leader of the Opposition pontificates, pretends and politicizes this very important public health issue on the floor of the House of Commons, New Democrats are pushing for what Canadians really want. That is a full, independent, public, impartial, searching and comprehensive public inquiry.

• (1800)

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I rise to speak since you were elected Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you and wish you a long reign.

I want to begin by saying that the Bloc Québécois, the adult in the room, is opposed to Bill C-278. The summary of this bill reads as follows:

This enactment amends the *Financial Administration Act* to provide that the Treasury Board may not require as a condition of employment in the federal public administration that a person receive a vaccine against COVID-19. It also amends the *Canada Labour Code* to provide that regulations may not be made that require, as a term or condition of employment in or in connection with the operation of a federal work, undertaking or business, that a person receive a vaccine against COVID-19.

In addition, the enactment amends the *Aeronautics Act*, the *Railway Safety Act* and the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001* to provide that no regulation, order or other instrument made under any of those Acts to prevent the introduction or spread of COVID-19 may prohibit or have the effect of prohibiting a person from boarding an aircraft, a train or a vessel solely on the ground that they have not received a vaccine against that disease.

What can I say about this bill? First, we will begin with a short step back in time. Back in the day, Bill C-285 required reasonable accommodation for people who refused to get vaccinated and wanted to use various means of transportation like trains, planes or ships. It also prohibited employers from retaliating against people's health decisions. The bill stated that a person who lost their job for

refusing treatments such as a vaccine could not be denied employment insurance. This was understood to be the COVID-19 vaccine.

Bill C-278 essentially does the same thing, but this time it prohibits restrictions related to vaccination status specifically for COVID-19. Bill C-285, on the other hand, targeted all types of medical treatment. What disturbs us about this bill are the reasons that led to it. Still, I would rather speak to the House about the reasons why we think it makes no sense.

We consider that the restrictions, such as the vaccine mandate for international travel, were justified. They were temporary and necessary in the context of COVID-19. Although some measures seemed unreasonable, for example, the vaccine mandate for all federal public servants, even those who do not come in contact with the public, these measures were up for debate during the 2021 election campaign and were upheld by the courts.

The Bloc Québécois also refuses to buy the conspiracy theories the member for Niagara West is selling. The many statements this member has previously made on vaccines, as well as the nature of the petitions he has sponsored, make it difficult to see his initiative and this bill as anything other than the umpteenth attempt to discredit vaccines. This is what we are talking about when we talk about the reasons that motivated the member to bring in this bill.

Let us not forget that the restrictions specific to COVID-19 and the borders have all been lifted since October 1, 2022. As for the vaccine mandate for federal employees, it was dropped on June 20, 2022. What is more, this bill seems to be aligned with several anti-vax petitions that contained many false statements based on dubious sources. Nevertheless, the member sponsored these petitions.

The Bloc Québécois will not be fooled. It knows that the bill's intention is to curry favour with the base of the member's party by spreading misinformation. COVID-19 was not a conspiracy; it was a tragedy. The different waves of COVID-19 in Quebec and Canada cost close to 18,000 lives back home in Quebec, over 50,000 in Canada and close to 6.5 million worldwide. This is no dream; it is reality. However, we see here that the Conservatives' sympathies do not lie with the victims, the health workers or all our young people who made sacrifices to protect our seniors. Neither do its sympathies lie with my friend Annie, an immunocompromised kidney transplant patient who risks death simply by getting COVID-19. The Conservatives' sympathies lie with pandemic deniers.

The Conservatives have chosen to forget all of that by voting against the principle of Bill S-209, which calls for the designation of March 11 as pandemic observance day.

Private Members' Business

• (1805)

Not only do they not wish to acknowledge the tragedy, but they are now proposing that we deny that vaccines saved many lives and enabled us to emerge from the pandemic. They can be the ones to tell those who lost a family member to COVID-19, those who were separated from their loved ones for a long time, or those who suffer from long COVID and are still affected by the virus, that this pandemic is nothing but a conspiracy, a hoax. They can be the ones to ask the guardian angels who have propped up our hospital system all this time whether COVID-19 is a sham, an invention.

Misinformation is a growing problem in our society, and it is very alarming. Misinformation has become an illness amongst the Conservatives. We need only look at the falsehoods they are spreading about the carbon tax, pretending that it applies to Quebec because it suits them to say it does.

It is preposterous to claim to be the party that will form the next government by spreading falsehoods. We can argue about a lot of things, and people can be more right leaning or left leaning. The Conservatives can even shamelessly criticize the current government's decisions on the pretext that it is too left-wing. However, they cannot lie to people just to gain power, although that is exactly what the Conservative Party is determined to do. It is unfortunate for democracy, for the people, and for the trust and honesty that we must honour in this place.

