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Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

Oral Questions

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government supports linguistic duality across Canada and has kept its promises.

We are providing unprecedented support for the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality by investing \$1.1 billion, the biggest investment ever in Canada's history.

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[English]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is turning our prisons into warehouses for those with mental illness. Ashley Smith's tragic death in a federal prison is now the subject of a coroner's inquest. Ashley ended up in jail rather than treatment and fell through the cracks. Instead of using this tragic incident as an opportunity to strengthen mental health treatment, the government is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to cover up its failure.

Why is the government fighting an inquiry designed to save lives, instead of investing in mental health treatment to prevent deaths like Ashley's from ever occurring again?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I expect that this provincial coroner's inquest will examine the facts concerning this tragic incident. We have indicated very clearly our condolences and respect to the family. What this does is demonstrate the need for mental health care to be addressed by provinces rather than having these individuals landing in our prison system. We are continuing to work with the provinces to ensure that we find ways to divert from prisons those who need medical and mental health attention.

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HEALTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in weeks OxyContin's patent expires and the drug will be replaced by a new version harder to tamper with. This will open the door to generic production of the old drug. OxyContin is very addictive. Since it was added to provincial drug plans, deaths went up 500%, especially in aboriginal communities.

Provincial and territorial ministers have asked the Minister of Health not to approve generic versions, since OxyContin addiction costs the system half a billion dollars, not counting the human suffering. Will the minister commit today to refusing approval of generic OxyContin?

• (1440)

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we told the provincial and territorial health ministers that we would be reviewing this matter and be making a decision shortly on the request from the provincial and territorial health ministers.

[Translation]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie took advantage of the presence of representatives from the Calgary Chamber of Commerce at the Standing Committee on Finance meeting to ask them whether the decline in value of Progress Energy and Nexen stocks and the Canada pension plan could have been avoided had the government reformed the Investment Canada Act as the NDP asked it to do. Their response was unequivocal. They answered that such was indeed the case.

When exactly will the Conservatives listen to the NDP and the Calgary Chamber of Commerce?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the type of frightening question that the NDP likes to ask.

I can reassure Canadians. We will not listen to the NDP because the NDP is against investment and free trade. The NDP is against all that.

The NDP is in favour of a carbon tax that would put a \$21 billion burden on the shoulders of Canadian taxpayers.

To come back to foreign investment, I would like to say that every decision that this government makes is in the best interests of Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government should be listening to Calgarians and other Canadians on this issue and it is not. Maybe it is time to have a hard-working NDP MP in Calgary. It sure has helped in Edmonton.

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce witness said yesterday at committee there was a lack of confidence reflected in the markets in the government on this issue. When asked if the NDP had done its work on the issue, the witness from the chamber of commerce replied, "absolutely".

Calgarians want to know if new and clear rules are going to be in place before the decision on Nexen, and when is the government going to stop dropping the ball on Investment Canada?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member should talk about what the chamber of commerce is thinking about NDP policies: anti-trade, anti-investment and a carbon tax of \$21 billion on the shoulders of Canadians that would raise the price of everything, including gasoline and groceries. Did the NDP ask that question of the chamber of commerce?