I invite the Conservative Party to reconsider the methods it uses to gain power. People are not naive. The shift towards lies and misinformation is dangerous. Fortunately, the Bloc Québécois is elevating the debate and bringing some lucidity and maturity to the conversation. The Bloc Québécois is responsible and will vote against this bill because, from the beginning, the Bloc has always supported bills that make sense and opposed those that do not.

By refusing to recognize the value of COVID-19 vaccines, the Conservatives are once again denying science. If this bill passed, our entire society could someday have to sacrifice its very safety and security to the anti-vax beliefs of a small group of people who are still in denial. That would be completely unacceptable. We have to ask ourselves if individual freedom ends where collective freedom begins.

The Conservative Party needs to go redo its homework, because I am sure that the people who supported it up until now will be put off when they see the party's true colours. It is a party of lies that need to be debunked right now.

The Speaker: Before I give the floor to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, I would ask that all members take care when they use the word "lies" or accuse someone of lying. That is very important, even when one is not addressing an hon. member present in the House. One must be very careful when using those words.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see that the Conservatives have decided to take a break from denial of climate change and go back to an old debate,

denial of vaccine effectiveness. Vaccines save lives, right off the top. It is not something I have heard today from the other side. This is the priority today of the Conservative Party. It is the priority of its leader to deny vaccines.

There was no mention, not that I heard, that more than 54,000 Canadians have died of COVID-19. That is more than the number of Canadians who died in the Second World War. Some 751 Niagara residents died of COVID-19, and in the past month, there have been six in intensive care in Niagara. They could be constituents of mine or of the member for Niagara West, who is sponsoring this bill on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition.

Vaccine denial is not a new thing. Vaccine denial is as old as vaccines. It goes back to the 19th century, when the first vaccines against smallpox came around. Funnily enough, at that time in the 19th century, vaccine denial was led by people who were selling snake oil and trying to make money on the side with their snake oil remedies to combat smallpox, which did not have any effectiveness. We see the grift continue here, but it is disappointing to watch the official opposition dive in head first again and again. The more things change, the more they stay the same, and unfortunately, when dealing with a massive health crisis, there are those in His Majesty's loyal opposition who echoed the disinformation and misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines.

I would like to go back a bit. I wish it was not more than 20 years ago, but when I was in my early twenties, I got a job in the labour pool at a paper mill in the Niagara region. I got through the interview and there was a requirement that I show proof of vaccination for tetanus. I had not had the vaccine within the past 10 years, so I had to get it before I could start work at the paper mill.

Every doctor, nurse, soldier, firefighter, pilot or police officer whom any Canadian has ever met in their lives has had a vaccine and had to have a vaccine before they started work. What is the reason for this? The Conservatives talk about having to protect our soldiers, having to do this and having to do that. Through world wars we have required soldiers to get vaccines because it protects their health and that of the person next to them in the trenches or foxholes. However, Conservatives do not care, and it is truly unfortunate that they are trying to take us back to square one.

Vaccines, as I mentioned, are safe, and it is alarming that we have not heard that from the official opposition. All its speakers gloss over that. They gloss over the effectiveness. If our ancestors saw that, it would be unbelievable to them that we would give away this miraculous medical breakthrough on all the diseases that have killed so many people through the years, including COVID-19.

One of the most horrific stories that I heard during the pandemic, and heard it time and again, was about nurses. Do members remember when they were our health care heroes? Well, that has faded, unfortunately, for the Conservatives and the Leader of the Opposition. They had to sit there and watch people die, people who listened to the misinformation and disinformation. People were begging on their deathbeds for a vaccine from nurses and doctors, only to be told they would have had to get it before they got sick and could not get it at the last moment.

● (1810)

Again, there was deafening silence from the Conservatives on that. I am not sure who they are trying to rally to. Actually, we do know who they are trying to rally to. They closed down this city for a few weeks. They closed down international borders. They tried to grind the economy to a halt.

The Conservatives talk a good game, although usually only during question period, about vulnerable Canadians. They talk a good game of wanting to stand to protect vulnerable Canadians. In this case, vaccines do that. I may be lucky, and most of us here may be healthy enough that, if we contracted COVID-19 and the disease progressed to a point, maybe we would be okay, but maybe not.

What about small children? What about seniors? What about people with severe illnesses? I hope members never have to witness a baby with whooping cough, for example, who did not get a vaccine. It takes a second. I can understand some people being concerned about it because it is a needle in their arm, but they should speak to their physicians about it because they know best about their patients' health.

My doctors told me to get it as soon as it was available. That is how much confidence they had. I know my doctors are good doctors. The doctors throughout the Niagara region, and throughout Canada, are highly regulated. These are people who are here to protect our health and would tell us to get the available vaccinations immediately.

Through the course of human history, disease has ravaged us so much that perhaps we are benefiting from its success if we can say in 2023 that we do not need these vaccines or to worry about things such as polio, smallpox or measles. I am sure many members of the House had measles when they were a kid and think it was okay, but kids die of measles. There was a kid in New York State who contracted polio in 2023. Mercifully, there was no outbreak, but there could have been. As more politicians like those in the Conservative Party try to make political hay out of vaccines and vaccine mandates, there is an acceptance that these snake oil sales people are trying to make us less healthy, which is truly disappointing.

I want to thank the vast majority of Canadians who did their part. Canadians stood up to protect their neighbours, families, loved ones and co-workers. They knew it was the right thing to do. It is shameful that the Conservatives would stand up to cheer on those who would stand against that, but there is no willingness on their part to stand up for the most vulnerable. They talk a good game during question period, I will grant them that, but after those 45 minutes are done, and sometimes it is a little longer, we do not see any of that. Their disregard for public health is absolutely shocking.

Private Members' Business

For more than 150 years, vaccines have been a valid public health tool, and in a crisis such as COVID-19, something we had not seen in our lifetime, it was a valid public tool to use. To take it off the table just shows the Conservatives' denial for science, for what is best for the Canadian people and for the protection of vulnerable members of society. In another pandemic, we would not want that party in charge. It is just not worth the risk.

● (1815)

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will do my best to be enlightening during the time allotted to me.

As we know, thinking is not a crime that leads to death, unlike COVID-19. All of the bills introduced here, even the most ridiculous, can be debated. When I think of the word ridiculous, I cannot help but think of this bill from the member for Niagara West.

Over the course of my career as an ethicist, I heard half-truths, short answers, evasive statements, ridiculous statements and frankly idiotic statements. In fact, I think that is exactly what we find ourselves facing today: idiocy.

What is idiocy? It can be recognized by its love of inaccurate statements. Idiocy is the opposite of reason. When we debate a subject here, we have to be able to give meaning and direction to what we say. When what is being said makes no sense, it is akin to going the wrong way and getting lost. Without meaning, we go astray, get out of line, which leads to mistakes. That is where we are at today, because this bill is fundamentally a mistake. I will try to demonstrate that.

Generally speaking, the public must be given information. It is interesting that this word basically comes from two separate words. It means to put words "in formation" in order to understand and learn, because learning enables us to make a decision.

The opposite of reason is what we have often heard from the member for Niagara West in his speeches, which are ridiculous on more than one level. We often hear about freedom, but it is important to understand that one person's freedom ends where another's begins, as we have always said. It is also important to understand that there are others to consider.

These days, it is annoying how, since we got cellphones, like iPhones for example, if we want to know where we are, we just have to open Google Maps and there is a little blue dot showing us where we are. We are the centre of the universe, and everything else revolves around us. That is how I feel when I read this bill. It seems as though the person who drafted it feels like they are the centre of the universe and that everything revolves around them. It is not very inspiring.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-278 prohibits quite a few things, but what I mainly see is that the sponsor of the bill is asking us to believe the same thing he believes. He wants us to share his obsession with vaccines and adopt his views, which he is attempting to pass off as the truth. I have a problem, which is that Bill C-278 would put beliefs ahead of the public interest.

Of course, the Conservative Party will support this bill. That is obvious. When a person does not believe in climate change, they are likely to believe in anything. It is deplorable. However, the Bloc Québécois will not support the bill because it contains theoretical views that are at odds with science and common sense, the thing the Conservative Party likes to crow about and say it is championing.

This bill is meaningless. It is nonsense. It is a mistake.

• (1820)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Niagara West for his right of reply.

[*English*]

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the debate we have had regarding this bill, although I do not agree with all my colleagues from the other parties.

As we conclude second reading, it is important to keep several things in mind. It was wrong to divide and discriminate against Canadians based on a personal medical decision. It was wrong for the government to demonize Canadians who did not agree with the heavy-handed approach of imposing unscientific mandates on compelling folks into a medical treatment. It was wrong for the Prime Minister to call more than six million Canadians nasty names. He called his fellow Canadians racists, misogynists and a fringe minority, and he dared to say they held unacceptable views. It was wrong for the Prime Minister to say that these Canadians should not be tolerated because of a personal medical decision. It was wrong for the Liberal government to freeze the bank accounts of Canadians who did nothing wrong.

More than six million Canadians disagreed with the Liberals' heavy-handed approach. Tens of thousands went out to protest throughout the country when they had no other avenue for expressing their concerns. Many of these folks lost their jobs. That includes truckers, government workers, doctors, nurses, crown corporation workers, our very own military members and many others. Why did the Prime Minister do this? He did it because he saw a political opportunity and did what he does best: divide.

Last week we saw the same thing happen with the Prime Minister's anti-energy, anti-resource development bill, Bill C-69, punishing mostly our western provinces by trying to limit their economic abilities to grow their own economies. The Prime Minister's divisive tactics based on Canadians' health is just another example in his playbook, which we have seen for eight long and miserable years of his tenure.

I was happy to see that common sense prevailed earlier this year when a ruling by the Canadian Armed Forces grievance board found that the Canadian Armed Forces mandates violated the charter rights of a member who was released for choosing to remain unvaccinated. The board stated that the Canadian Armed Forces man-

date infringed on the member's right to liberty and security of the person, under section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The board also found that the policy was arbitrary, overly broad and disproportionate. It was the right decision.

In addition to all of this, it was difficult to watch as other levels of government felt pressured by the Prime Minister's rhetoric to implement more ridiculous and unscientific mandates. Municipal and provincial officials did not want to get ridiculed, so they reluctantly imposed their own mandates. These mandates, as everyone knew at the time, did nothing to prevent transmission or illness.

What the mandates did do, however, was damage our country like I have never seen before. Folks were fired. Folks lost their livelihoods. Folks were forbidden from travelling. I cannot believe this actually happened right here in Canada. Folks missed birthdays, funerals and other important events of friends and family across the country and abroad. It was sheer vindictiveness by the Liberals, plain and simple. They wanted to exact some sort of punishment on folks who did not agree with their stance on imposing unscientific mandates that drove a wedge with families, friends and neighbours. Families were torn apart because of the government's stigmatization of Canadians.

This must never happen again, ever. My bill seeks to do that at the federal level, where we do have jurisdiction. We can never introduce such egregious and vindictive measures. We are not that country. We cannot do that to our people. We are Canadians. We show compassion and understanding for one another. We do not seek to get someone fired or to ban them from travelling because they think differently or want to handle their own medical decisions in their own particular way. They have every right to do so. It is their health.

How did the government ever think it was okay to overstep such a sensitive boundary? I have heard from thousands of Canadians first-hand. They are still disillusioned about what happened. They are still in shock from what their own government did to them. Many people who went along with the mandates realized, as time passed, the punitive methods used in this ordeal. Many have lost trust in government in general. Some will likely never trust government again, including many of those six million Canadians who were affected. I would also fully agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the imposition of the Emergencies Act to crush the civil liberties of Canadian citizens who protested for their freedoms was one of the most despicable acts we have seen under the Prime Minister's government.

I hope we all make sure this never happens again. I do not believe we can move on from what took place until there is accountability. This bill is a step in the right direction. Let us start with Bill C-278, and let us continue to work until there is full accountability. I know I will.

• (1825)

[Translation]

The Speaker: The question is on the motion.

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[English]

Mr. Dan Muys: Mr. Speaker, I would ask for a recorded division.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 25, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to rise tonight to talk about a really difficult year that we had in my riding of Courtenay—Alberni.

We know that ocean temperatures around the world have been rising rapidly. It is a record year for air temperatures, ocean temperatures and wildfires globally.

We watched with horror as we saw wildfires rage across Yellowknife and Hay River and Nova Scotia, coast to coast to coast. My riding was no different. This included Highway 4 at Cameron Bluffs in my riding, which separated my riding from the west coast to the east coast along the Alberni Valley. That fire started, really, at full rage on June 6. It had a tremendous impact on the communities and on small business.

We know that the PBO projected just 10 years ago that climate emergencies would cost Canadians about \$900 million a year. Here we are, and we are into multi-billions of dollars. This has an impact on the economy, the ecology and the ecosystem. We are seeing, right now, that the PBO projects that, so far, climate emergencies have cost Canadians between \$20 billion and \$25 billion.

I think about the impact that has on our communities. Of course, we need to take real action when it comes to climate change. We need to make sure that we invest heavily in clean energy and transition away from fossil fuels.

Adjournment Proceedings

We also need to make sure that the impact of climate emergencies is not shouldered by the most vulnerable or by small businesses. That is why I am here tonight.

The communities of Tofino, Ahousaht, Hesquiaht, Clayoquot, Yuułuʔiłʔath, Toquaht, Huu-ay-aht, Hupačasath, Tseshah, Uchucklesaht and Port Alberni have all been heavily impacted by wildfires in my riding.

In just Tofino and Ucluelet, they identified that the cost was \$44 million, and that was on August 16. We are talking two months in. It took a long time before the highway could get cleared and people could move. Supply chains were heavily impacted.

Currently, Canada does not have a rapid response emergency fund for small businesses when it comes to climate emergencies. We know that there will be a lot more emergencies.

I cannot imagine the suffering of people in Hay River and in Yellowknife. They were even more impacted. We need to find a fund.

When I ask small business owners who should pay for this climate emergency rapid response fund, and if it should be an increase in taxes, the flat-out answer is no when I give them the alternative. That is to charge an excess profit tax on oil and gas, which has had record revenues and record profits. Shift that revenue to help support small businesses that have been impacted.

I believe we can have hope in taking on climate action really wholeheartedly after a year such as this. We need to.

However, SMEs cannot shoulder the burden. Right now, they have asked for an extension on the CEBA loan. They are still not getting that refundable portion, which they need by the end of next year.

I was just talking to Scott Stewart, who runs True North Distilleries. He needs the CEBA loan extended. His distillery also pivoted to help provide sanitizer for public health agencies through the pandemic. They just cannot absorb this kind of punishment.

We need to make sure that we are supporting small business with urgency, especially with the impact of climate-related emergencies. The CEBA loan extension is one part; we should provide a fund that can move rapidly and pivot, so that we can help support these small businesses.

Adjournment Proceedings

We have seen Britain charge an excess profit tax on oil and gas. We know the Conservatives are not going to support that. We cannot even get Liberals to do that in Canada. It is time for the Liberal government to step in and provide resources to support those small business owners, who really are the economic drivers of our small communities.

• (1830)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his advocacy for firefighters. I would also like to thank all of the first responders across Canada who keep us safe, including the brave volunteer firefighters whom so many communities across our country depend on. Our government recognizes the important role that first responders play, and we will continue to support them.

I would like to point out that one member of our government in particular has taken a leadership role in supporting firefighters across the country. The member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne has crossed the country meeting with firefighters. After discussing with them the urgent needs they are facing, she presented a bill in this House to develop a national framework to actively support research, education and cancer screenings, with the goal of improving access for firefighters to cancer prevention and treatment.

The government continuously reviews the tax system to ensure that it remains fair and efficient. On that point, I would add that the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne is in touch with the minister responsible on the topic of firefighter tax credits.

I cannot emphasize enough the important role of first responders in facing the realities of climate change, most notably in the form of increasingly frequent wildfires. In fact, Canada is experiencing more extreme wildfires, and according to the data, this trend will only continue as the climate changes.

[*Translation*]

The 2022 budget included significant funding to support our firefighters, as well as support for provinces, territories and indigenous communities to mitigate, monitor and respond to fires.

The budget included nearly \$40 million to train 1,000 new firefighters and integrate indigenous traditional knowledge into fire management, as well as \$308.2 million to acquire firefighting equipment, such as vehicles and aircraft, including nearly \$40 million specifically for first nations communities.

• (1835)

[*English*]

These very concrete actions will help ensure greater volunteer safety in the line of duty and will help ensure a higher degree of emergency preparedness in communities across Canada.

[*Translation*]

Since 2015, the federal government has invested over \$100 billion in its fight against climate change and in environmental protection.

What is more, our emissions reduction plan is ambitious but achievable. Our goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure Canada reaches net zero by 2050.

Our government will continue to take action to protect our communities and support first responders, including the volunteer firefighters who keep us safe and protect our homes.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for talking about my bill, Bill C-310, on the volunteer firefighter tax credit. I hope the government comes to its senses and prioritizes this for the over 100,000 volunteer firefighters and search and rescue volunteers, because inflation is having a huge impact on them.

In terms of supporting our volunteers, we need to look at new ways to tackle forest fires with the climate emergencies we are seeing. Coulson Group, which is in my riding in Port Alberni, is currently one of the global leaders on night firefighting. It wants to create a quick reaction force and support Canada's rapid response to forest firefighting in Canada.

I asked the Minister of Emergency Preparedness to come to the Alberni Valley. I hope my colleague can help encourage that to happen so he can learn from the best in the business and learn how Canada can mitigate and put out forest fires, because the quicker we can put out forest fires, the quicker we can reduce emissions. We do not talk enough about that connection when it comes to tackling climate change.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again thank the member opposite for his advocacy and leadership. I know he is working closely with government members, including the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, on Bill C-310 and on other measures that will ensure greater tax fairness for our first responders. I also know that we will continue to work in this direction through various other means. We have Bill C-224, which addresses this.

There are many actions that our government has taken and will continue to take. I encourage collaboration between my NDP colleague, whom I respect enormously, and members of government and cabinet in order to advance this cause.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since October 7, Israelis have not been able to mourn their dead in peace. Every day we are learning more about the sickening and horrifying brutality of Hamas and the Hamas terrorist attacks. We mourn the loss of so many bright lights, including so many people who were working for peace. We want to see the hostages come home now.

Only a few miles away from where Hamas committed these terrorist attacks, Israeli military bombs are now raining down on homes in Gaza. More than 2,000 children in Gaza have been killed in the past two weeks. Families have been eradicated. Half of Gaza's homes have been destroyed.

A few days ago, 18 people were killed in an Israeli military air strike on a Greek Orthodox church, where 200 vulnerable people had sought shelter. Bombs fall next to schools and hospitals. Children are experiencing mass trauma. Surgeries are performed with no anaesthetic and with vinegar from the corner store. Humanitarian aid is desperately needed. Palestinians are not able to mourn their dead either because the bombs keep falling.

My city of Edmonton is grieving. In my community of Edmonton, I know of at least eight families who have, together, lost over 100 people, 100 family members in the siege of Gaza. We need a ceasefire now.

Dehumanization of the enemy is a terrible feature of wars and genocides. It is already evident in this war, with Hamas militants spitting on and torturing their victims. It is disgusting. It is horrifying. The Israeli defence minister is using words such as “human animals”. The Israeli president has said that the “entire nation” of Gazans is responsible for Hamas.

There is a straight line between dehumanization and the hate crimes we are seeing around the world. We know that hate crimes against Jewish Canadians have massively increased since October 7. It is heartbreaking to see what is happening in the world. The National Council of Canadian Muslims says that reports of hate crimes against Muslims have increased by 1,000%.

I am deeply concerned by the silencing of Jewish and Palestinian people, particularly of women and of women's voices across Canada, in the media, on social platforms and in public discourse. This is a time for us who are not Palestinian and who not Jewish to listen and to learn. We need a ceasefire.

Our call for a ceasefire does not mean we do not want the end of Hamas. Of course we do. However, the people of Gaza are not Hamas. The children of Gaza are not Hamas. Palestinians are not Hamas. They deserve, as all people do, to live, to thrive, to be free and to be safe. They do not deserve this.

These bombings will not make Israelis safe either. Collective punishment does not make anyone safer.

Canada must do better. We must recognize the broader context of this war and the ongoing occupation in which we have so much work to do. Before this war, Gazans were severely restricted in their movement by Israel.

Adjournment Proceedings

Israel still occupies the West Bank, where illegal settlements are being built. As rockets have fallen on towns in Israel, settlers have attacked Palestinian residents of the West Bank. The occupation has enormous costs, most importantly in lives, but also in long-term security. I urge the government, now, to finally call for a ceasefire.

● (1840)

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Edmonton Strathcona for the passion, compassion, intelligence and wisdom she brings to this subject, not only today but every day, and for the ongoing work we are attempting to do together in a really horrific situation.

Canadians were shocked to see the unspeakable atrocities that were committed by the terrorist organization Hamas. Hamas is recognized by Canada and by others as a terrorist organization, and we unequivocally condemn the brutal terrorist attack against Israel. Israel has a right to defend itself in accordance with international law. That international law, the international humanitarian law and other laws, is very clear that a civilian is a civilian. Palestinian and Israeli civilians needs to be protected and we need to keep this in the front of our minds every day, even as Canadian hearts are broken and our minds are taxed as we attempt to find solutions to the situation.

We continue to work with our allies and our friends, primarily to de-escalate the situation. We have been working extremely hard to get Canadians and other foreign nationals out of Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. We will continue to do that work. We have also been continuing to work feverishly on getting humanitarian aid into Gaza, and this has been a trying and difficult situation. For no other reason than to get humanitarian assistance into the area, the Prime Minister today called on the international community to say that humanitarian pauses on hostilities need to be considered. What the Prime Minister said was echoed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. We are looking for the best ways Canada can engage in the situation to ensure that humanitarian assistance can be provided.

As I said, we have been working with our allies and our partners for over two weeks now to find a way to de-escalate the situation. The foreign affairs minister has been in the region twice. She has been to Israel and to Jordan, as well as to discussions with the Palestinian authority. Most recently, she was in Egypt at a peace conference and today was in the UAE. Her goal is to support Canadians and bring them home as they want to come home. She has been there to witness the human impact of the violence, to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and to work with our partners, as I said, to de-escalate.

That is what we will be doing and will continue to do.

Adjournment Proceedings

The safety and security of Canadians is first, but it is not the last. What we will continue to do is find ways for Canada to engage constructively in the situation in order to help. As the Speaker will be well aware, Canada was one of the first countries to offer humanitarian assistance, with an immediate \$10 million and a further \$50 million. We are in the top five countries in humanitarian assistance, but we have to get it in. That is why the government and the Prime Minister say that the world needs to find a way to do a humanitarian pause on the hostilities. That would allow such aid to travel into the war-torn area without causing further vilification of others there.

This is what we will do. We will continue to fight for this. We want to ensure that Palestinian civilians and Israeli civilians are cared for and are safe and secure as they move to the day after and find the best way to solve the situation.

• (1845)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, I have one very short question and then one that is a bit longer. The first question is this: What on earth is the difference between a humanitarian pause and a ceasefire? Stop dropping bombs on kids. That is the same thing. Why can the government not use the word “ceasefire”? Why can the government not say what so many people in our country have been urging it to say: “ceasefire”? We need a ceasefire now, and if it needs to call it a humanitarian pause, it is going to have to explain why that is different from a ceasefire.

For years, New Democrats have asked Canada to end arms sales to Israel while the occupation continues. For years, we have been

asking it to condemn illegal settlements, to call for an end to settler attacks, to ban trade of products from illegal settlements and to end the blockade of Gaza, and still the Liberals have remained silent.

Once again, call for a ceasefire. The children of Palestine need the Liberals to stand up now.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear. People are dying. Children are dying, on both sides of the border. Our goal is not to play games. Our goal is not to have semantics. Our goal is to get humanitarian assistance to a war-torn part of the world.

This is not a conventional war. This is a war between a democratic state and a listed terrorist organization. We do not negotiate with terrorist organizations. Maybe members of the New Democratic Party would like to do that, but this government does not do that. What we will do is ensure safety, security and long-term viability in this very difficult situation.

I have been in this area of the world six times. I have worked in Palestine and worked in Israel. I will continue to do that, and this government will continue to stand up for every civilian regardless of where they live in that part of the world.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:49 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Public Accounts of Canada	
Ms. Anand	17817
Auditor General of Canada	
The Speaker	17817
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Oliphant	17817
Committees of the House	
Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics	
Mr. Brassard	17817
Mr. Barrett	17817
Motion	17817
(Motion agreed to)	17818
Petitions	
Aquaculture	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	17818
Public Safety	
Mr. Calkins	17818
Climate Change	
Mr. Serré	17818
Public Safety	
Mr. Mazier	17818
Justice	
Mr. Cooper	17819
Climate Change	
Mr. Gerretsen	17819
Remote-Controlled Model Airplanes	
Mr. Gerretsen	17819
Child Support	
Mr. Gerretsen	17819
Aquaculture	
Mr. Johns	17819
Natural Health Products	
Mr. Arnold	17819
Justice	
Mr. Motz	17819
Health Care Workers	
Mr. Lamoureux	17820
Justice	
Mr. Kurek	17820
Pornography	
Mr. Viersen	17820
Children and Families	
Mr. Viersen	17820

Charitable Organizations

Mr. Viersen 17820

Women's Shelters

Mr. Viersen 17820

Criminal Code

Mr. Viersen 17820

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux 17820

Points of Order

Requirement of Royal Recommendations for Bills C-353 and C-356

Mr. Lamoureux 17821

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act, 2023

Bill C-57. Second reading	17821
Mr. Fast	17821
Mr. Kurek	17821
Mr. Muys	17822
Mr. Miao	17822
Mr. Fast	17823
Mrs. Vignola	17823
Mr. MacGregor	17823
Mr. Perron	17823
Mr. Lamoureux	17825
Ms. Ashton	17825
Mr. Garon	17825
Mrs. Vignola	17825
Mr. Lamoureux	17827
Mr. Garon	17827
Ms. Ashton	17827
Ms. Dzerowicz	17827
Mr. Johns	17831
Mr. Fast	17831
Mr. Barsalou-Duval	17831
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	17831
Mr. Lamoureux	17832
Mr. Soroka	17832
Mr. Lamoureux	17833
Mrs. Vignola	17834
Mr. Johns	17834
Mr. Vis	17834
Mr. Lamoureux	17835
Mrs. Vignola	17836
Mr. Fast	17836
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	17836
Mr. Lamoureux	17838
Mr. Fast	17838

Mr. Blaikie.....	17838
Mr. Blaikie.....	17838
Mr. Lamoureux.....	17840
Mr. Fast.....	17840
Mr. Johns.....	17841
Mr. Viersen.....	17841
Mr. Lamoureux.....	17842
Mr. Barsalou-Duval.....	17842
Mr. Johns.....	17843
Mr. Kmiec.....	17843
Ms. Sgro.....	17845
Mr. Albas.....	17845
Mr. Lamoureux.....	17845
Ms. Sgro.....	17845
Mr. Barsalou-Duval.....	17847
Ms. Gladu.....	17847
Mr. Johns.....	17847
Mr. Albas.....	17847
Mr. Jeneroux.....	17848
Mr. Lamoureux.....	17849
Mrs. Vignola.....	17849
Mr. Johns.....	17850
Mr. Baker.....	17850

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

World Polio Day	
Mr. Hanley.....	17851
Capital Experience	
Mr. Schmale.....	17851
Eye Care	
Ms. Sgro.....	17851
Fédération de l'âge d'or du Québec	
Mr. Perron.....	17852
Lynn Philip Hodgson	
Mr. Turnbull.....	17852
Charitable Organizations	
Mr. Falk (Provencher).....	17852
Foreign Affairs	
Ms. Taylor Roy.....	17852
World Polio Day	
Mr. Aldag.....	17852
Carbon Tax	
Mr. Généreux.....	17853
Member for Vancouver Centre	
Mr. Noormohamed.....	17853
Housing	
Mrs. Gallant.....	17853
Tragedy in Sault Ste. Marie	
Ms. Findlay.....	17853

United States Consulate in Halifax	
Mr. Fillmore.....	17854
Foreign Affairs	
Ms. Gazan.....	17854
Decline of French	
Mr. Beaulieu.....	17854
Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada	
Mr. Cooper.....	17854
Parkinson's Disease	
Mr. Longfield.....	17854

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Economy	
Mr. Poilievre.....	17855
Mr. Trudeau.....	17855
Mr. Poilievre.....	17855
Mr. Trudeau.....	17855
Carbon Pricing	
Mr. Poilievre.....	17855
Mr. Trudeau.....	17855
Public Services and Procurement	
Mr. Poilievre.....	17856
Mr. Trudeau.....	17856
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Poilievre.....	17856
Mr. Trudeau.....	17856
Mr. Blanchet.....	17856
Mr. Trudeau.....	17856
Mr. Blanchet.....	17856
Mr. Trudeau.....	17856
Housing	
Mr. Singh.....	17856
Mr. Trudeau.....	17857
Mr. Singh.....	17857
Mr. Trudeau.....	17857
Diversity and Inclusion	
Ms. Lantsman.....	17857
The Speaker.....	17857
Housing	
Mr. Hallan.....	17857
Mr. Fraser.....	17857
Ms. Gladu.....	17857
Mr. Fraser.....	17857
Ms. Gladu.....	17858
Ms. Gould.....	17858
Carbon Pricing	
Mr. Paul-Hus.....	17858
Mr. van Koeverden.....	17858
Mr. Paul-Hus.....	17858
Mr. van Koeverden.....	17858

Small Business	
Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné	17858
Mrs. Valdez	17858
Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné	17858
Ms. Martinez Ferrada	17859
Mr. Perron	17859
Ms. Bibeau	17859
Carbon Pricing	
Mr. Gourde	17859
Ms. Bendayan	17859
Mr. Gourde	17859
Mrs. Lebouthillier	17859
Housing	
Ms. Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	17859
Mr. Fraser	17859
Small Business	
Mr. Vis	17860
Mrs. Valdez	17860
Housing	
Ms. Gazan	17860
Mr. Fraser	17860
Northern Affairs	
Ms. Idlout	17860
Mr. Vandal	17860
Innovation, Science and Industry	
Mr. Gerretsen	17860
Mr. Champagne	17861
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	
Mr. Barrett	17861
Mr. Brassard	17861
Mr. Barrett	17861
Ms. Gould	17861
Public Services and Procurement	
Mrs. Kusie	17861
Mr. LeBlanc	17861
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	
Mr. Berthold	17862
Ms. Gould	17862
Aerospace Industry	
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	17862
Mr. Duclos	17862
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	17862
Mr. Duclos	17862
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	
Mr. Brock	17862
Mr. LeBlanc	17862
Carbon Pricing	
Mr. Barlow	17862
Mr. MacAulay	17863
Mr. Barlow	17863
Mr. van Koeverden	17863

Employment	
Mr. Chahal	17863
Mr. Boissonnault	17863
Carbon Pricing	
Ms. Rood	17863
Ms. Sudds	17863
Mr. Perkins	17863
Mr. Fraser	17864
Mr. Small	17864
Mr. O'Regan	17864
International Trade	
Mr. Baker	17864
Ms. Ng	17864
Labour	
Mr. Boulерice	17864
Mr. O'Regan	17864
Health	
Mr. MacGregor	17864
Mr. Holland	17865

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act, 2023	
Bill C-57. Second reading	17865
Mr. Baker	17865
Mr. Cannings	17865
Mr. Champoux	17866
Ms. Chagger	17866
Mr. Epp	17866
Mr. Muys	17868
Mr. Fast	17868
Ms. Larouche	17868
Mr. Samson	17868
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	17870
Mr. Cannings	17870
Mr. Fast	17870
Mr. Longfield	17870
Mr. Garon	17870
Mr. Lamoureux	17872
Mr. Cannings	17872
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	17873
Mr. Gerretsen	17873
Mr. Ellis	17874
Mrs. Desbiens	17874
Ms. McPherson	17875
Mr. Martel	17875
Mr. Longfield	17876
Ms. Larouche	17876
Mr. Gourde	17877
Mr. Blois	17877
Mr. Desjarlais	17878
Mr. Beaulieu	17879
Ms. Chagger	17879
Ms. McPherson	17879

Ms. Chagger	17880
Mr. Fast	17881
Mr. Beaulieu	17881
Mr. Deltell	17881

Mr. Bittle	17888
Mr. Villemure	17889
Mr. Allison	17890
Division on motion deferred	17891

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Prevention of Government-Imposed Vaccination
Mandates Act**

Bill C-278. Second reading	17883
Mr. Lamoureux	17883
Mr. Poilievre	17884
Mr. Davies	17885
Mrs. Desbiens	17887

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Taxation

Mr. Johns	17891
Ms. Bendayan	17892

Foreign Affairs

Ms. McPherson	17893
Mr. Oliphant	17893

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